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Power, Authority, and the Future of Mankind

Rereading William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*

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Abstract

This paper aims to consider a series of politico-symbolic aspects in a specific politicized dystopia of the twentieth century: *Lord of the Flies* (1954) by William Golding (1911–1993). This analysis is paired with a brief overview of the relationship between utopian fictions and politics.

Keywords: political theory, English literature, state of nature, political symbolism, Hobbes.

Moč, avtoriteta in prihodnost človeštva. Ponovno branje *Gospodarja muh* Williama Goldinga

Povzetek

Pričujoči prispevek želi premisliti niz politično-simbolnih vidikov znotraj specifične politično obarvane distopije dvajsetega stoletja: romana *Gospodar muh* (1954) Williama Goldinga (1911–1993). Analizo spremlja kratek pregled razmerja med utopično fikcijo in politiko.

Ključne besede: politična teorija, angleška književnost, naravno stanje, politični simbolizem, Hobbes.

1. Politics and dystopian literature

Certain literary genres have a peculiar relationship with politics (and political theory). Although dystopian fictions developed their most recent form at the beginning of the twentieth century (Sargent 2010), the early use of the term "dystopian" was reported in the political field long before the outburst of dystopian fiction. The English philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) coined the term in a Commons debate on Irish Land Tithes in 1868 (Mill 1868). Despite the fact that the reference was to a series of impracticable government plans—a response to the nineteenth-century Great Famine in Ireland—, Mill (rhetorically) introduced this word as playing the role of antonym of a specific (idyllic) conception, namely, *utopia*. Utopian visions and dimensions corresponded to a specific type of narrative fiction (More 1516). Although Thomas More's classic presented itself as socio-political satire (Sargent 2010), *Utopia* peculiarly defined a relationship between literature and politics, and a special form of narrative pertaining to such. More precisely, Mill rhetorically adopted the term "dystopian," since he could rely on the common understanding—within the British cultural environment—of its opposite conception, that is "utopian" (Stock 2019). The latter implied at once political and narrative perspectives: the political use of a term—which belongs to the fictional/rhetorical realm—implies the endowment of a specific dynamic. Therefore, the political connotation of a word is granted once the *realpolitik* allows for it. Thus, it is possible to notice a dynamic that rules the relationship between the political life of a kingdom (i.e., Mill's speech) and its representation—even though here offered in its distorted version. By means of a rhetorical expedient, the opposite conception of utopia is herein introduced.

Although a relationship between the political sphere and its representation is stressed, it is not entirely possible to neatly separate one from the other. Storytelling is a crucial component in certain political processes (Bellini 2011; Bonvecchio 2014; Wunenburger 2020). For instance, the notions of "consensus" (Arendt 2005) and "imaginary" (Wunenburger 2016) peculiarly characterize the interaction between politics and storytelling. If, on the one hand, political narratives are crucial in the establishment of a (total or partial) consensus, then, on the other hand, some narrative forms relate much more than other to

the mere community's consensus. Speech, stories, *images*—which also entail political implications—convey and deal with rational and irrational aspects of the whole community and its members (including the single individual). Significant images, pictures, and symbols constitute a crucial part of the collective imaginary of any society. According to the French anthropologist Gilbert Durand, the imaginary of a social system is conceived through the meeting "of the faculty of imagination and the heritage of cultural symbols" (Durand 1960). This implies two further considerations: the way ideas and symbols are ordered and mutually integrated is not entirely designed by man himself, rather, it is—according to Durand—linked to the interaction between the psychophysical dimension of the individual and the "social cosmic environment" around him; moreover, there is a strict connection between the members of the community and the sphere of their "cultural and intellectual meanings" (Wunenburger 2016). Therefore, cultural representations are an integral part of the collective imaginary and an expression of a specific community. The "world of representations" reflects—and embodies—both rational and irrational aspects of the community members (i.e., their feelings, expectations, concepts, values, ideas). The way these latter are represented, symbolized—or even manipulated or influenced—is a substantial part of political processes (like power legitimization, on which see: Chiodi 2011; Bonvecchio and Bellini 2017) of a social system (Wunenburger 2020). In addition, the use of symbols and images which root the "cultural codes" of the modern state heavily influences perceptions of reality (Bellini 2011). Thus, this collective dimension of the imaginary shows a strict, solid interrelation between literature and politics.

It is in light of this digression that it is worth approaching the political narratives that interest the focus of this article. The rise—and affirmation—of the dystopian genre in the twentieth century is hugely indebted to the previous form of utopian literacy (Stock 2019). The developments of the dystopian genre