

A STUDY OF
THE THEME OF PERSONAL IDENTITY
IN WILLIAM GOLDING'S LORD OF THE FLIES

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AN ABSTRACT

William Golding's first novel, Lord of the Flies, can be approached by considering how it reflects one of the dominant themes of the twentieth century--the search for personal identity. It can then be seen that Golding has revealed the enormous importance, both for the well-being of the individual person concerned and for the survival of the entire human community of each person's undertaking an intensive search for complete personal identity. The reader sees the importance of this search by comparing the consequences of attaining and of not attaining complete identity. Simon is the only character who determines through deep probing the dimensions of his identity. His search is a conscious effort toward realizing an authentic self-image, achieving self-knowledge, relating fully to his environment, to other people, and to himself. Simon realizes his identity in two experiences. The first occurs soon after the classroom-like order of the early assemblies becomes threatened by the almost pathological fear of the nightmarish "beastie". Simon retreats to a secluded place in the jungle to examine the dark side of his nature and of the nature of the others. In the second experience, the Lord of the Flies scene, Simon's view of himself and of his role in relation to the now chaotic and highly dangerous society is rendered articulate as he overcomes the temptation to yield to fear and despair. Ralph also undertakes to search for his identity but only half-heartedly, for his search is limited to exploring the practical side of his role as chief. As a result of his failure to examine the irrational side of his nature, Ralph is unable to prevent either himself or the group from yielding to terror and despair.

None of the other characters in the novel actually searches for his identity. Piggy attempts from first to last to cling to a scientific view of man and the universe and does not even try to understand the irrational impulses to which he occasionally succumbs. When the "beast" is discovered on the island, his world view is shattered, and he falls victim to the most abject despair. He is nonetheless able to repress the irrational in his nature to such an extent that, even after he has participated in the murder of Simon, he can still make an appeal to the group's feeling for justice and human rights. Jack suffers loss of identity because in surrendering himself to his impulses and instincts as a hunter and to his ego demands for absolute control on the island, he becomes a driven being. Alienated from themselves and society, unheeding of the one character who has established his identity, the major characters except Simon allow circumstances to carry them to the point of complete disaster.

The introductory chapter briefly explores the theme of identity throughout British literature.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. SIMON'S ATTAINMENT OF IDENTITY	20
III. THE IDENTITY PROBLEMS OF RALPH, PIGGY AND JACK	57
IV. CONCLUSION	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY	108

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to study, descriptively and analytically, the search for personal identity of the characters in William Golding's Lord of the Flies. The search for identity has been a major theme of contemporary novelists and dramatists in England, France, and the United States and, as such, has evoked considerable attention from scholars and critics. Yet, though two of the major characters in Golding's Lord of the Flies are clearly seeking their identities with as great intensity as those in other contemporary works, critics of Golding have given scant attention to this important theme. The reason seems to be that, up to the present, commentary on Golding has been preoccupied largely with determining the allegorical meaning of the novels. In his essay on Golding's novels, for example, Frank MacShane merely mentions Golding's concern for the problem of identity without investigating it.¹ E.C. Bufkin devotes a chapter of his doctoral dissertation on Golding's novels to the quest for identity in Pincher Martin, but practically ignores the problem of identity in the other novels. The one important exception to this paucity of criticism on the identity theme in Golding is the recent study by Mark Kinkead-Weekes

¹"The Novels of William Golding", (Dalhousie Review, XLII (1962), p. 171.

and Ian Gregor.² The study explores the question of being and becoming in Pincher Martin and Free Fall and recognizes the theme in other novels as well. Even though this excellent study makes useful suggestions, however, it is concerned primarily with the development of the novelist's art in general and leaves room for a more intensive study of this theme in one of Golding's novels.

In his survey of contemporary English fiction, published in 1962, James Gindin does not mention Golding in his chapter on identity, nor does he mention identity in his chapter on Golding, though he does say that "almost all contemporary novels are searches for identity."³ Gindin may have discovered that what Golding's characters find out about themselves is rather different from what characters in other contemporary English novels find out about themselves. Gindin links the search for identity with the "existential attitude common to most British writers."⁴

It will be shown that Golding is an exception concerning the existential attitude and that the view of man's nature and personal identity in Golding's novels is directly opposed, in some respects, to the existential view. For example, existentialists

²E.C. Bufkin, "The Novels of William Golding: A Descriptive and Analytic Study" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1964); Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor, William Golding: A Critical Study (London: Faber and Faber, 1967).

³Postwar British Fiction (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), p.11.

⁴*Ibid.*, p.12.

like Albert Camus hold that the ultimate character of the universe is evil and that consequently man is always uncertain and always threatened; whatever good there may be in life is in man and is created in the struggle to establish and preserve his own integrity in an absurd universe. Golding, on the other hand, insists that the source of evil is to be found in the nature of man himself and that an important part of each character's struggle to find his identity consists in recognizing this basic truth.

As a preparation for Golding's particular insights, it seems desirable to survey briefly the background and history of the treatment of the problem of identity in English literature.

Though it hardly seems necessary to demonstrate the proposition here, the narrative in which the major character seeks a personal identity may well be as old as literature itself. Arthur Miller once said:

All plays we call great, let alone those we call serious, are ultimately involved with some aspect of a single problem. It is this: How may a man make of the outside world a home? How and in what ways must he struggle, what must he strive to change and overcome within himself and outside himself if he is to find the safety, the surroundings of love, the ease of soul, the sense of identity and honor which, evidently, all men have connected in their memories with the idea of family?⁵

⁵"The Family in Modern Drama", (Atlantic Monthly, 1956, reprinted in Modern Drama: Essays in Criticism, Travis Bogard and William I. Oliver eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp.222-223.

In their anthology of readings on the identity question, Stein, Vidich and White discuss Hamlet's search for identity, though from a different point of view from Miller's.

Central to Hamlet's character is the search for personal reality in a society where collective reality can no longer be taken for granted. His search becomes a quest for his own identity, but he discovers that he can find this only by scrutinizing the relations he has with the real and assumed personae of those around him....He balances at all times the passionate character of various persons, the roles they are supposed to play in relation to him, the feelings he is supposed to have towards them in his reciprocal role, the feelings he actually has, and finally, the feelings and actions he ought to display according to his scheme of higher values and identities.⁶

It is now a cliché to say that the Elizabethan period, like our own, was one of "rapid transition". Like most clichés, it does convey some truth. In such a period certain traditional values are apt to be severely questioned; society is in a state of flux. Institutions may be challenged, several losing influence and others gaining influence. Rigid class barriers and standards of conduct are broken down, and members of the educated classes are thrown back on their own individual resources. In such circumstances, society is no longer dominant in defining the individual identity. Ideology, standards of conduct, and occupation are no longer rigidly pres-

⁶Maurice R. Stein, Arthur J. Vidich, and David Manning White, Identity and Anxiety (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1960), p.17.

cribed; hence the educated person has considerable choice in determining what he will become.

The literary importance of the identity theme, however, declined considerably in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The theatre that was restored, along with the monarchy, after the Civil War and Cromwell had closed it down, was largely limited to portraying the manners and morals of the courtier class and the question of identity per se was hardly raised. The novel, then in its infancy, was still developing techniques for revealing the individual's interaction with society. It had not yet developed the techniques for exploring the question of identity in any depth. The search for identity, moreover, was not a major social problem during the late seventeenth, the eighteenth, and the early nineteenth century. To a far greater extent than did the Elizabethan society, the more stable society of this later period defined each person's identity according to class, occupation, religion, and locality. Gindin makes this point clear for the nineteenth century:

Novelists such as Dickens, George Eliot, and Trollope frequently dealt with class divisions and with the problems of attempting to move from one class to another. All these writers, in defining in terms of class, worked on the assumption that man's social environment, to a large extent, conditions his attitudes and his responses to the world....The terms of the social novel demanded that, for the majority of the people involved, time, place, family, and occupation both moulded and explained the individual. Frequently, in nineteenth century

fiction, as in the work of Dickens, the hero, unique and individual, was set against a society in which all the forces were explained and categorized as rigid class forms. The hero represented virtue; the others vice or sterility or benevolent mindlessness. Yet class became through the development of the novel, a convenient way of explaining the frequency with which social environment defines the individual.⁷

Discussing the period of the novel from its inception, Steven Marcus reveals how limited the search for identity problem had become. He observes that

for more than two hundred years the English novel may be understood as chafing under a single preoccupation: what it means to be a gentleman.⁸

In Tom Jones, Pride and Prejudice, and Pickwick Papers, the major characters are concerned with developing a conception of what a gentleman or a lady should be and with attempting to live up to this ideal so that the character would conceive of himself, and society would recognize him, in terms of it. For example, in Pride and Prejudice, the most telling accusation Elizabeth can make to Darcy, one which causes him to change the pattern of his life, is the suggestion that he has not acted in a "gentlemanlike manner." Elizabeth herself is mainly concerned with the question of what are the terms on which a woman of principle can accept marriage.

⁷Gindin, p.88.

⁸Steven Marcus, "The Novel Again", Partisan Review, XXIX (Spring, 1962), p.176.

Despite what seemed to be an underlying assumption that social environment to a large extent defines the individual, eighteenth and nineteenth century novelists were much too conservative to subscribe wholeheartedly to such a radical doctrine or to accept its full implications. A point of view more acceptable is that suggested by Bradford Smith, writing on Mark Twain. He says:

The quest for identity is central to both (Twain's) writing and his personality....The mystery of identity...becomes a matter of seeking out the true character beneath the social disguise.⁹

Implied in Smith's comment is the belief in innate characteristics, which become the objects of the search for identity. Henry Nash Smith, in his introduction to the Riverside Edition of Huckleberry Finn, supplies perhaps a good illustration of this comment.

The intuitive self, the spontaneous impulse from the deepest levels of the personality, is placed in opposition to the acquired conscience, the overlayer of prejudice and false valuation imposed upon all members of society in the name of religion, morality, law, and culture. Huck's triumph over his conscience is his most nearly heroic moment, falling short of grandeur only because his youth and ignorance prevent him from undertaking a decisive action.¹⁰

⁹"Mark Twain and the Mystery of Identity", College English, XXIV (March, 1963), p. 425.

¹⁰(Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959, reprinted in Scholarly Appraisals of Literary Works Taught in High Schools, Stephen Dunning and Henry W. Sams ed. Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965), p. 99.

This view of human nature is typical of nineteenth century novelists. Dickens reveals it, for example, in Oliver Twist and Great Expectations, just as earlier, Fielding had revealed it in Tom Jones, and Jane Austen in Pride and Prejudice. In all of these novels, the major characters have the task of wringing recognition of their inherent worth from a reluctant society, or conversely, of preventing their inherent evil nature from being unmasked.

The beginning of a modern approach to the search-for-identity theme was indicated late in the nineteenth century in Henry James's The Portrait of a Lady. Even though the heroine, Isobel Archer, early in the novel exudes the "air of being some one in particular",¹¹ she is nonetheless trying to enlarge her self concept and to consider what her role in life should be. "She was always planning out her development, desiring her perfection, observing her progress."¹² Ralph Touchett, her admiring cousin, ponders the outcome of her search for identity, as she herself might have done:

She was intelligent and generous; it was a fine free nature; but what was she going to do with herself? This question was irregular, for with most women one had no occasion to ask it. Most women did with themselves nothing at all; they waited, in attitudes more or less passive, for a man to come that way and furnish them with a

¹¹Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), pp.46-47.

¹²Ibid., p.55.

destiny. Isobel's originality was that she gave one an impression of having intentions of her own.¹³

Isobel seems to have everything she needs to determine what she will be: beauty, charm, wealth, and freedom. Yet, as the novel progresses, Isobel's development reveals a tragic discrepancy between the illusion of self and the real self of a depth unprecedented in English literature since King Lear. In the crisis of the novel, Isobel suffers an anguished period of self-discovery that is similarly unprecedented.

To measure the advance made by Henry James in depicting the search for identity, one can first observe how little Elizabeth Bennet of Pride and Prejudice discovers about herself in comparison to what Isobel Archer discovers about herself. One can further observe that confrontations between the major characters and the true selves are also present in Thomas Hardy's novels Tess of the d'Urbervilles and The Return of the Native. Both Tess and Eustacia, after perceiving "visions of the self"¹⁴ take action that determines their fate: Tess murders Alec d'Urberville and Eustacia commits suicide; but in neither novel was the self-discovery more than a momentary flash of insight.

¹³Ibid., p.63.

¹⁴The term used by J. O. Bailey, "Hardy's Visions of the Self," Studies in Philology, LVI, i (January, 1959), p.74.

Great as it may appear, however, the progress marked by James in depicting the identity problem was still only a step toward a full treatment. Neither Isobel nor Lambert Strether, though he discovers a great deal about himself in The Ambassadors, is shocked into examining the central core of his whole being as Jim is forced to do in Lord Jim, Kurtz in Heart of Darkness, and Razumov in Under Western Eyes. And though Heyst in Victory also seems preoccupied, at first, with what it means to be a gentleman, in fact, he wills not to be himself, content to adopt roles that others define for him. His yet unacknowledged love for Lena, however, gives him "a greater sense of his own reality than he had ever known in all his life,"¹⁵ and he is finally driven to question the entire basis of his existence. Joseph Conrad, then, is foremost among the early twentieth century writers who broadened the basis of the identity question to make it one of the great central themes of modern literature. In Peter Anthelm's words;

The vision sought by the modern hero....can best be described as self-understanding or perception.... He uncovers elements of pain, humiliation, and guilt, yet continues his quest as his suffering increases, hoping at last to find some perception of the truth that lies at the center of his existence.¹⁶

¹⁵Joseph Conrad, Victory (Toronto: Dent, 1958), pp.200,187.

¹⁶The Modern Confessional Novel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p.11.

The best-known novels of the early twentieth century clearly portray the identity problem in these terms: Stephen Dedalus in Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, discovers and preserves his personal identity despite the attempts of church, family, and friends to change it, and in Ulysses, he seeks to gain clearer self-knowledge; in Sons and Lovers, Paul Morel, barely able to arrest a "drift toward death", gropes toward a masculine identity which he had been denied by the smothering love of Mrs. Morel; Christopher Tietjens of Parade's End struggles to preserve his identity in a world tumbling insanely into chaos.

In the postwar period, the existential view contributed still another dimension to the problem of identity. Gindin sums up the state of the identity question in contemporary British novels in these terms:

Man is, today, even less sure of what he is and where he is headed than he apparently was fifty or a hundred years ago....The hero accepts the fact that he is, but wonders what kind and degree of adjectival postulate he can build upon his existence....The problem of identity indicates an existential attitude, a skepticism about ever knowing the essential nature of any person or thing. Man is a creature too limited, too unsure, to gain certainty of the essential nature of any of his various experiences, particularly when experience is received through individual consciousness. At the same time, man must live and make choices, must act on partial knowledge without the assurances of abstract sanction, must come to some terms with his own existence and the existences around him. The

limitations placed on man's knowledge and power, the puzzling search for identity and definition, and the necessity, in spite of all this, for some kind of human action or engagement, all contribute to the existential attitude common to most British writers.¹⁷

The existential influence, of course, comes from the writings of a group of French authors of whom Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus are the most important. In Camus's novel The Outsider, published in 1942, for example, the hero Meursault has come to believe that it makes little difference what choices a man may make, that man's individual actions have little significance, that man can only find himself in his feelings of the moment. When his employer asks if Meursault would like to be transferred from Algiers to Paris, instead of grasping, as expected, the opportunity to live in the great center of French culture, Meursault replies merely that he was prepared to go, but that he didn't really care. He goes on to report:

He then asked if a 'change of life', as he called it, didn't appeal to me, and I answered that one never changed one's real life; anyhow, one life was as good as another and my present one suited me quite well.¹⁸

¹⁷Gindin, pp.11-12.

¹⁸Trans. Stuart Gilbert (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), p.48.

After he is sentenced to death in a brutally unfair trial for murder, he seems to conclude that choices do matter. But any doubt he feels about his long-held view of life ends abruptly during a visit by the prison chaplain.

I'd been right, I was still right, I was always right. I'd passed my life in a certain way, and I might have passed it in a different way, if I'd felt like it. I'd acted thus, and I hadn't acted otherwise; I hadn't done x, whereas I had done y and z. And what did that mean? That, all the time, I'd been waiting for this present moment, for that dawn, tomorrow's or another day's which was to justify me. Nothing, nothing had the least importance.¹⁹

One postwar British novel that appears to deal with the search for identity in Gindin's terms is Angus Wilson's The Middle Age of Mrs. Eliot. In the beginning of the story Meg Eliot's identity is largely defined by her well-appointed home in a fashionable section of London--"the center of all the life she had made for herself."²⁰ But on an around-the-world trip with her husband, an internationally known corporation lawyer, she prepares to shed her old identity and to create a new one.

But flying through space like this, with the tattered fragments of her normal daily life torn from her by the furious gale of changing time and place, she felt herself without any of the magic protection that being Mrs. William Eliot of 102 Lord North Street gave to her, naked to meet the mysterious demands that would

¹⁹Ibid., p.118.

²⁰(Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), p.31.

be made upon her by this destination that was coming so rapidly towards her through the darkness. She needed all her powers to retain her identity for herself, let alone to preserve or to create a personality to meet a changed, unfamiliar outside world.²¹

Her thoughts prove to be a premonition of the great change in her life which comes about when her husband is killed while heroically trying to prevent an assassination at an Oriental airport. Her husband's death leaves her impoverished. As she painfully gropes toward a new identity, she soon learns that she is almost powerless to act without the support of her husband's reputation and wealth and that it is impossible to predict the consequences of any course of action. In a hotel room where she seeks temporary refuge,

the wallpaper, the pink, bevel-edged, modernistic mirror, and the furniture of shaded pink and silver began to give her a sense of anonymity....She was safe from the present desert of the London streets where, no longer Mrs. Eliot of Lord North Street pausing in her busy purpose to enjoy the human variety around her, she felt herself only unknown; a creature without place or purpose; ageing female of the past, everything to be despised. Above all she was still hidden from the future that sought to prise her out of the last fragments of her protective shell and expose her for whatever absurd and ill adapted creature she was henceforth to be labelled.²²

²¹Ibid., pp.63-64.

²²Ibid., p.164.

Eventually Meg gains a new faith in herself, a personal identity that will enable her to face the world and to act instead of merely being acted upon. Her newly-found self-confidence is limited, however, by awareness that her past actions had driven her husband almost to the breaking point and that she had caused two dear friends needless suffering and anguish.

Other contemporary British novels reveal the same interest in the question of identity. Almost all the major characters in Iris Murdoch's Flight from the Enchanter seek to establish and assert their identities against the soul-destroying magnetism of Mischa Fox. Sandy and the other girls of the Brodie set in Muriel Spark's The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie similarly struggle to find an identity against the seductive appeal of their overbearing schoolmistress. Smith in Alan Sillitoe's The Loneliness of a Long-Distance Runner discovers in his loneliness and joy of living the reality of his being as he learns to relate himself to his late father and others of the "out-law" class. In Sillitoe's short story "Uncle Ernest", the major character moves from a "ghost"-like existence--after being imprisoned for giving away his Identity Card--to a purposeful life when he finds his identity as "uncle" to two neglected young girls.

It will be shown that Golding shares the existential interest in the identity question and has been influenced by existential thinking. Golding reveals that, paradoxically, the greatest

barrier to the creation of an adequate personal identity is man's proclivity toward self; his pride is self-delusion because it is based on ignorance, often wilful, of the irrational side of man's nature. Often Golding's protagonists become reconciled to the dark side of their natures and establish their identities in epiphanies or series of epiphanies in which they learn to identify with something beyond themselves. These epiphanies generally occur when the chief characters are isolated from society and unable to avoid confronting themselves in moments of great personal crisis. In Lord of the Flies an initial state of innocent unconcern about personal identity is disturbed by external events which bring knowledge of the dark side of man's being. The protagonist finds himself perplexingly ready to respond in irrational ways to these events.

What emerges, however, is the conviction that men can grow, that choices matter, that man is both determined and self-determining.

Before the validities of these statements can be established by reference to Lord of the Flies, however, it may be well to define precisely the term identity. Any serious reading on the subject will soon reveal that different authors use the word in a wide variety of ways. For the purpose of this thesis, therefore, a definition has been sought from among reputable psychologists who have done considerable research on identity in recent years.

The definition chosen is that of Abraham H. Maslow whose Toward a Psychology of Being²³ is one of the most influential contemporary works on the subject and has been recently revised.

"Ultimately," says Professor Maslow, "the search for identity is, in essence, the search for one's intrinsic authentic values. Especially is this clear when we remember that improved self-knowledge (and clarity of one's values) is also coincident with improved knowledge of others and of reality in general (and clarity of their values).

Professor Maslow believes that the search for identity is a natural inner pressure in the same sense that an acorn displays pressure toward being an oak tree.

The human being...has within him a pressure toward unity of personality, toward spontaneous expressiveness, toward full individuality and identity, toward seeing the truth rather than being blind, toward being creative, toward being good, and a lot else. That is, the human being is so constructed that he presses toward what most people would call good values, toward serenity, kindness, courage, honesty, love, unselfishness, and goodness.

And what is the process by which one searches for his identity?

Maslow explains:

To the extent that growth consists in peeling away inhibitions and constraints and then permitting the person to "be himself", to emit behavior - "radiantly", as it were - rather than to repeat it, to allow his inner nature to express itself, to this extent the behavior of self-actualizers is unlearned, created and released rather than acquired, expressive rather than coping.

²³Second edition (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968).

But the search for identity is only partly an uncovering and acceptance of what is "there" already. Maslow further explains that the search also involves

a creation of the person himself. Life is a continual series of choices for the individual in which a main determinant of choice is the person as he already is (including his goals for himself, his courage or fear, his feeling of responsibility, his ego-strength or "will power," etc.) We can no longer think of the person as "fully determined" where this phrase implies "determined only by forces external to the person." The person, insofar as he is a real person, is "his own project" and makes himself.²⁴

According to Maslow, the only people who are earnestly involved in a search for identity are those he calls "self-actualizers."

The self-actualizing individual, by definition gratified in his basic needs, is far less dependent, far less beholden, far more autonomous and self-directed. Far from needing other people, growth-motivated people may actually be hampered by them....

Such people become far more self-sufficient and self-contained. The determinants which govern them are now primarily inner ones, rather than social or environmental. They are the laws of their own inner nature, their potentialities and capacities, their talents, their latent resources, their creative impulses, their needs to know themselves and to become more and more integrated and unified, more and more aware of what they really are, of what they really want, of what their call or vocation or fate is to be.

²⁴Ibid., pp.177,160,155,39,193.

Self-actualizers find their identities in a series of peak-experiences. Maslow defines a peak-experience

as an episode, or a spurt in which the powers of the person come together in a particularly efficient and intensely enjoyable way, and in which he is more integrated and less split, more open for experience, more idiosyncratic, more perfectly expressive or spontaneous, or fully functioning, more creative, more humorous, more ego-transcending, more independent of his lower needs, etc. He becomes in these episodes more truly himself, more perfectly actualizing his potentialities, closer to the core of his Being, more fully human.²⁵

The following chapters will show that of the major characters in Lord of the Flies only Simon completes his search for identity in Maslow's terms. The only other character engaged in a search for identity is Ralph, but he fails to realize his self. Neither Piggy nor Jack can be said to be searching for their identities. Jack, in fact, suffers a loss of identity; Piggy neither loses nor gains recognition of self.

²⁵Ibid., pp.34-5,97.

CHAPTER II

SIMON'S ATTAINMENT OF IDENTITY

In defining his terms, Richard Dewall in The Vision of Tragedy¹ writes:

The tragic vision is primal, or primitive, in that it calls up out of the depths the first (and last) of all questions, the question of existence: What does it mean to be? It recalls the original terror, harking back to a world that antedates conceptions of philosophy, the consolations of later religions, and whatever constructions the human mind has devised to persuade itself that the universe is secure. It recalls the original unreason, the terror of the irrational. It sees man as questioner, naked, unaccommodated, alone, facing mysterious, demonic forces in his own nature and outside, and the irreducible facts of suffering and death.

This comment, though expounded in the author's discussion of Oedipus the King, Doctor Faustus, and King Lear, seems hardly less appropriate for Golding's Lord of the Flies in its revelation of the depths reached by Simon in exploring the heart of his being. Simon is the only character in the novel to fit Maslow's definition of a self-actualizer, the only one to have repeated peak-experiences in Maslow's terms. Consideration in this chapter will be given, therefore, to the search for identity of the only character in the novel who is successful in the search; who learns what it means to be.

The island setting appears to give the children of the novel complete freedom to discover themselves and each other.

¹(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 4-5.

While being evacuated from Britain about to be destroyed in a nuclear assault, a plane-load of schoolboys is shot down and marooned on a desert island of the tropics. The crash kills the plane-crew and supervisors and so removes all adult authority. At the same time, a provident nature frees the boys from the tyranny of a harsh existence. It is their prerogative to be and do whatever they like, to "have fun", so it seems, until they are rescued.

At first they establish a sensible program to ensure that simple amenities of a human community are provided, but a dark side of their natures gradually reveals itself, and presently what seems to be a fairly stable society begins to break up. A certain uneasiness present from the beginning becomes overt fear and finally terror, as a new order based on physical force and sadistic authority replaces the egalitarian society established at the beginning. It becomes apparent that the suffering and the terror arise from the failure of the boys to know themselves. To a great extent, this failure is wilfull; only two of the boys--Simon and Ralph--can be said to be seeking their identities to a greater or less degree. Simon, the most intuitively aware of all the boys, achieves the most success in his quest, only to be murdered because the terror-stricken boys cannot receive his insights.

At first on the island the older boys respond as though they hold the same dependent status they knew at home. Their

identities, for a time, remain pretty much what they had been. Ralph expects that his father will rescue them when he "gets leave", that is, after they finish having fun. He only begins to abandon this unrealistic view when the boys' first attempt to build a signal fire results in the devastation of the forest on one side of the mountain and in the death of one of the "littluns". The comfortable dependent status that supported their limited identities gives way to either a crucial self-appraising search for full identities viable in a completely different social setting where they are forced to depend upon their personal resources for their very existence, or to a self-destroying attempt to deny any personal identity whatsoever out of sheer terror.

This terror is revealed on the first day when a "littlun's" seemingly inconsequential complaint of a nightmare momentarily shakes the assembly of boys. Mention of the "snake-thing" and the "beastie" opens the boys to the whole nightmare world of ghosts, ogres, and bogiemen, and the childish equivalent of mankind's irrational fear of the dark unknown, both in the external world and within man himself. From this point on, each boy's success in attaining a complete identity will depend upon his recognition of that tendency within him to allow panic to overthrow his sense of reality. More than that, of course, the boys' very survival, both as a group and as individuals, depends upon this recognition. When the littlun first mentions the "beastie", Ralph does not understand

the serious implications of the nightly terror and tries to explain it away as just a bad dream. Others, though, succumb to the belief that the "beastie" may be real. Ralph's failure to explain away the "beastie" threatens to upset the order of the assembly, and he finds himself shouting angrily over and over, "But there isn't a beast."

Later when the boys set a signal fire and it gets out of control, killing one of the littluns, the "snake-thing" gains added significance. As the creepers writhe in flames, the boys cry out: "Snakes! Snakes! Look at the snakes!" The horror formerly haunting the dream world of troubled sleep now appears to dominate the boys' real world of wide-awake consciousness.² The boys attempt in the period after the fire on the mountain to repress all mention of the beast. Their aim is to keep the beast penned in the dark recesses of the mind in hopes that the daylight at least will be free from terror.

Only one boy on the island is able to observe with a certain detachment all that is happening both to the other boys and to himself. In this respect, Simon shows that he has already established a firmer identity than any of the other boys and meets Maslow's definition of the self-actualizer. Because Simon's

²William Golding, Lord of the Flies (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), pp.32-45.

safety needs are not as great as the others', he can, in Maslow's terms,

take a non-valuing, non-judging, non-interfering, non-condemning attitude toward others, a desirelessness, a 'choiceless awareness'. This permits much clearer and more insightful perception of what is there.³

Simon appears to sense that terror can be controlled only if it is brought to light and examined. Only Simon keeps insisting on seeing this terror for what it is. For this reason Simon shows intent interest when Jack tries to explain how it feels to hunt:

'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.'

Simon's desire to look closely into the dark side of man's nature is also revealed earlier in the same conversation. When Ralph recounts to Jack how the littluns talk and scream at night, Simon comments:

'As if...the beastie, the beastie or the snake-thing, was real. Remember?'

The two older boys flinched when they heard the shameful syllable. Snakes were not mentioned now, were not mentionable.⁴

³Maslow, pp.40-41.

⁴Lord of the Flies, pp.51,50.

The last passage at the end of Chapter Three is an important one. On first reading, the passage may not reveal much more than that Simon is a gentle kind person, that he likes to be alone on occasion, that he is not afraid of the dark, and that he has a remarkable curiosity concerning nature. These characteristics, important as they are to the reader's understanding of Simon, do not seem to suggest that he undergoes much of a search for identity or that he develops any more insight concerning his self than any of the others concerning each of theirs. In fact, however, the passage is a key one in Simon's discovery of his identity. It is in Maslow's sense a peak-experience.

Up to this point in the novel, Simon has not made much of an impact on the reader's attention. Ralph has occupied most of the limelight as chief; and the rest is largely shared between Jack and Piggy. Even on the exploration, Simon is so much in the shadow of Ralph and Jack that the reader has to remind himself continually that Simon is there. In the assemblies Simon has had little or nothing to say. Yet after Simon's communion with nature in Chapter Three, he emerges more and more into the center of events. Though in the eyes of the other boys Simon makes a fool of himself, the reader can see consistency in his actions and remarks. Simon begins to speak in assemblies and what he says shocks the other boys, but taken altogether his words and actions denote the consistent point

of view of one who is beginning to know himself and to understand what is going on around him. It would seem, then, that, despite the apparent irrelevance of a mere description of nature as viewed by a small boy, the passage in Chapter Three is somehow a turning-point in Simon's finding his identity. It can also be concluded that, in order to find the meaning in relation to the identity theme, one must look beyond a mere literal reading of the passage.

One clue to the meaning of the passage is provided in the opening sentences; Simon had followed Jack and Ralph when they went to look at the mountain. It is clear that Simon "follows" Ralph in his concern for fire, rescue, and shelters. His "intent" interest in Jack's attempt to describe his feeling of being hunted in the jungle indicates that he "follows" Jack part way too. But he "follows" only to an extent and then pursues his own way. Perceiving and accepting as he does both Ralph and Jack's point of view, Simon nonetheless needs to meditate alone and develop his own point of view. In this desire he again reveals the kind of progress he has made in establishing his identity, for, as Maslow states,

Frequently the problems and the conflicts of the growth-motivated person are solved by himself by turning inward in a meditative way, i.e. self-searching, rather than seeking for help from someone....In the theory of personality improvement, a place must be reserved for self-improvement and self-searching, contemplation and meditation. In the later stages of growth the person is essentially alone and can rely only upon himself.⁵

⁵Ibid., p.53; Maslow, p.38.

It is also significant that he stands for a moment "frowning down at a pile of sand on the beach where somebody had been trying to build a little house or hut."⁶ Why does he frown? Simon and Ralph had just been trying to build a shelter, and Simon was the only one who would mention the real reason for the shelters--to wall out the terror of the unknown. Their attempts to build shelters were largely failures because none of the boys could make the sustained effort required although all apparently understood the need. Simon frowns, then, because the tumbledown shelters are symptoms of something fundamentally wrong on the island that he needs to meditate deeply about. The little huts of sand also remind Simon of his own little shelter in the jungle. It is not the rickety place the boys had attempted to erect on the beach--the place of loud snores, nightmares and noisy restlessness, but a natural one where, as it will be shown, Simon comes to grips with his troubled spirit.

Simon then walks into the forest "with an air of purpose." What is reflected to his consciousness as he moves through the jungle is a vision of his self--a vision which is not finally clarified until the Lord of the Flies scene. Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor offer some perceptive comments on how Simon's consciousness functions in this key passage.

⁶Lord of the Flies, p.53.

Simon is the first child to know, to register fully, what the island and its jungle are like in themselves. The qualities that were present in Ralph's daydreaming at the finding of the conch, but have subsequently been overlaid by his need to think and lead, are fully realized in Simon. On the other hand, in solitary communion with nature, he taps Jack's sensitivity to the creepy as well as the beautiful. But he is outside the hunter mentality, outside even himself. He exists in terms of his sensitivity to what is outside him. This allows him to know comprehensively. He not only registers the heat, the urgency, the riot, the dampness and decay; he also registers the cool and mysterious submergence of the forest in darkness, the pure beauty and fragrance of starlight and nightflower, the peace. Finally he not only registers both, but accepts them equally, as two parts of the same reality. It is these qualities of acceptance and inclusion that give us the "Simon-ness" of Simon.⁷

The last three paragraphs of Chapter Three, examined carefully, can be seen to reflect in considerable detail the two sides that together make up Simon's nature--indeed, the nature of mankind. Simon here learns to understand and accept with all their implications the emotional and spiritual sides of his nature. A cluster of images from the natural surroundings symbolize and contrast each of these sides of human nature. It is in these image-clusters that the full value of the passage in all its beauty and economy can be seen. A careful examination of them will reveal why Simon is able to emerge from his experience as one who, to a considerable extent, has found himself.

⁷William Golding: A Critical Study (London: Faber and Faber), pp.30-31.

Since the emotional side of man develops first and is fundamental to the spiritual side, it is appropriate that the images which characterize this side be presented first. The basic images here all relate to the enormous fecundity of nature. There is the "booming of a million bees", the rapid climber that "flaunted red and yellow sprays right to the top", the open space where creepers had woven a "great mat", fruit and flower growing "together on the same tree". It is the hot-house atmosphere of intense heat and light where everything in nature bursts forth, cries out, overflows. The mood is one of great urgency: the colors are "riotous"; life goes on "clamorously"; there are "endless outstretched hands", the "roar" of the bees, the "crying" of the gulls, the "rapid" climber, again. All of these images portray unrestrained passion. The colours, as it was noted, are riotous: the climber "flaunted" its red and yellow flowers, the butterflies are "gaudy", the birds are "bright" and "fantastic". Despite the intensity, it is nonetheless a life of surfaces and half-awareness. It is only on the "canopy" of the jungle where life goes on "clamorously" or in the open space where "a patch of rock (comes) close to the surface" and where dark aromatic bushes make it "a bowl of heat and light". Everything there is is there to be seen or heard, indeed, demands attention. Even the butterflies, which elsewhere may provide an image of delicate beauty and innocent spontaneous movement, here are linked to the compulsive passionate atmosphere by their "gaudy" colors and by the fact that they dance "round each other in

the hot air." The "pair" of them are caught in the grip of a passion that they can neither resist nor want to resist.

However appealing the bright color and movement and excitement may be to Simon, it must be noted that it is a "critical" ear he cocks at the sounds of the island that reflect the life of emotions: "the sounds of bright fantastic birds, the bee-sounds, even the crying of the gulls." He does not give way to his feelings. Aware that it will be something he will always have to resist, Simon accepts as a part of his nature the temptation reflected in his natural surroundings to live a life of passionate intensity.

Simon can resist the life of mere surfaces, of half awareness because he intuitively seeks the depths--symbolically the life of the spirit. Leaving the acres of fruit trees, Simon follows a "just perceptible path" into the depths of the jungle. Here in contrast to the sweaty fecundity in the full light and heat of the sun, the ways are dim under the protective "dark canopy". Coming directly from the brilliant flowers of the fruit trees that provided pasture for a million booming bees, the pale flowers within the high jungle are "unexpected". After a few "furtive" movements in the clearing, Simon worms his way into the great mat of creepers at the edge of the clearing. There, within the dark tangle of growth, Simon enters the soul of his being to find himself. The creepers and bushes close around him and form a "little cabin"--his spiritual self, symbolically.

Here he is "utterly alone...secure in the middle...screened off from the open space by a few leaves." Simon gains a feeling of security and spiritual peace of mind.

As evening advances, the sounds that denote the feverish driven life of emotion, the fantastic bird calls, the bee-sounds, and the cries of the gulls, die down, and Simon senses the distant sounds that seem to speak to him as from the depths of his being. "The deep sea breaking miles away on the reef made an undertone less perceptible than the susurrations of the blood." The qualities of nature that reflect his spiritual being become more and more apparent. Simon's shelter, always dim and cool in comparison with the open space, grows still darker and cooler. Movement ceases, and the deep hush that pervades the scene signifies a profound spiritual peace. Simon accepts all the qualities of the night jungle including the dark. The final passage in the chapter reveals in nature Simon's feelings of love and brotherhood with all mankind. It may be one of the most subtle and beautiful short descriptions of nature suggestive of loving ever to have been written in English prose.

The candle-buds stirred. Their green sepals drew back a little and the white tips of the flowers rose delicately to meet the open air.

Now the sunlight had lifted clear of the open space and withdrawn from the sky. Darkness poured out, submerging the ways between the trees till they were dim and strange as the bottom of the sea. The candle-buds opened their wide white flowers glimmering under the

light that pricked down from the first stars. Their scent spilled out into the air and took possession of the island.⁸

The significance can perhaps be seen more clearly by noting how well Maslow's description of one facet of a peak-experience applies to the passage.

All peak-experiences may be fruitfully understood as completion-of-the-act...or as...closure, or...complete orgasm, or as total discharge, catharsis, culmination, climax, consummation, emptying or finishing....

How does this bear on identity? Probably the authentic person is himself complete or final in some sense; he certainly perceives it in the world. It may turn out that only peakers can achieve full identity.⁹

One other facet of the peak-experience also bears on Simon's experience, and once again it is well to quote Maslow directly:

As (the person in a peak experience) gets to be more able to fuse with the world, with what was formerly not-self, e.g....the astronomer is "out there" with the stars (rather than a separateness peering across the abyss at another separateness through a telescopic keyhole).

That is, the greatest attainment of identity, autonomy or selfhood is itself simultaneously a transcending of itself, a giving beyond and above selfhood. The person can then become relatively egoless. This meaning can be communicated easily enough, I think, by calling it the total loss of that self-consciousness or self-awareness or self-observation which is normally with us.¹⁰

⁸Lord of the Flies, pp.54-55.

⁹Maslow, p.111.

¹⁰Ibid., p.105.

Simon loses himself in the final vision of love as he identifies with all the various elements of nature. Because his acceptance of everything in nature and in himself is intuitive, he gains a deep spiritual peace of mind. He does not suffer the prolonged agony of self-examination Ralph does or the anguished attempts to repress the dark terror in his nature Piggy does. Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor are therefore quite correct in noting that it is "acceptance and inclusion that give us the Simon-ness of Simon."¹¹

It is possible for the reader, in some respects, to compare Simon's view of the world with D.H. Lawrence's. According to Lawrence, everything, every person, and every creature is separate and individual, and as long as this "otherness" is respected there can be a creative relationship between persons and between persons and things. "The rapid climber", the "gaudy butterflies", and particularly the candle-buds have, in Lawrence's terms, a strong "thereness" or "otherness" and establish themselves as existences in their own right. Simon's perception of their separate identities puts him in relation with himself because he is able by analogy to perceive and accept the various separate facets of his own identity and see them in relation one to the other. Simon's point of view can perhaps be seen more clearly by referring to Simon's first look at the candle-buds at the

¹¹Cf. p. 32.

end of Chapter One. Here Simon's view is seen in contrast to Jack's and Ralph's. Simon enjoys the candle-buds for just being what they are. Jack, in slashing at one of them with his knife, violates its separate selfhood and assumes the things of nature to be merely instruments for the expression of himself. Ralph, too, fails to acknowledge the independent existence of the candle-buds by considering only how they might be useful to him: "You can't light them".¹² Simon's attitude is, of course, more clearly revealed in Chapter Three as he observes them opening "their wide white flowers."

Perhaps most important of all, though, the passage in Chapter Three reveals Simon's acceptance of the dark. As the approaching evening softens the raucous sounds, Simon drops the screen of leaves back into place. There he sits waiting the approach of the dark.

The slope of the bars of honey-coloured sunlight decreased; they slid up the bushes, passed over the green candle-like buds, moved up towards the canopy, and darkness thickened under the trees....Now the sunlight had lifted clear of the open space and withdrawn from the sky. Darkness poured out, submerging the ways between the trees till they were dim and strange as the bottom of the sea.

In accepting the dark, Simon is accepting one of the basic rhythms of life, the rhythm of the day. Simon's acceptance of darkness, also, is emphasized by contrast with the other boys' attempted denial of it.

¹²Lord of the Flies, p.30.

In the opening of Chapter Four, the boys are seen accepting only half the rhythm of the day, "the slow swing from dawn to quick dusk." The coming of the dark was a time of menace when "the shelters were full of restlessness."¹³ Darkness has great symbolic potency for Golding, just as it has for Lawrence. Dorothy Van Ghent comments on the symbolic value of darkness in Lawrence, and a remark such as the following seems equally applicable to Golding:

Darkness is half of the rhythm of the day, the darkness of unconsciousness is half of the rhythm of the mind, and the darkness of death is half of the rhythm of life. Denial of this phase of the universal tide is the great sin, the sin committed by modern economy and modern rationalism. In acceptance of the dark, man is renewed to himself and to light, to consciousness, to reason, to brotherhood. But by refusal to accept that half of the rhythm, he becomes impotent, his reason becomes destructive, and he loses the sense of the independence of others which is essential to brotherhood.¹⁴

Because Simon can accept the darkness in Chapter Three, he accepts also the darkness of unconsciousness, for his sleep is not troubled as the other boys' is; in accepting his fate, as will be seen in confronting the Lord of the Flies, he accepts the darkness of death.

Simon's acceptance of the various elements of his natural surroundings is tantamount to the acceptance of the corresponding elements of his own being, and, by extension, the acceptance of other persons as well. Maslow comments on this facet of the peak experience.

¹³Ibid., pp.55-56.

¹⁴The English Novel: Form and Function (New York: Harper and Row, 1961) pp.257-58.

As the essential Being of the world is perceived by the person, so also does he concurrently come closer to his own Being (to his own perfection, of being more perfectly himself). This interaction effect seems to be in both directions, for as he comes closer to his own Being or perfection for any reasons, this thereby enables him more easily to see B-values in the world. As he becomes more unified, he tends to be able to see more unity in the world.¹⁵

Simon's acceptance of all elements of himself, natural things, and other people, then, gives him a vision of self. By following this vision in all his actions, Simon, in the ensuing chapters, discovers his complete identity before his death. His acceptance of the dark means he can act while the others are overcome with terror. Ralph is astonished that he should be "wandering about in the forest at night."¹⁶ After the beast has been discovered, Bill is equally incredulous that Simon would volunteer to carry a message across the island long after dark.

It was earlier noted that after Simon's pilgrimage to his natural shrine, he appears transformed and shocks the other boys by what he says and does. It seems clear that Simon's vision of self in Chapter Three includes the role he conceives for himself--to communicate to others what he has intuitively learned about man's irrational fear. He had earlier been a silent observer during the discussion of the "beastie". He is, however, the only boy to break

¹⁵Maslow, p.95.

¹⁶Lord of the Flies, p.81.

the taboo against using the term. Now in his peak-experience he overcomes his fears by confronting the dark, the loneliness and the terror of a ravenous natural surrounding. His own conquest of irrational fear can be explained in Maslow's terms:

One aspect of the peak-experience is a complete, though momentary, loss of fear, anxiety, inhibition, defense and control, a giving up of renunciations, delay and restraint. The fear of disintegration and dissolution, the fear of being overwhelmed by the "instincts", the fear of death and of insanity, the fear of giving in to unbridled pleasure and emotion, all tend to disappear or go into abeyance for the time being. This too implies a greater openness of perception since fear distorts....

We may therefore expect to find a certain "permeability" in people who have such experiences commonly, a closeness and openness to the unconscious, and a relative lack of fear of it.¹⁷

Unfortunately, Simon has not formulated what he "knows" about fear into the language of thought. Whereas Ralph's main problem is to persuade, Simon's problem is to be able to articulate his vision. He cannot achieve self-realization until this problem is solved because the whole inner pressure of his being from this point on is toward an outward expression of his insight that would tear away the repressions of the other boys and allow them to conquer their fears in a peak experience like his own. Ironically and tragically, when he does learn to articulate and therefore reaches full

¹⁷Maslow, pp.94-95.

identity, he is killed before he is given a chance to reveal that there is nothing to fear but fear itself.

Simon's problem is first brought to light in Chapter Five. As Ralph's carefully planned assembly threatens to break up on the issue of the beast, Simon feels compelled to communicate the insight he has gained.

Simon was close to him, laying hands on the conch. Simon felt a perilous necessity to speak; but to speak in assembly was a terrible thing to him.

'Maybe', he said hesitantly, 'maybe there is a beast.'

The assembly cried out savagely and Ralph stood up in amazement.

'You, Simon? You believe in this?'

'I don't know,' said Simon. His heartbeats were choking him. 'But...'

The storm broke.

'Sit down!'

'Shut up!'

'Take the conch!'

'Sod you!'

'Shut up!'

Ralph shouted.

'Hear him! He's got the conch!'

'What I mean is...maybe it's only us.'

'Nuts!'

That was from Piggy, shocked out of decorum. Simon went on.

'We could be sort of...'

Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express mankind's essential illness. Inspiration came to him.

'What's the dirtiest thing there is?'

As an answer Jack dropped into the uncomprehending silence that followed it the one crude expressive syllable. Release was like an orgasm....The hunters were screaming with delight.

Simon's effort fell about him in ruins; the laughter beat him cruelly and he shrank away defenceless to his seat.¹⁸

¹⁸Lord of the Flies, p.85.

Later, the same night as the assembly, an event occurs that renders Simon's chosen role all the more urgent and at the same time more difficult. In an air battle fought ten miles above the island, a plane is shot down and the pilot, already dead, drops in a parachute, lands on the mountain and is dragged by the wind-blown parachute up to the top of the mountain. There the position of the body in the rocks and the tangled lines of the parachute allow either the head to drop between the knees or the figure to be jerked up to a sitting position as the fitful wind decrees. The flapping of the parachute and the sight of the horrible face peering over the rock in the early morning terrifies Sammeric who are tending the fire. They scramble away and flee down the mountainside to tell Ralph and the others in the first shelter.

When Ralph and the boys hear the twins' report of a "beast" and overcome their initial terror, they begin a search for it. Simon, however, still cannot accept the reality of a slow-moving mountain-dwelling beast with claws that leave no tracks. He does not give way to the prevailing feeling of horror but clings to his previous conviction that the beast is merely a contorted image springing from man's passionate refusal to examine the dark side of his own being.

However Simon thought of the beast, there arose before his inward sight the picture of a human at once heroic and sick.

Simon, in this crisis, tries to calm Ralph. "I don't believe in the beast," he says to him. Simon knows that Ralph is a

competent leader; he knows too that the greatest danger is that Ralph, not having examined his inner self, may give way to panic or give up in despair. Simon therefore seeks to reassure Ralph on what he knows is Ralph's main concern. He tells him, "You'll get back to where you came from."¹⁹

Though Simon's responses are not given explicitly, it seems likely that Simon would find confirmation in his concern for Ralph's unexamined self when the searchers decide to combine hunting the beast with a little hunting of pig. It is the first time that either Ralph or Simon have entered Jack's world of hunting. A boar is flushed out and charges after the boys. Ralph aims with his spear and hits the boar's snout. He is "full of fright and apprehension and pride" and begins to feel that "hunting is good." Simon might well question whether Ralph, whose continued leadership is the only hope for a semblance of order on the island, may give way at critical moments to those impulses within him that could make him a ruthless fanatic of the hunt like Jack. The question looms larger still when Ralph joins in a mock hunt with Robert as the pig. In the ritual chant and dance Robert begins to scream in real pain, and Ralph succumbs to the uncontrolled passion of the moment:

Ralph was too fighting to get near, to get a handful of that brown, vulnerable flesh. The desire to squeeze and hurt was over-mastering.²⁰

¹⁹Ibid., pp.99-100;106.

²⁰Ibid., pp.108-09.

It would be increasingly clear to Simon that boys capable of such a frenzy could in the right circumstances kill and that Ralph is not one who would escape the murderous urge.

Because Simon volunteers to cross the island in the growing dark to tell Piggy of the delay in completing the search, he is not present when Jack, Roger, and Ralph see on the mountain "something like a great ape...a thing that bowed."²¹ To the three boys whose hold on reality has been loosened by tiredness, dark, fear, and the enervating clash of hostile personalities, the figure on the mountain is the beast of their nightmares. Absent from that encounter is Simon, the one boy on the island who has accepted the darkness, who has a firm conviction that the beast has arisen from the dark terror within man himself, and who knows that the only way to control that terror is to confront and examine closely the thing that is feared. Simon's act of bringing news of the search to Piggy was necessary to prevent the poison of terror from spreading. Unfortunately, his delay in getting to the mountaintop allows the poison to break out anew--with fatal consequences.

This delay, of course, does not mean that Simon fails in his role or that he suffers some loss of identity as a result. He may well have felt that in allowing the boys to continue up the mountain

²¹Ibid., p.118.

without him he is allowing them to discover the truth for themselves. Unfortunately their fevered imaginations prevent them from seeing the truth.

Back on the beach another old poison breaks out anew. The "rising antagonism",²² which had become fever-hot after Simon had left the search, erupts again when Jack attempts to overthrow Ralph as chief and usurp his position, but Jack finds no open support in his challenge and walks out of the assembly in defeat.

With Jack absent and the other leaders dejected and devoid of ideas, it would seem that Simon, as the only one with a clear vision of what must be done, would have found suitable occasion for sharing his insight. Even though Jack and Ralph had reported similar signs of the beast to those reported by Samneric, Simon never wavers in his view that the beast is no external being but emanates from the dark center of man himself. He never wavers either in his determination to lead the others to discover this truth themselves. Unfortunately, Simon still has not discovered how to articulate his view, even to himself, since it is intuitive rather than conscious. Though Jack is not there to make a crude joke of his efforts, he is still held in disgrace by the assembly for his previous attempt. He also still suffers from "that dreadful feeling of the personality."

For a while they sat in depressed silence. Then Simon stood up and took the conch from Piggy, who

²²Ibid., p.113.

was so astonished that he remained on his feet. Ralph looked up at Simon.

'Simon? What is it this time?'

A half-sound of jeering ran round the circle and Simon shrank from it.

'I thought there might be something to do. Something we--'

Again the pressure of the assembly took his voice away. He sought for help and sympathy and chose Piggy. He turned half towards him, clutching the conch to his brown chest.

'I think we ought to climb the mountain.'

The circle shivered with dread. Simon broke off and turned to Piggy who was looking at him with an expression of derisive incomprehension.

'What's the good of climbing up to this here beast when Ralph and the other two couldn't do nothing?'

Simon whispered his answer.

'What else is there to do?'

His speech made, he allowed Piggy to lift the conch out of his hands. Then he retired and sat as far away from the others as possible.²³

In an open debate, Simon's intuitive knowledge is a poor rival for Piggy's logic. Once more, Simon appears defeated.

Had Simon accepted defeat, however, he would have lost his role and a good deal of his self-concept as well. Again Simon is thrown back on his own resources with no support from anyone. Now with Ralph and Piggy reduced to impotence, with the group dangerously split between rival factions, with terror rampant on the island, with no fire on the mountain-top, and with none of these basic problems really recognized, let alone grappled with, Simon slips away to consider "what else there is to do."

²³Ibid., pp.122-23.

What Simon observes from his little place in the jungle convinces him that the reign of terror on the island has already begun. Now joined by the hunters who had all defected from Ralph's ranks, Jack has found a herd of pigs and selected the largest sow as their prey. At the end of a bloody chase into the afternoon the sow finally staggers and falls in the open space separated only by a screen of leaves from Simon's view.

When Simon arrived earlier at his place, little had changed from his previous visit except that the atmosphere was now more ominous. The butterflies still danced in the open space, but the dance was now described as "unending", even more compulsive than before, the oppressive heat threatened, and the arrow of the sun fell on Simon as he knelt and he may have been subconsciously aware that he was marked for sacrifice by the great progenitor of the clamorous life. "There was no avoiding the sun"²⁴; it had even violated the hidden sanctuary of his spirit. As Simon sees from his covert the final act in the killing of the sow, the symbolic meaning of the open space and everything that Simon has seen there becomes clear. It is appropriate that the killing takes place there, "where bright flowers grew and the butterflies danced round each other and the air was hot and still." The killing of the sow is portrayed as an act of unrestrained passion. The hunters are

²⁴Ibid., pp.126-27. Earlier the same day, Jack blew the conch "as though he were serenading the rising sun" (p.119). The imagery thus suggests that Simon is a sacrifice to the sun god--here the god of the passionate side of man's nature.

"wedded to her in lust"; Roger's spearthrust is presented as a sexual act reaching a climax when "the sow collapsed under them and they were heavy and fulfilled upon her." Meanwhile..."the butterflies still danced, preoccupied in the centre of the clearing."²⁵ Both boys and butterflies are caught in the net of a passion which they are powerless to resist. The gross sexual imagery of this passage presents a clear contrast to the beautiful delicate love imagery associated earlier with Simon's little place.

Simon's previous awareness of the passionate life and the threat it holds for all mankind is given reality here more forcefully than in the various crises that have shaken the fragile social order on the island, such as the quarrel over the fire going out when "passions beat about Simon on the mountain-top with awful wings."²⁶

After the killing of the sow, the boys attempt to propitiate the beast by offering the sow's head stuck on the end of a sharpened stick in the small clearing. Their gift presented, the boys withdraw. The identification of the blood-streaked boys with the gaudy butterflies is stressed when the butterflies also "desert the open space." Simon is left alone with the Lord of the Flies.

While the two parts of the Lord of the Flies scene depict Simon locked in an all-important internal struggle with his personal integrity at stake, a different scene, juxtaposed between the two

²⁵Ibid., pp.126,129.

²⁶Ibid., p.68.

parts, depicts Ralph and Piggy lapsed into impotent despair as they watch Jack and two of the hunters, all painted, steal fire. Ralph and Piggy then suffer a critical loss of personal integrity as they surrender to Jack's invitation to the feast. The surrender seems all the more surprising in view of their having just come to the conclusion that Jack is the reason why things are breaking up. Simon, who had examined his own nature, had come to quite a different conclusion. Ralph and Piggy's acceptance of Jack's invitation is a very important turning point because they thus deliver themselves into Jack's hands. Once having eaten Jack's meat, Ralph will find it extremely difficult to assert himself against Jack. The circle is therefore closed to Simon, the only boy on the island who does not participate in the feast. There is now almost no chance that Simon can obtain any kind of sympathetic hearing.

Obviously the way of surrender is open to Simon as well. Outwardly it might seem easier for Simon to join Jack's feast than it is for Ralph and Piggy, for Simon is a former member of the choir and therefore technically a hunter, whereas neither Ralph nor Piggy were members. Furthermore, Simon does not have an established position to uphold in opposition to Jack as both Ralph and Piggy have. There are, however, compelling reasons why Simon forsakes neither the knowledge he has gained nor the role he has chosen. Neither would he deny what he is.

At the beginning of the first part of the Lord of the Flies scene, the reader learns that Simon's sensitive mind has reacted in horror to the killing, paunching, and decapitation of the sow. Though the terrible spectacle, coupled with the heat and thirst, has produced the hallucination of the Lord of the Flies, Simon had been prepared for the killing and fully understood what it meant-- that the boys have forsaken the conch of Piggy and Ralph, representing order and democracy, for the knife and spear of Jack and Roger, representing an order founded on blood-lust, cruelty, and terror.

One of the most famous passages in modern fiction, the Lord of the Flies scene is, of course, central to the meaning of the whole novel, and, more to the point here, it is central to Simon's search for identity. The scene verifies everything that Simon has so far learned about the role he has chosen, about the others, and about himself. In this one scene Simon is subjected to all the doubts about who he is and what he is to become that generally characterize the period of adolescence for most people; yet Simon is only ten or eleven years old. In the open space he meets the Lord of the Flies and is subjected to social pressure, fear of loneliness, fear of the unknown, physical fear, and finally fear of death; yet like Christ facing the temptations in the wilderness or like the Thomas Becket of Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral, he meets the tempter and emerges stronger than ever in his resolution to fulfill his role and finally reach his complete identity by

living up to his ideal self, even in the face of death. More specifically, he strengthens his will to do what he now knows must be done alone--to climb the mountain and discover exactly what it is that so terrified the five boys who had seen it. His intuitive knowledge that the beast is no external creature will thus be rooted in concrete evidence. In his earlier communion with nature, nothing of what he had learned was rendered articulate; everything was intuitive. Partly for this reason he was unable to convey his vision of man in intelligible terms to the other boys. By means of the Lord of the Flies, Simon is able to think out in articulate and concrete terms what he knew previously only by intuition.

The voice of Lord of the Flies he recognizes as coming from within him. The head itself represents the force that erected it, the uglier side of unrestrained passion. The Lord of the Flies replaces the showy symbols of unrestrained passion that formerly dominated the open space--the rapid climber and the bright fantastic birds. The flies replace the gaudy butterflies and the booming bees as the corrupting, diseased, and deadly side of man's passionate nature comes to the fore. The Lord of the Flies takes on the character of a hardened cynic, a roué: "The half-shut eyes were dim with the infinite cynicism of adult life." The half-shut eyes indicate that the passionate view of life is only half the total view, less than half really, for the eyes are also "dim". Simon thus sees the kind of self a life devoted to self-gratification would produce. He imagines what this self would say to him.

The interview, then, is an internal one which clears away his doubts about himself and defines both himself and his role more clearly. The first temptation he must deal with is simply to give up in despair because "everything is bad business." But Simon is not intimidated by the half-shut eyes. His eyes are fully open to himself and his world. "I know that," he answers, but the knowledge does not shake his purpose or change what he is. This first temptation is the same one that defeated Ralph. Since Ralph's return from the mountain where he saw what he took to be the beast, he has practically resigned the leadership and has allowed Jack the upper hand by default. It is clear that Ralph is not the same person that he was in previous assemblies. Giving up in despair has caused him grievous loss of identity. But Simon does not yield to the same temptation. He accepts as fact that "everything is bad business" but remains the same person--in fact, a somewhat wiser person.

The second and third temptations come together as alternatives. The second is simply to take the easy way and accept what everyone else believes. The beast might come for its gift of the pig's head. In fact, it may come for Simon too, so he had better go back to the others. Facing an unpleasant truth alone is always more difficult than refusing to think and simply resigning one's identity to someone else's making. The alternative third temptation would perhaps be even easier for Simon. Since he has a deep

conviction that the beast is not an external being, he can perhaps enjoy a feeling of superiority and regard the whole offering of the pig's head as a joke and forget it. Simon may be seeking in his natural surroundings a reflection of the kind of self that could hold such a view, just as he had found other reflections of the passionate and spiritual sides of his self before. Instead, as he looks up he sees a reflection of quite a different kind:

clouds, great bulging towers that sprouted away over the island, grey and cream and copper-coloured. The clouds were sitting on the land; they squeezed, produced, moment by moment, this close tormenting heat.

Terrible pressures are building up in nature as they are in the society of the boys and even within Simon himself, both physical and mental. Nature then reflects the forces unleashed by the beast itself. What he sees reflected in nature is the destructive side of man's nature ready to explode in violence and confirms the intuitive knowledge of society and himself that he has gained before. He is looking for something more definitive, but for a time he is disappointed.

There were no shadows under the trees but everywhere a pearly stillness, so that what was real seemed illusive and without definition.²⁷

Then, he looks back at the pig's head, watches the flies buzzing on top of the pile of guts, and now feels them drinking his sweat, tickling him, and "playing leap-frog on his thighs", having fun, just as

²⁷Ibid., pp.131-132.

the Lord of the Flies declares later that he will have fun. Simon's intuitive knowledge of himself and mankind finally becomes intelligible. Simon's gaze is "held by that ancient, inescapable recognition." The pig's head that grins on the stick is Beelzebub, Lord of the Flies. The devil in man is unrestrained emotion; malice, hatred, the drive for absolute power, despair, blood-lust, terror. Simon sees this truth about himself and mankind reflected in each detail that meets his gaze: the cruel white teeth, the half-aware dim eyes, and the horrible blood.

At the beginning of the second part, Simon is subjected to new doubts and temptations. The fourth temptation is to give up his new-found identity and simply see himself as others see him, "just an ignorant, silly little boy." Simon rejects such a view of himself. He knows he is neither silly nor ignorant, and again he refuses to allow others to decide for him what he is. But he is forced to come to grips with a further temptation in his nature--in all human natures--to yield at all times to the desire to be liked and accepted.

'Well then', said the Lord of the Flies, 'you'd better run off and play with the others. They think you're batty. You don't want Ralph to think you're batty, do you? You like Ralph a lot, don't you? And Piggy, and Jack?'

This fifth temptation really involves the previous one also since to yield to the desire to be liked and accepted involves accepting the others' definition of his self and the role they prescribe for him.

The temptation is difficult to avoid--"His eyes could not break away"--

until the full implications of it are apparent to Simon. To avoid being thought batty, he must accept the belief that the beast is an external force, one to be greatly feared. But Simon knows that what confronts him is only "Pig's head on a stick", that the "beast" is a part of himself, and that the beast within is "the reason it's no go". To accept the urge to express unrestrained passion as a part of his own and others' nature confronts him with one more horrible truth, a truth he may have been dimly aware of before. To persist in his chosen role of bringing his vision of the truth to the others will bring about his own murder.

'You know perfectly well you'll only meet me down there--so don't try to escape!'

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! So don't try it on, my poor misguided boy, or else--'...

'--Or else,' said the Lord of the Flies, 'we shall do you. See? Jack and Roger and Maurice and Robert and Bill and Piggy and Ralph. Do you. See?'

Simon knows from his previous attempts to communicate with the others that his vision of the truth will evoke a savage response, not only from Jack and his tribe, but from Piggy and Ralph as well. Faced with this fact, Simon is overwhelmed with the evil in man's nature:

One of his times was coming on. The Lord of the Flies was expanding like a balloon...Simon found he was looking into a vast mouth. There was blackness within, a blackness that spread.... Simon was inside the mouth. He fell down and lost consciousness.²⁸

²⁸Ibid., pp. 136-37.

Simon, in the Lord of the Flies, has created a concrete image of everything he fears in his own and other natures. He knows now exactly what he is dealing with in explicit terms. In addition to meeting, understanding, and resisting the temptations that he is prone to, Simon now fully understands the implications of his natural desire to have fun. He had shared the excitement of the moment when the pig was first sighted on the island. He participated in the boar hunt in the expedition to search for the beast. At that time he learned something of the cruelty of the ritual dance and mock hunt when Robert is deliberately hurt in a game of "fun". The horror of the blood-lust is not brought home to Simon in explicit terms, however, until he can see it all as a detached observer. This horror cannot be dismissed as a "joke", for it is the very heart of reality on the island. It is the kind of "joke" that fate has played on man in confounding his hopes by giving him the emotions of a beast of prey. It is a joke with malice. Or it is the frantic joke that forces a man to laugh hysterically in the face of death.

'Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!' said the head. For a moment or two the forest and all the other dimly appreciated places echoed with the parody of laughter. 'You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?

The laughter shivered again.

It is the nightmarish joke where man is trapped in the forest and "all the other dimly appreciated places" while jeering faces appear from behind trees, pillars, or basement steps and explode in mock laughter.

The night the assembly broke up in fierce argument about the beast, Simon heard from the beach the same hysterical laughter accompany the screams of terror. The urge to hysterical laughter is another temptation, then, which may have been defeated only when Simon lapses into unconsciousness. So when the Lord of the Flies says, "We are going to have fun on this island," Simon knows that he is faced with a new wave of terror. To appreciate Simon's grasp of the reality of his own and other natures, the reader has only to look back to the previous page and compare the Lord of the Flies' statement to Bill's when he urges the acceptance of Jack's invitation: "And then hunting and all that--being savages I mean--it must be jolly good fun."²⁹

The self-actualization of Simon in the Lord of the Flies scene clearly illustrates the agonizing side of a peak experience. Maslow explains it in these terms:

Growth has many intrinsic pains and always will have. Each step forward is a step into the unfamiliar and is possibly dangerous. It also means giving up something familiar and good and satisfying. It frequently means a parting and a separation, even a kind of death prior to rebirth, with consequent nostalgia, fear, loneliness and mourning. It also often means giving up a simpler and easier and less effortful life, in exchange for a more demanding, more responsible, more difficult life. Growth forward is in spite of these losses and therefore requires courage, will, choice, and strength in the individual.³⁰

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Maslow, p. 204.

The last thing Simon saw in Lord of the Flies before he fell unconscious was the darkness of death. Waking several hours later, Simon experiences, not the calm beauty that denoted spiritual love in his earlier sojourn in the forest, but "the threat of violence in the air." Simon can now face the terrible choice: he can either attempt to repress his own identity and accept a precarious existence where unrestrained passions of every variety run amok, or he can act on his knowledge of the truth of himself and mankind, and, even at the cost of his life, show the others that only by examining their own natures can they be free of the terror they all feel. He cannot escape, even momentarily, from the horrible dilemma, for even the flies warn him of what he can expect if he interferes with the "fun" of untamed emotion:

He turned over, drew his feet under him, and laid hold of the creepers to pull himself up. When the creepers shook the flies exploded from the guts with a vicious note and clamped back on again.

If he accepts what he knows he is, there can be but one choice. "What else is there to do?" In going up the mountain to confirm that whatever is up there is no beast, he thereby confirms his own identity. He accepts a role of his own making and choice. Only he decides what he is to be; he does not merely accept a role and an identity created for him by someone else. Even his death is of his own choosing because he knows that his role is a very dangerous one. He knows that only by facing the truth about themselves can he and the others and all mankind free themselves from the grip of a mon-

stuously destructive irrationality and live in peace and brotherhood with each other.

Simon toils up the mountain with "glum determination like an old man," not an old man, perhaps, just as a reflection of life weariness or nearness to death, but like one who has long since discovered his identity. Just as he knew that the Lord of the Flies was only "a pig's head on a stick", he knows even before he sees him that the dead man on the mountain is "harmless and horrible."³¹ He sets off down the mountain again to deliver the message. The dead airman killed in a battle fought above the island simply confirms what Simon knew all along, that the thing to fear is not an external force or beast but man's tendency toward violent passion. Simon is destined to communicate this truth not by words, but by suffering the same fate as the other "beasts". He blunders into the open end of the dance-ring of the hunters who, lashed to a murderous frenzy by a violent tropical storm, leap upon the beast, strike, bite, and tear him to death.

Simon confirms his identity in the way he meets death. He knew what he was as a man, even though he was a ten-year-old child.

³¹Lord of the Flies, pp. 142, 138, 139, 137, 140.

CHAPTER III

THE IDENTITY PROBLEMS OF RALPH, PIGGY, AND JACK

Though Ralph had played a part, like all the other biguns on the island, in the horrible bludgeoning to death of Simon, he is the only one prepared, even though only momentarily, to acknowledge it. Ironically, he is also the only one to have shown any regard for Simon or any understanding of him. Ralph, furthermore, is the only boy other than Simon who could be said to be searching for his identity. He had the opportunity to learn the same kind of truths about himself that Simon learns about himself. Unlike Simon, however, he falters during several parts of the search, and though he recovers and continues the search, he never attains the full self-knowledge that Simon attains because he cannot bear to face for more than a moment certain truths about himself. A comparison between Ralph and Simon at various points in their search is useful, therefore, in establishing in a brief discussion the highlights of Ralph's quest for self-definition.

Ralph learns much about himself from Simon, from his own suffering, and from his failures as a responsible leader of the group, but even at the end he appears to block out deliberately a part of the vision of self that he has attained. Piggy's identity is largely unrealized. He catches only glimpses of the vision from time to time; just before his murder his inner blindness is symbolized by his having been deprived of his glasses. Finally, Jack, and

in fact all the rest of the group, suffer loss of identity. Simon's success can then be gauged in terms of the other boys' failure, or, at the most, limited success.

Why do all the boys except Simon fail to attain their full identity or abort the search for self altogether? Maslow can give a partial answer by explaining what, in general, inhibits a search for identity.

Apparently growth forward customarily takes place in little steps, and each step forward is made possible by the feeling of being safe, of operating out into the unknown from a safe home port, of daring because retreat is possible. We may use as a paradigm the toddler venturing away from his mother's knee into strange surroundings. Characteristically, he first clings to his mother as he explores the room with his eyes. Then he dares a little excursion, continually reassuring himself that the mother-security is intact. These excursions get more and more extensive. In this way, the child can explore a dangerous and unknown world. If suddenly the mother were to disappear, he would be thrown into anxiety, would cease to be interested in exploring the world, would wish only the return of safety.... Safety is a most basic and prepotent need for children, more primarily necessary by far than independence and self-actualization....The child must choose safety even at the cost of giving up self and growth.¹

Although the island provides all the physical necessities of life, it does not provide many of the "safety" needs of the boys - love, respect, approval, admiration. As a result, the littluns soon display the anxiety and loss of identity that will eventually afflict the older boys as well.

¹Maslow, pp. 49,52.

'Now tell us. What's your name?'

'Percival Wemys Madison, The Vicarage, Harcourt St. Anthony, Hants, telephone, telephone, tele--'

As if this information was rooted far down in the springs of sorrow, the littlun wept. His face puckered, the tears leapt from his eyes, his mouth opened till they could see a square black hole. At first he was a silent effigy of sorrow; but then the lamentation rose out of him, loud and sustained as the conch.

'Shut up, you! Shut up!'

Percival Wemys Madison would not shut up. A spring had been tapped, far beyond the reach of authority or even physical intimidation. The crying went on, breath after breath, and seemed to sustain him upright as if he were nailed to it.

'Shut up! Shut up!'

For now the littluns were no longer silent. They were reminded of their personal sorrows; and perhaps felt themselves to share in a sorrow that was universal. They began to cry in sympathy, two of them almost as loud as Percival.²

A little later his wailing cry is heard again as he wakes from a terrifying nightmare, and Golding makes the explicit comment:

Percival Wemys Madison, of the Vicarage, Harcourt St. Anthony, lying in the long grass, was living through circumstances in which the incantation of his address was powerless to help him.³

As would appear natural in a twelve-year-old boy, Ralph early in the novel reveals that he has a tendency to ignore unpleasant truths, no matter how important, for example, in his reaction to Piggy's concern for their situation on the island.

²Lord of the Flies, p. 83.

³Ibid., p. 90.

'We may stay here till we die.'

With that word the heat seemed to increase till it became a threatening weight and the lagoon attacked them with a blinding effulgence...

'We got to find the others. We got to do something.

Ralph said nothing. Here was a coral island. Protected from the sun, ignoring Piggy's ill-omened talk, he dreamed pleasantly.⁴

Ralph's search for identity begins when he is chosen chief.

At first he attains considerable success in discovering his identity as chief. He employs his native social intelligence, first, in placating, at least for a time, Jack's jealousy by putting him in charge of the choir. Secondly, "with the directness of genuine leadership," he apologizes to Piggy for revealing his name and, by giving him the job of taking names, placates him for excluding him from the exploring party. On the exploring trip, Ralph retains his earlier fun-loving identity as the three boys enjoy themselves thoroughly struggling through the jungle, rolling stones, finding adventure and comradeship, but Ralph never forgets that the mission has a serious purpose--to determine whether the land is an island and, if so, what kind. On this first exploration of the island, Ralph reveals that at least in some ways he is a self-actualizer according to Maslow's description.

Self-actualizing people enjoy life in general and in practically all its aspects, while most other people enjoy only stray moments of triumph, of achievement or of climax or peak experience.

⁴Ibid., p. 14.

Partly this intrinsic validity of living comes from the pleasurable inherent in growing.... But it also comes from the ability of healthy people to transform means-activity into end-experience, so that even instrumental activity is enjoyed as if it were end activity.⁵

When the boys return Ralph gives an enthusiastic but useful report and lays down rules for the assembly. He seems to identify completely with the role of a responsible leader. Then when the mulberry-faced boy mentions the "snake-thing" or "beastie" and Ralph's attempt to explain it away fails, Ralph momentarily loses control.

He felt himself facing something ungraspable...

'But there isn't a beast!'

Something he had not known was there rose in him and compelled him to make the point, loudly and again.

'But I tell you there isn't a beast!'

Ralph, unlike Simon, never does come to terms with that "something" in his nature, though it does come to the surface repeatedly, for example, when he gazes into the first fire that burned half the mountainside:

Startled, Ralph realized that the boys were falling still and silent, feeling the beginnings of awe at the power set free below them. The knowledge and the awe make him savage.⁶

⁵Maslow, p. 31.

⁶Lord of the Flies, pp. 24, 36, 43.

Ralph's momentary savagery changes to shame as he tries to evade responsibility for the mulberry-faced boy, missing in the burned-out area.

Most of the time, however, Ralph discovers more and more about himself as he deals in a practical way with the problems of being chief. He recognizes the desperate need for shelters to fend off the terror of nightmares. In this endeavour he has the full support of only Simon, but unlike Simon he does not really delve into what to him is a forbidden area of self. He limits himself to the practical--"the world of longing and baffled common sense." Since he does not even try to understand Jack's attempt to explain his obsession with hunting, Ralph fails to see that this obsession might make Jack a poor leader in the vital task of watching the fire. When Jack and his hunters let the fire go out in order that all of them might join in the pig hunt, Ralph is able to assert successfully his leadership and chastize Jack, but he does not understand nor try to understand "the brilliant world of hunting, tactics, fierce exhilaration, skill." He is beginning to feel the effects of his responsibilities as chief, to understand "the wearisomeness of life", and in a "new mood of comprehension" to discover the external dirt and decay, but the "concealing splendour of sunlight" allows him only surface awareness. He does not look into the shadows beneath to the main springs of human behaviour, as Simon does. Still, he is aware that there are different points of view, and he begins to wonder whether external appearance does

tell him everything, or, for that matter, anything: "If a face were different when lit from above or below--what was a face? What was anything?" The limits to Ralph's questioning of reality are revealed, however, when he turns to Piggy as a model for thinking rather than Simon. Again, of course, it is natural that this "link" should be "fastened", for Piggy's "scientific" thought promises to answer all questions, and Simon's thought has not been made articulate.⁷

Ralph's search for identity to this point has thus consisted mainly of an exploration of the role of being chief, but the search has expanded his awareness of self and given him a new system of values in which thinking and business take precedence over fun. With the confidence that his more clearly defined values and identity have given him, Ralph introduces a business-like program "to put things straight"--rules for improved sanitation, fresh water supply, building shelters, and, to keep the fire going on the mountain, a rule forbidding fires anywhere else.⁸

Ralph's attempt to grapple with a less tangible question, however, shatters his tentative identity as chief and "specialist in thought...that got results". He recognizes that things are breaking up because the children are frightened. He hopes that by

⁷Ibid., pp. 68,74,70.

⁸Ibid., pp. 75-78.

talking things over in the assembly they can agree that there is nothing to fear and thus solve the problem. Ralph is not prepared for any deep probings of the dark recesses of his being, and, as was revealed in the discussion of Simon, only such a searching self-examination can really reach the problem. Ralph's repression of the darker side of his self is revealed when Percival-Wemys Madison stands before the assembly:

Ralph remembered another small boy who had stood like this and he flinched from the memory. He had pushed the thought down and out of sight, where only some positive reminder like this could bring it to the surface. There had been no further numberings of the littluns, partly because there was no means of ensuring that all of them were accounted for and partly because Ralph knew the answer to at least one question Piggy had asked on the mountain-top. There were little boys, fair, dark, freckled, and all dirty, but their faces were all dreadfully free of major blemishes. No one had seen the mulberry-coloured birthmark again. But that time Piggy had coaxed and bullied. Tacitly admitting that he remembered the unmentionable, Ralph nodded to Piggy.

'Go on. Ask him.'

Percival's suggestion that the beast comes out of the sea produces such wild arguments that to Ralph "this seemed the breaking-up of sanity." Simon's suggestion, as was discussed earlier, further amazes but does not enlighten Ralph. When Ralph calls for a vote and it seems to favor the belief in ghosts, Ralph thought that "the world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away."⁹

⁹ Ibid., pp. 74, 82, 84, 87.

After the meeting breaks up in wild disorder, Ralph, Piggy and Simon are left discussing the situation. Ralph now meets two of the temptations that Simon met in the Lord of the Flies. Either of them would have resulted in his loss of identity as chief. The first temptation is simply to give up in despair.

'If I blow the conch and they don't come back;
then we've had it. We shan't keep the fire going.
We'll be like animals. We'll never be rescued."

The second temptation is to yield to the belief that the beast is an external being.

'But s'pose they don't make sense? Not here,
on this island? Supposing things are watching
us and waiting?"¹⁰

Simon and Piggy are able to prevail upon him to continue as chief and cling to the values that enable him to identify with the position. The unexamined dark side of Ralph's being, however, continues to leave him vulnerable to the two temptations.

The vulnerability of Ralph's identity is clearly revealed in the aftermath of Samneric's report of seeing a beast on the mountain. For example, as was noted in our discussion of Simon, Ralph succumbs not only to the excitement of hunting pig, but also to the impulse to hurt Robert in the mock ritual dance that follows. The incident may well have provided the occasion for Ralph to re-examine his view of

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 88,89.

himself, his identity. Unfortunately, Ralph does not give more than a passing thought to this impulse. Instead of acknowledging it, examining it, and considering how it might be controlled, he excuses his behaviour on the grounds that it was "just a game."¹¹ His identity can never be complete until he learns to identify even the least favorable sides of his nature. Loss of self-awareness occurs when the unacknowledged side dominates behaviour.

After Simon had left the search for the beast, Ralph's anger leads him into a trap that results in further loss of self-awareness. His anger allows Jack to goad him into climbing the mountain in the dark. He thereby negates his identity as chief because he has allowed himself to be dominated by Jack against his better judgment. If Ralph had heeded his own sensible decision "to go straight across to the platform and climb tomorrow", they would never have mistaken the dead pilot for the beast.

His experience on the mountain causes him to yield to the temptation of despair. In the assembly following the sighting of the beast by Jack, Roger and Ralph, Ralph's despair is such that his awareness of himself as chief is greatly diminished. He allows the assembly to be dominated first by Jack, then when Jack leaves, by Piggy. Despite a deflated self-concept, however, there is some

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 110.

evidence that Ralph has an awareness which prepares the reader for his eventual regaining of a more stable identity. Though he does not respond to Simon's suggestion of climbing the mountain again, he does wonder whether Simon will climb by himself and seems to watch for his return. Eventually he forgets about Simon, the fire, and rescue and in despair gives his answer to Simon's question: "What else is there to do?" "'Bathing,' said Ralph, 'that's the only thing to do.'"¹²

Despite a serious disintegration, however, Ralph's identity, except for a brief moment, never suffers complete collapse. Even Ralph's succumbing to Jack's invitation to the feast is made acceptable to his self-concept by Piggy's suggestion that they need to "make sure nothing happens" and Bill's earlier suggestion that they "go to this feast and tell them the fire's hard on the rest of us." It is clear, however, that Ralph is not thinking the situation through properly as a responsible leader. Otherwise he would never have accepted Jack's meat until after there was agreement on keeping the fire going. Ralph clearly suffers considerable loss of identity because he fails to understand that his actions are motivated by despair, irrational fear, loneliness, and desire to gratify his senses. This loss is acutely felt when he tries to assert himself against Jack.

¹²Ibid., pp. 113,140.

'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!'

Ralph went crimson.

'I said you were hunters. That was your job!'

Jack ignored him again.

'Who'll join my tribe and have fun?'

'I'm chief,' said Ralph tremulously. 'And what about the fire? And I've got the conch--'

'You haven't got it with you,' said Jack, sneering. 'You left it behind. See, clever? And the conch doesn't count at this end of the island--'...

'The conch counts here too,' said Ralph, 'and all over the island.'

'What are you going to do about it then?'

Ralph examined the ranks of boys. There was no help in them and he looked away, confused and sweating.¹³

Ralph's identity is therefore in poor condition to resist the terror aroused by the violent thunder storm that breaks upon them at that moment. Jack leaps onto the beach and calls upon everyone to join the dance while Roger plays the pig. The terrible storm causes Ralph to panic and suffer temporarily complete loss of identity.

Piggy and Ralph, under the threat of the sky, found themselves eager to take a place in this demented but partly secure society. They were glad to touch the brown backs of the fence that hemmed in the terror and made it governable.

'Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood.'

¹³Ibid., pp. 141,136,143.

Out of the terror arose the "thick, urgent, blind" desire to kill at the very moment Simon comes crawling out of the forest to prove by his murder that the beast is a part of all of us.¹⁴

In participating in the murder, Ralph has descended into hell. He has experienced terror, blind panic, the impulse to kill, and the actual deed of killing another human being. The fragile mind of a twelve-year-old boy could easily become obsessed with the images of that horrible moment and be driven insane. On the other hand, to attempt to repress that moment and to ignore the side of one's self that produced it would be futile and dangerous, for one's identity would continue to be prey to such inexplicable feelings and behaviour. Under the circumstances the only way of keeping the self healthy is to look briefly but steadily at the act and the feelings that gave rise to it, understand and accept them. Then, having done that, one must focus on means of controlling these feelings and avoiding the circumstances that excite them, not only in one's self but in others as well.

Unfortunately, Ralph does not look quite long enough at that moment to enable him to understand or accept it. His efforts toward rebuilding his shattered identity are, therefore, never quite successful. He is revealed as a normal vulnerable human being who has many admirable traits but whose failings are those of human beings

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 144-45.

everywhere. They are failings that make him in many respects a more sympathetic character than Simon, who is an exceptional person. The particular failing to be noted here is his failure to attain a complete identity. It is not denied that he does have some success.

When Ralph is first seen the following morning, it appears that he will undertake the kind of self-examination needed to achieve full identity. Had Piggy been willing to undertake the same self-examination, both might have developed complete selfhood. Piggy, however, is seeking to preserve the illusory identity of a completely rational person. He therefore makes the futile attempt to repress his participation in the dance and blame Jack for everything that happened. Faced with Piggy's denial, Ralph also attempts to repress all knowledge of the terrible dance. Samneric are forced to deny their part as well, and all suffer loss of identity as a result. "Memory of the dance that none of them had attended shook all four boys convulsively." Until after the death of Piggy, Ralph makes only two more feeble attempts to come to grips with the terror on the dark side of his being, the first when he admits aloud the need for fire to ward off the terror, the second when he remembers the dead pilot being lifted out to sea by the windblown parachute and Simon's shouting about a dead man on a hill.¹⁵ Both attempts are quickly repressed.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 150,154.

One can more easily understand how these repressions damage Ralph's identity by referring to Maslow's description of the part played by guilt in realizing one's self.

Intrinsic guilt is the consequence of betrayal of one's own inner nature or self, a turning off the path to self-actualization, and is essentially justified self-disapproval....It is "true" or "deserved" or "right and just" or "correct" because it is a discrepancy from something profoundly real within the person rather than from accidental, arbitrary or purely relative localisms. Seen in this way it is good, even necessary, for a person's development to have intrinsic guilt when he deserves to. It is not just a symptom to be avoided at any cost but is rather an inner guide for growth toward actualization of the real self, and of its potentialities.¹⁶

Ralph's attempts to repress his guilt can therefore be seen to block development of his identity.

Though at one point Ralph goes so far as to acknowledge, "I'm frightened. Of us",¹⁷ his constant repressions of his fear prevent him from understanding the menace of Jack and the tribe and from taking effective measures against it. Consequently, when in a raid Jack and his painted henchmen steal Piggy's glasses, Ralph's expedition to recover them ends in utter disaster with Piggy killed, Samneric captured, and Ralph hunted as a fugitive who barely escapes death himself. It must be acknowledged, however, that Jack's challenge, issued by the raid, does momentarily seem greatly to spur

¹⁶Maslow, pp. 194-195.

¹⁷Lord of the Flies, p. 149.

Ralph's search for identity. As a result, he apparently succeeds in restoring the level of identity he had achieved before the dead airman comes to the island. His self-image, sunk in despondency, prone to terror, and stifled by repressions, is so lifted by his responses to the raid as to sustain acts of high courage and high principle as he leads his little group to demand justice in the face of threats of violence. Indeed, it could be said that the events immediately preceding and following Piggy's tragic death constitute Ralph's finest hour.

Examined more closely, however, it can be seen that the tragedy may have been avoided had Ralph completed his search for identity in the dark corners of his self. If one looks beneath the high-sounding words of both Piggy and Ralph, the boys seem incredibly naive to employ terms of moral outrage against Jack for theft when they themselves have just taken part with Jack in a murder. Furthermore, they blind themselves to Jack's warpaint, his tribe armed with spears, the fortress, and Jack's hatred of them both in order to believe that Jack will listen patiently to their speeches of moral condemnation, say his mea culpas, and humbly hand back Piggy's glasses. It can be seen, therefore, that had Ralph completed a thorough self-examination he would have seen the utter futility of such an expedition. But one must ask Simon's question at this point: "What else is there to do?" Could Ralph have simply ignored the theft of Piggy's glasses? What about the rescue fire then? If he had done nothing, Ralph would have made his loss of identity permanent.

If Simon's question is asked, perhaps Simon's answer should also be given. But since speculation on what might have been is futile at best, only the most general suggestion can be offered. Simon would have advised Ralph to confront all the boys with the truth, make them see the murder for what it is, recall to them Simon's words about the dead man on the mountain, and appeal to them to re-light the fire on the mountain. If he had done this, would the outcome have been any different in terms of plot? That answer cannot be given, but clearly, whatever else might have happened, Ralph would have attained his full identity. Ironically, the only thing he remembers of Simon at this point is a prediction that Ralph completely misapplies. When Simon told him that Ralph would get back to where he came from, Simon was trying to lift him out of despair so that he would go forward and see the truth. When Ralph remembers the words now, they prevent him from seeing the truth and encourage his almost fatal optimism concerning his mission. He has repressed his part in Simon's murder and blames Jack for it.¹⁸ Ralph's expedition is, then, in Simon's terms, "heroic but sick."

Even in the final chapter of the novel, after the murder of Piggy and Jack's clear warning that Ralph can expect the same treat-

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 163,162.

ment, Ralph can bring himself only occasionally to see the truth of his situation. At other times his irrational belief in an "understandable and lawful world" betrays him into committing almost fatal errors of judgment. Ralph's errors are all related to his failure to achieve his complete identity. Golding emphasizes Ralph's failure by twice bringing him into the open space to confront the Lord of the Flies and even by bringing him into Simon's little cabin where Simon learned to accept the truth about himself. Ralph's gaze is held, not by "that ancient, inescapable recognition" of the beast within him, as Simon's was, but by "sick fear and rage" that the skull is an external being. Even though he lashes out and strikes the skull and breaks it, he is the one defeated, for he has yielded to the temptations of the beast of ungovernable feeling within him. He has attempted to reject a part of himself instead of understanding it. In shattering the skull he merely extends its cynical grin to six feet across. The eyes of the Lord of the Flies, the passionate side of Simon's nature, were dim with half-awareness. The passionate side of Ralph's nature, on the other hand, is completely blind, for the eye sockets are empty. Ralph has yielded to all the temptations of the Lord of the Flies without knowing it. He cannot accept the dark or the fact that he is not wanted, and he yields to uncontrollable fear. Immediately after his encounter with Lord of the Flies, he returns to the thicket near Castle Rock where

he knelt among the shadows and felt his isolation bitterly. They were savages it was true; but they were human, and the ambushing fears of the deep night were coming on.

His fear of the dark and of being alone leads to his first almost fatal error. He makes himself known to Sammeric and informs them of his hiding place. But even when someone else is heard coming, he continues to talk. Consequently, his interview with Sammeric is discovered, and the twins are tortured into revealing Ralph's hiding-place. Even when Ralph hears sounds of an argument and cries of terror, his inability to face cruel facts causes him to ignore signs from which he could easily deduce his true situation. He therefore awakens to realize that he is trapped in the thicket. Only good fortune saves him from being crushed to death as two huge rocks are rolled down into the thicket. Finally the thicket is fired, but he manages to charge through the ring of savages by becoming a savage himself: "Ralph launched himself like a cat; stabbed, snarling, with the spear, and the savage doubled up."¹⁹

It is only when Ralph comes to the Lord of the Flies a second time and enters Simon's little spot in the mat of creepers that he learns that he is the beast. He had blundered into the open space just as earlier the sow had done whose skull now shows Ralph a "fathom-wide grin." As he finds a temporary security in

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 176,185.

Simon's place, he sees in the open space signs of the hunt, just as Simon had done. Simon had observed the ritual of placing the pig's head on a stick sharpened at both ends. He learned that he was to replace the beast as object of the hunt. Now, as Ralph sees in his own hands the stick sharpened at both ends, he recalls Sam's statement that Roger had sharpened a stick at both ends. He knows the stick in his hands once held the pig's head. He knows now that he is the beast the savages seek to kill. But the beast, which was only part of Simon, is momentarily all of Ralph. His identity shrinks to the size of his now enlarged passions as he is discovered in his hiding-place.

Ralph screamed, a scream of fright and anger and desperation. His legs straightened, the screams became continuous and foaming. He shot forward, burst the thicket, was in the open, screaming, snarling, bloody....He forgot his wounds, his hunger and thirst, and became fear; hopeless fear on flying feet.

Even at the end, when the naval officer arrives to save him from imminent death Ralph is seen to have accepted only a small glimmer of insight into the dark side of his nature, as compared to Simon's self-knowledge. Though Ralph once again claims the identity of chief, he immediately seeks to reduce his responsibility for the horrors unleashed on the island. "Nobody killed, I hope? Any dead bodies?" asks the officer. "Only two," Ralph answers. That he has forgotten the mulberry-faced boy is really the minor part of the evasion; the "only" speaks volumes. In his answer, Ralph tries to hint

that their sojourn on the island was a brave struggle against a hostile environment in which casualties were reduced to the minimum. How far Ralph's answer comes from conveying the essential truth is emphasized in the heavily ironical statement: "The officer knew, as a rule, when people were telling the truth."²⁰

Though Ralph weeps finally for the "end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy",²¹ without an acknowledgment that he was in part the murderer of a truer friend called Simon, can he really be said to know who he is? The discussion on Ralph's futile search for identity might well be concluded by concurring with the comment of Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor on the final passage on Ralph.

What Ralph weeps for is the failure of Piggy's idea of a rational world, Piggy's friendship, Piggy's intelligence. We might ask whether there has not been a truer 'innocence', a greater 'wisdom', a more loving 'kindness', a better attitude to 'darkness' and the 'fall'. If Ralph weeps for Piggy, may it be because he only knows one degree better than the officer?²²

Ralph has elevated his "true wise friend" almost to the status of tragic hero. It has been suggested that such a judgment,

²⁰Ibid., pp. 187, 189-190, 191.

²¹Ibid., p. 192.

²²Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, p. 64.

though credible on a first reading of the novel, ultimately reveals a certain weakness in Ralph's system of values. This conclusion can be supported only by examining Piggy's own identity problems.

It cannot really be said that Piggy is searching for his identity. He is not a "self-actualizer" or a "peakier" in Maslow's terms. In fact, Maslow's description of a non-peakier fits him very well.

Non-peakiers must always remain incomplete, deficient, striving, lacking something, living among means rather than among ends....

As we consider the physical and psychological tensions and perseverations of incomplete, it seems plausible that they may be incompatible not only with serenity, peacefulness and psychological well-being, but also with physical well-being.²³

Only occasionally does Piggy question the personal values that support his identity, but the questioning is mainly destructive and does not lead to a greater understanding of who he is. Instead, the questioning leads to a temporary loss of identity, but Piggy quickly regains his self-image much as it was, neither enlarged nor diminished. In one respect only does Piggy seek to enlarge his identity; he would like to be accepted as the wise councillor of a just and reasonable society.

His lack of acceptance and his great desire to achieve it are explained by details of Piggy's physical condition; his fat,

²³Maslow, pp. 111-112.

his asthma, his glasses, his lack of motor co-ordination. To compensate for his physical deficiency, he prides himself on his ability to understand and explain how things work in society, what is wrong when they do not work, and what must be done to set them right. He believes that there is a reasonable explanation for everything, that life is "scientific". Because of his physical deficiency he cannot compete in anything requiring physical exertion: swimming, hunting, fighting, or the hard work of building shelters and fires. The only place he excels is in assembly or as an advisor to Ralph as chief. Even there, his identity depends upon the others' acceptance of his view of the world as well as his particular advice. His identity as wise councillor also depends upon the parliamentary system of decision-making. He is therefore the chief exponent of that system and the values represented by the conch; he is also a loyal supporter of Ralph who owes to the system his election as chief and is therefore committed to it. It is through Ralph's acceptance of him that Piggy hopes to win the acceptance of all the others except Jack. Jack, he recognizes, is the chief threat to the parliamentary system.

Piggy early establishes his identity as a man of sense. It was his idea that the conch could be used to call the others. He organizes the first assembly, taking names and making introductions. These activities prompt the author's comment that "what

intelligence had been shown was traceable to Piggy."²⁴

Piggy's self-concept is even more limited to the rational and intellectual side of man's nature than Ralph's is. In pointing out the results of the boys' irresponsibility in the fire on the mountain, Piggy's insight had been symbolized by "the flash of his spectacles". In the second crisis on the mountain when the hunters let the fire out, Piggy's lack of insight into the irrational sources of human behavior is symbolized by the fact that one lens of his spectacles is broken. Frustrated at not being able to make Ralph understand the "brilliant world of hunting, tactics, fierce exhilaration, skill", Jack simply cannot bear the added provocation of Piggy's bitter reproach. He therefore lashes out at Piggy and knocks his glasses to the ground. Though he seldom acknowledges the irrational side of his self, Piggy nonetheless yields to it when he dribbles and whines at not being served meat from the hunt.

The clearest exposition of his view of a rational universe and his great reluctance to concede anything to the irrational is given in his speech to the assembly on the beast.

'Course there isn't a beast in the forest.
How could there be? What would a beast eat?...
You have doctors for everything, even the inside
of your mind. You don't really mean that we got
to be frightened all the time for nothing? Life',
said Piggy expansively, 'is scientific, that's

²⁴Lord of the Flies, p. 22.

what it is. In a year or two when the war's over they'll be travelling to Mars and back. I know there isn't no beast--not with claws and all that, I mean--but I know there isn't no fear, either.'

Piggy does, however, make one qualification to his final statement. "Unless," he says, "we get frightened of people." This qualification reveals that Piggy's airy dismissal of the irrational is really whistling in the dark. Piggy, indeed, fears the irrational; he therefore attempts to repress it in himself as firmly as he chastizes it in others. The passionate side of his nature, though, cannot be finally repressed and comes to the surface whenever things get beyond his control. Piggy admits to an instinctive fear of Jack.

'I'm scared of him,' said Piggy, 'and that's why I know him. If you're scared of someone you hate him but you can't stop thinking about him. You kid yourself he's all right really, an' then when you see him again; it's like asthma and you can't breathe. I tell you what. He hates you too, Ralph--'²⁵

This is the only occasion on which Piggy allows intuitive cognition to enlarge his awareness of the boys' predicament. A good comment on this passage is given by Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor:

Piggy's asthma is an expression of fear and hate, and how hate may grow from fear and alienation. His sickness tells Piggy truths of human motivation that his rational intelligence, and Ralph's health, are blind to.²⁶

²⁵Ibid., pp. 43, 68, 80, 89.

²⁶Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, pp. 36-37.

The beginnings of insight into the passionate side of his nature are not sufficient to prevent Piggy from suffering a greater loss of identity than any other major character when the beast from the air is seen. The coming of the beast collapses his rational world, and the wise councillor can give only the counsel of despair: "Couldn't we--kind of--stay here? Maybe the beast won't come near us." Piggy does recover something of his identity immediately after Jack walks out of the assembly.

Piggy was speaking now with more assurance and with what, if the circumstances had not been so serious, the others would have recognized as pleasure.²⁷

Piggy's suggestion that the fire be moved to the beach arouses enthusiasm in the group, and for a short time Piggy is the dominant figure. Even when it is realized that the boys are sneaking into the forest one by one to join Jack, Piggy still urges Ralph to carry on as before. When Jack leads a raid for fire, however, and invites them to a feast of meat, Piggy's irrational impulse towards self-gratification overrules his commitment to the rescue fire and his belief that Jack is the source of all that is wrong on the island. His urging Ralph to accept the invitation causes Piggy a great loss of self. As was noted in the discussion of Ralph, loss of self becomes total when the two boys, with the others, participate in the murder of Simon.

²⁷Lord of the Flies, pp. 96,123.

His denial of self is greater than Ralph's, for he never for a moment acknowledges that he bears any responsibility for the murder, and he finally persuades Ralph to deny their presence in the murderous dance. He feels more comfortable when he can blame Jack for Simon's murder, along with everything else that has gone wrong on the island. This stage is not reached until Jack raids Ralph's camp once more and this time carries off Piggy's glasses.

The circumstances leading to the murder of Piggy, beginning with his outraged response to Jack's theft, show that Piggy has regained his former selfhood at its best as he re-asserts his sense of values and attains once more his buoyant self-confidence. These circumstances show, however, as they did with Ralph, that Piggy's failure to know himself, particularly the irrational side of his nature, is responsible for his fatal blindness in understanding others. This blindness is symbolically represented by his lost glasses. Nonetheless, Piggy's speech to the small assembly before he undertakes his journey to Castle Rock is perhaps his most inspired statement of his view of a just society:

'I'm going to him with this conch in my hands. I'm going to hold it out. Look, I'm goin' to say, you're stronger than I am and you haven't got asthma. You can see, I'm going to say, and with both eyes. But I don't ask you to be a sport, I'll say, not because you're strong, but because what's right's right. Give me my glasses, I'm going to say--you got to.'

Piggy's values, however, represented by the conch, have no meaning in a society where passions are allowed to go unchecked. Piggy has himself ignored the insights he had gained into hatred and fear. The "luminous veil" that hangs "between him and the world" is poignantly revealed in the juxtaposition of the description of the shell and the mounting passion of the savages.

By him stood Piggy still holding the talisman,
the fragile, shining beauty of the shell. The
storm of sound beat at them, an incantation of
hatred.

In this charged atmosphere all restraint is released, and Roger "with a sense of delirious abandonment" sends the poised rock crashing down to knock Piggy to his death.²⁸

A second boy, therefore, is murdered attempting to bring his vision of truth to a frenzied mob who would kill rather than look into the darkness of their hearts.

As has been shown, Piggy's identity remains largely static. Left to be discussed is the only one of the major characters to suffer an irreversible loss of identity. Jack's loss of identity consists in a progressive deterioration in the conscious scrutiny to which he submits his instincts and passions and a corresponding alienation from those who develop a sense of solidarity. Jack's

²⁸Ibid., pp. 162-163, 166, 172.

life on the island is the very antithesis of a search for identity; instead of seeking the meaning and significance of each of his acts, thoughts, and feelings in a social context, as one must do to discover who one is, Jack seeks to evade any such evaluation, and at last he completely surrenders his self-awareness in order to gratify without any conscious restraint each whim and passion of the moment. Before the end of the novel, though Jack himself is no sadist, he is as far removed from self-awareness and as much immune to the horror of Simon's murder as Roger is. Whatever flicker of conscious awareness still shows in his dark being he would snuff out just as he seeks to destroy Ralph, the last representative of rationality left on the island.

But if one were tempted to argue that Jack suffers no loss of identity because his acts of cruelty, greed, and lust for power really express what he is, then the best answer would probably be Maslow's:

A neurosis is not part of the inner core but rather a defense against or an evasion of it, as well as a distorted expression of it (under the aegis of fear). It is ordinarily a compromise between the effort to seek basic need gratifications in a covert or disguised or self-defeating way, and the fear of these needs, gratifications and motivated behaviors. To express neurotic needs, emotions, attitudes, definitions, actions, etc., means not to express the inner core or real self fully. If the sadist or exploiter or pervert says "Why shouldn't I express myself?" (e.g., by killing), or, "Why

shouldn't I actualize myself?" the answer to them is that such expression is a denial of, and not an expression of, instinctoid tendencies (or inner core).

Each neuroticized need, or emotion or action is a loss of capacity to the person, something that he cannot do or dare not do except in a sneaky and unsatisfying way. In addition, he has lost his subjective well-being, his will, and his feeling of self-control, his capacity for pleasure, his self-esteem, etc. He is diminished as a human being.²⁹

In his first appearance in the novel, Jack obviously does have conscious control over his actions and feelings; in fact his consciousness of self--that he is Jack Merridew, a person of importance--exceeds greatly that of any other boy on the island. His apparently strong identity is indicated by the haughty authority of military command which he exercises over the marching choir. His demand to be called "Merridew" shows that he identifies with the officer class of the army establishment. Ralph recognizes the outward strength of Jack's identity from the beginning: "This was the voice of one who knew his own mind." Even when Jack's arrogant bid for chieftainship fails, his self-image suffers only momentary mortification. Alienation is avoided by Ralph's adroit offer to let Jack lead the choir as hunters and by the invitation to join in exploring the island.

The events of that first assembly, nevertheless, contribute ultimately to Jack's loss of identity. As prefect Jack, in his

²⁹Maslow, pp. 205-206.

former school life, would have borne certain responsibilities. He would have been accustomed to think, not only for himself, but for the group as well. Had he been elected chief at the first assembly, he may well have borne his responsibilities to the group creditably, at least for a time, realizing and expanding his self-image at the same time. His failure to win the position of chief removes him from direct responsibilities and therefore removes one of the conscious restraints upon his unexamined passionate self. At the same time as a restraint is removed, his passionate self is directly incited by his being appointed leader of the hunters. This position opens him to blood-lust and the terror of the jungle. More and more the rational, self-critical side of his nature shrinks and his identity becomes more and more restricted to that of a hunter. His conscious, self-critical faculties are still functioning, however, when he has his first opportunity to establish himself as a hunter. On the first exploration of the island, the boys find a piglet struggling in the creepers. Jack drew his knife but, because they all understood "what an enormity the downward stroke would be", Jack hesitates and the piglet breaks free. Jack's failure makes him fiercely determined to live up to his new ideal self.³⁰

In a gradual process, as Jack identifies more and more with

³⁰Lord of the Flies, pp. 21,30.

the role of tribal hunter, other elements that formerly made up his identity lose their force. As his identity is reconstituted on a narrower basis, he becomes more and more alienated from the tidy world of Ralph and Piggy. Then, too, as fear of the beast grows, the other boys seek to block out terror by identifying with Jack the hunter. This tendency is first revealed at the assembly in which the three explorers report. All Jack can talk is hunting, even when the snake-thing is mentioned:

'Ralph's right of course. There isn't a snake-thing. But if there was a snake we'd hunt and kill it. We're going to hunt pigs to get meat for everybody. And we'll look for the snake too--'

On this first day, of course, hunting is not yet the obsession it will become; Jack is therefore as enthusiastic as any of the others at the idea of a signal fire on the mountain. He jumps up and leads the tumultuous march up the mountain.

In one sense, though, hunting provides Jack with a unique opportunity to develop a complete identity. In Chapter Three by showing the response of both boys to the deep jungle, Golding reveals to the reader that Jack has similar opportunities to Simon's in developing insights into the dark side of his being. In many respects he does develop similar insights. But it is Jack's blind surrender to his unconscious self, as opposed to Simon's acknowledgment and examination of his unconscious self, that accounts for Simon's ultimate realization of his identity and Jack's loss of identity.

Jack feels the same fascination for the jungle that Simon feels, but his focus is much narrower than Simon's. Both explore the same landscape. There is the same "bold trunks supporting a dark roof...the semi-darkness of the undergrowth...the pale flowers on a grey trunk", but Jack is not consciously aware of any of this. Instead of Simon's acceptance of all elements of nature, Jack's awareness is largely narrowed to signs of pig: "the faintest indication of a trail...a cracked twig and what might be the impression of one side of a hoof; a tendril...polished on the underside" by pigs with their bristly hide; olive green, smooth droppings. These details indicate that Jack has found deep within him the instincts of a hunter. As Jack studies the life and habits of the pig he seems to enter into its very mind. He therefore develops valuable insights on terror and compulsion which could be useful to the entire group of boys in understanding themselves. He has also found the hunter's obsessive drive. In the frustration of the hunt his eyes seem "bolting and mad," and he searches the ground "avidly". The patter of pig's hoofs was "seductive, maddening, the promise of meat." Jack's sensitivity is, however, attuned to something else besides pig, as the following passage makes clear:

The silence of the forest was more oppressive than the heat, and at this hour of the day there was not even the whine of insects. Only when Jack himself roused a gaudy bird from a primitive nest of sticks was the silence shattered and

echoes set ringing by a harsh cry that seemed to come out of the abyss of ages. Jack himself shrank at this cry with a hiss of indrawn breath; and for a minute became less a hunter than a furtive thing, ape-like among the tangle of trees.

Jack feels the terror of the hunted as well as the compulsion of the hunter. He does therefore gain insight into a side of his nature that enables him to understand the fear of the beast. This insight parallels, in some respects, that of Simon.³¹

When Jack returns from that day's unsuccessful hunt to meet Ralph, it is clear that the close friendship of the two boys is to be succeeded by a growing alienation. Jack tries "to convey the compulsion to track down and kill that was swallowing him up"; he also tries to convey the terror of the jungle:

"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."

At that time, however, Ralph is deeply concerned about the unfinished shelters and annoyed that the unsuccessful hunt drains off much of the available manpower. He therefore gives no encouragement to Jack to share his vivid experience. Jack has a similar difficulty entering Ralph's world:

Jack had to think for a moment before he could remember what rescue was.

'Rescue? Yes, of course! All the same, I'd like to catch a pig first--' He snatched up his spear and dashed it into the ground. The opaque, mad look came into his eyes again.

³¹Ibid., pp. 36,46-47.

Whatever enhancement Jack's identity might have obtained from his awareness of the compulsive side of his nature is therefore cancelled by his failure to subject that side to critical scrutiny. That his social awareness seems almost completely lost is indicated by the fact that the idea of rescue is now almost meaningless and has little or no place in his system of values. "The opaque, mad look" denotes the degree to which he has surrendered his self and become a driven being. Ralph, then, in a sense represents Jack's conscious rational self which he attempts more and more to deny. The boys, like the sides of Jack's nature, are "two continents of experience and feeling, unable to communicate." Jack is as much alienated from himself as he is from Ralph.³²

Jack's surrender of self in the emerging but limited new identity as a hunter chieftain is indicated and assisted by his mask of war paint. By the time Piggy is killed, Jack no longer hides behind the mask; he has become the mask. Therefore, when Ralph confronts him at Castle Rock, he looks at "the green and black mask before him, trying to remember what Jack looked like." Even when Jack first creates the mask, he is metamorphosed:

Jack planned his new face. He made one cheek and one eye-socket white, then he rubbed red over the other half of his face and slashed a black bar of charcoal across from right ear to left jaw....

³²Ibid., pp. 51, 53.

He 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 an awesome stranger. He spilt the water and leapt to his feet, laughing excitedly. Beside the mere, his sinewy body held up a mask that drew their eyes and appalled them. He began to dance and his laughter became a blood-thirsty snarling. He capered towards Bill, and the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness.

The mask thus liberates Jack's passionate self from rational scrutiny and also from the world of order, duty, and social inhibitions--the world of Ralph and Piggy. The liberation is not merely for the purpose of play. When Jack sets up his own tribe, he raids the camp of Ralph and Piggy to steal fire. As he issues his invitation to the feast, he is able to look at each of Ralph's lot in turn. "He was safe from shame or self-consciousness behind the mask of his paint." After the murder of Simon, though, the meaning of the liberation becomes clearer. As Piggy, Ralph, and Samneric plan their expedition to Castle Rock, the thing they fear most is Jack's new self as revealed by the painted mask.

'But they'll be painted! You know how it is--'

The others nodded. They understood only too well the liberation into savagery that the concealing paint brought.³³

Assisted by the mask, Jack's first killing of a pig fulfills

³³Ibid., pp. 169, 61, 134, 164.

his identity as a hunter. It also marks his last attempt to convey the compulsive urge that drives every other consideration from his mind:

He sought, charitable in his happiness, to include them in the thing that had happened. His mind was crowded with memories; memories of the knowledge that had come to them when they closed in on the struggling pig, knowledge that they had outwitted a living thing, imposed their will upon it, taken away its life like a long satisfying drink.

He spread his arms wide.

'You should have seen the blood!'

Instead of sweetening his triumph by sharing it with others, he is faced with sour humiliation; the fire he and his hunters had undertaken to keep going is out when a ship goes by that could have rescued them. His knowledge of having imposed his will upon a living thing changes to viciousness as he seeks in his frustration to impose his will upon a human being. His mask thus liberates him to attack Piggy who had bitterly condemned him for letting out the fire. This violent act that smashes a lens of Piggy's glasses completes his alienation from Ralph and his supporters. All the boys share in the feast, however, but because "numberless and inexpressible frustrations combined to make his rage elemental and awe-inspiring", his attempt to portray his feelings and skill is therefore abortive. He looks for "understanding and finds only respect."³⁴

³⁴Ibid., pp. 67,71.

The effects of the alienation are shown in the assembly the same evening. Jack can talk knowingly about the beast because he has experienced the terror of the jungle. To be a hunter, he must live with fear, accept it as part of human nature. To this extent his view can be compared to Simon's. Ralph's amazed response reminds Jack that he cannot expect the understanding he seeks. From this point on Jack's contributions to the debate are almost always disruptive. It is only on one point, therefore, that he agrees with Simon. He himself interrupts Simon with a crude joke. Though in his speech on fear he seems to have gained insight into the passionate side of his nature, his final speech indicates how easily he can forget his self-knowledge and yield to the belief in a beast. The lack of understanding from Ralph and Piggy coupled with their continuing rebukes over the fire finally provokes Jack to a violent demonstration of his alienation:

'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--!'

He gave a wild whoop and leapt down to the pale sand.³⁵

The following quotation from Maslow not only reveals the loss of identity entailed in Jack's outburst here but also provides a comment on the whole pattern of his responses to anger to the end of

³⁵Ibid., p. 88.

the novel. Jack's unhealthy response might be contrasted with Ralph's healthier--though still inadequate, as has been shown--response, for example, in the same assembly.

In the healthier person, anger is reactive (to a present situation) rather than a characterological reservoir from the past. That is, it is a realistic effective response to something real and present, for instance to injustice or exploitation or attack, rather than a cathartic overflow of misdirected and ineffective revenge upon innocent bystanders for sins that someone else had committed long ago. Anger does not disappear with psychological health; rather it takes the form of decisiveness, self-affirmation, self-protection, justified indignation, fighting against evil, and the like. And such a person is apt to be a more effective fighter, for justice, for example, than the average person.

In a word, healthy aggression takes the form of personal strength and self-affirmation. The aggression of the unhealthy person or of the unfortunate or exploited person is more apt to take on a flavor of malice, sadism, blind destructiveness, domination, cruelty.³⁶

Though Jack further limits his self-concept by thus seeking a violent solution to his problems, he nonetheless provides an acceptable formula for meeting the terror the boys all feel.

As he sees it, Jack's basic problem at this time is the challenge of Ralph and Piggy to his identity as hunter chieftain. Jack might well have allowed Ralph the responsibility of deciding all other matters on the island if only he were recognized and understood as the supreme authority and leader of the hunt. Ralph

³⁶Maslow, pp. 162-163.

and Piggy, however, are continually intruding in various ways which tend to belittle his triumphs and humiliate him. A further important instance is the sighting of the beast by Samneric. Jack immediately recognizes the beast as a problem for the hunters, but Ralph's response to the suggestion is almost a sneer. When the hunt does get underway, Ralph is the leader, not Jack. Jack is given the leadership during various parts of the search, but when Ralph leads he can quickly sense "the rising antagonism, understanding that this was how Jack felt as soon as he ceased to lead." When Ralph takes part in a pig-hunt and is the only one to spear the encircled boar, Jack feels all the more the challenge to his steadily-diminishing identity. Feeling that he can no longer maintain any positive self-concept while subjecting himself to the various slights of Ralph's leadership, Jack, on their return, calls an assembly for the purpose of overthrowing Ralph as chief. The failure of this attempt causes a deep momentary loss of identity, and Jack regresses to childish language: "I'm not going to play any longer. Not with you."³⁷

The agony of his failure also causes him to become obsessed with the need for absolute control on the island; his ego demands the absolute submission of all the boys to his will and whim. It is not enough that the hunters acknowledge him as chief; he insists on forcing recognition even from Ralph and Piggy. He has two savages

³⁷Lord of the Flies, pp. 113,121.

go through a choral ritual after he issues his invitation: "The Chief has spoken." By subverting his entire personality to the ego demands for absolute power, Jack suffers a loss of identity. This loss is clearly shown by the fact that Jack's communication with his hunters is limited to his sharp commands and queries and the tribe's obsequious responses. Jack has allowed his identity to shrink to the point where it is represented simply by symbols of power; his knife, his spear, the jealously guarded title of "Chief", and later, Piggy's broken glasses. He is described as a deity gloatingly receiving tribute of the devout. His passionate pursuit of power is all there is to his being. "Power lay in the brown swell of his forearms: authority sat on his shoulders and chattered in his ears like an ape."³⁸

The effect on his identity of his having completely engrossed himself in the pursuit of power is vividly revealed in the aftermath of Simon's murder. Jack has insulated himself from the horrible truth--and from the knowledge of self that accompanied it--more completely than anyone else. The Chief is the only one of the savages who does not shudder in horror as he formulates a means of evading the terrible responsibility.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 127,134,143.

'--and then; the beast might try to come in.
You remember how he crawled--'

The semicircle shuddered and muttered in agreement.

'He came--disguised. He may come again even though we gave him the head of our kill to eat. So watch; and be careful.'

His only blush of humility comes when he is forced to admit a dependence on the others for fire. He is determined to eliminate this final limitation to his power. When he executes his last raid on Ralph's camp, his identity as chief seems finally secure.

He was chief now in truth; and he made stabbing motions with his spear. From his left hand dangled Piggy's broken glasses.³⁹

At the time of the raid neither Piggy nor Ralph seemed likely to challenge Jack's identity as chief. Even when Ralph does appear at Castle Rock, Jack appears willing to allow Ralph to live peaceably at the other end of the island as long as Ralph makes no attempt to reassert his former position as chief or interfere in any way with Jack's exercise of his power. But Ralph cannot let him alone. When Ralph's accusations uncover truths about himself he needs desperately to repress if his ego demands are to be met, Jack's hatred is roused. At first Jack apparently only wishes to hurt Ralph, but Roger's killing of Piggy unleashes Jack's full fury.

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

³⁹Ibid., pp. 152,160.

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

He ran forward, stooping.

'I'm chief!'

Viciously, with full intention, he hurled his spear at Ralph.

From this moment Jack feels that Ralph's very existence is a threat to his identity as chief. This feeling, then, is "that indefinable connexion" between Ralph and Jack, the reason Jack will never let Ralph go. Ralph's existence will always be a reproach, a reminder of what Jack really is--"a beast and a swine and a bloody, bloody thief." Ralph will never let Jack forget who was chosen chief. Jack will stop at nothing to destroy Ralph because Jack wishes to destroy the rational side of his own nature that Ralph has come to represent. In seeking to destroy Ralph he therefore destroys his own selfhood.⁴⁰

Jack's destruction of self is not reversed, however, by his ultimate failure to destroy Ralph, and when Ralph, at the end claims the title of chief, Jack's inability to offer a challenge completes Jack's loss of identity and his alienation.

Jack's loss of identity, though greater than that of any other boy's, is nonetheless representative of all the others' loss,

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 172,175,170.

except Ralph's. Except for Ralph, who at the end is the only unpainted bigun, all the boys revert to savages. Bill is a typical example:

He had even glimpsed one of them, striped brown, black, and red, and had judged that it was Bill. But really, thought Ralph, this was not Bill. This was a savage whose image refused to blend with that ancient picture of a boy in shorts and shirt.

Golding emphasizes the general loss of identity in another way. Percival in the beginning was the only boy identified by a complete name and address. In the end he no longer knows who he is:

Other boys were appearing now, tiny tots some of them, brown, with distended bellies of small savages. One of them came close to the officer and looked up.

'I'm, I'm--'

But there was no more to come. Percival Wemys Madison sought in his head for an incantation that had faded clean away.

They are all anonymous little savages:

A semicircle of little boys, their bodies streaked with coloured clay, sharp sticks in their hands.⁴¹

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 174, 191, 190.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Maslow sums up the qualities of a self-actualizing person as follows:

1. Clearer, more efficient perception of reality.
2. More openness to experience.
3. Increased integration, wholeness, and unity of the person.
4. Increased spontaneity, expressiveness; full functioning; aliveness.
5. A real self; a firm identity; autonomy, uniqueness.
6. Increased objectivity, detachment, transcendence of self.
7. Recovery of creativeness.
8. Ability to fuse concreteness and abstractness.
9. Democratic character structure.
10. Ability to love....

In addition, there are subjective confirmations or reinforcements of self-actualization or of good growth toward it. These are the feelings of zest in living, of happiness or euphoria, of serenity, of joy, of calmness, of responsibility, of confidence in one's ability to handle stresses, anxieties, and problems.¹

On the basis of Maslow's description, it has been shown that, of all the boys in Lord of the Flies marooned on the island where seemingly endless opportunities exist for them to relate to themselves, to each other, and to their little world, only Simon finds his identity.

Simon realizes his self in two peak experiences. The first occurs after early indications that all is not well on the island: talk of

¹Maslow, p. 157.

the "beastie", friction between Ralph and Jack, Jack's obsession with hunting, and a general apathy toward good order. Simon's experience, which occurs in a little spot in the jungle, allows him to understand and accept intuitively the passionate and spiritual sides of his nature, to relate to the other boys and to the world of nature. As a result of this experience he assumes the role of persuading the others that the "beastie" is only a product of their own irrational fear.

Simon's second peak experience coincides with a crisis on the island. The group has split into rival factions, all the boys are terror-stricken of the beast (actually the body of the fallen airman), Ralph's leadership has lapsed, and the brutal regime of the hunter tribe succeeds. Simon renders articulate his intuitive knowledge of self as he confronts the head of a pig stuck on a stick that the hunters have offered as a propitiation to the beast. In the Lord of the Flies scene Simon resists a series of temptations: to give up in despair, to accept the belief that the beast is an external being, to regard the whole incident as a joke, to accept the identity of "just an ignorant silly little boy" that the others would bestow on him, to yield to the desire to be liked and accepted. Having met this trial, Simon fulfills his identity by accepting the role of determining the exact truth of whatever has terrified the boys and of bringing that truth to them even at the

risk of death. In meeting his death, Simon overcomes irrational fear and so achieves the highest potentiality of his being.

Ralph is just as active initially as Simon in his search for identity, but his search is too narrowly restricted to his pragmatic responsibilities as chief. He attempts to repress the passionate side of his being instead of examining it and trying to understand it. His failure to look steadily at the dark side of his being is the root of his failure to solve a number of problems. This failure in turn results in an almost complete catastrophe on the island. First, he fails to explain away the question of the beast when it first arises; he fails to understand Jack and thus fails to avoid a bitter conflict with him; he allows Jack to goad him into a night-time encounter with the "beast" when his better judgment favors an approach by daylight. Thus, instead of allaying the terror that afflicts the boys, he adds significantly to it. He then lapses into despair, succumbs to Jack's adroit invitation to a feast and thus tacitly recognizes Jack's supremacy. He is driven by terror with the others to murder Simon, then is persuaded by Piggy to deny that he played any part in the horrible deed. Repressing his guilt, he is enabled to assume a moral superiority over Jack. He leads a disastrous expedition to persuade Jack to return Piggy's glasses and thus becomes indirectly responsible for Piggy's death and very nearly his own. Still unable to face the ugly truth

about himself and his situation or the terrors of the night or being alone, Ralph places himself in jeopardy and would certainly have been killed but for the fortuitous arrival of a naval party at the end of the novel. Even at the end Ralph's knowledge of himself and the human situation is very limited.

Piggy does not search for his identity. His self-awareness at the time of his death is no greater than at the beginning of the novel. His conscious attitude toward himself and life in general allows little room for the irrational. Life is "scientific", he declares. In a moment of awareness he does admit to being frightened "of us", but he quickly represses the thought. But he never succeeds in repressing his irrational impulses. Despite his strong feeling that Jack is the root of all evil on the island, his stronger impulse toward self-gratification prevails when he persuades Ralph to accept Jack's invitation to the feast. He even yields to the impulse to kill during the horrible frenzied ritual murder of Simon. He succeeds so well in repressing his part in the murder, though, that two days later he can make an eloquent plea for justice after his glasses have been stolen by Jack's tribe. His speech inspires Ralph and Samneric to join an expedition of utter folly and disaster to recover Piggy's glasses from Jack's murderous tribe. Piggy is killed because of his blindness to the irrational in himself and others.

Jack's loss of identity can be traced clearly through the use of names. His initial strong identity is revealed by his insistence on being called Merridew. After Ralph is chosen chief, however, he accepts being called Jack. Then, when he establishes his tribe, his loss of identity is shown by his demand that he be simply the "Chief". In the end his almost complete loss of identity is shown when he gives up the title and allows Ralph to claim it. He becomes just "a little boy who wore the remains of an extraordinary black cap on his red hair and who carried the remains of a pair of spectacles at his waist."² Jack early discovers within him the impulses of the hunter which soon become inseparable from those of the hunted. Instead of examining these impulses and understanding them, he surrenders himself to them and becomes a driven being. He becomes obsessed with the idea of becoming, not a fully integrated self, but a hunter chieftain concerned only with the gratification of his need for power and of his hunter instincts. He uses the terror prevalent on the island to achieve his ego demands so that terror soon becomes not just a means to achieving power but his method of maintaining power. His compulsive demands for absolute power destroy not only his identity but most of the island and the identities of the other boys as well.

²Lord of the Flies, p. 191.

Golding, in Lord of the Flies, has explored through his characters the dimension of the search for identity, the great importance of achieving it, as well as the great difficulties involved in the search. Through the disaster that befalls the island the reader can see the catastrophe that threatens mankind itself unless large numbers of men are willing to undertake an intensive search for identity.

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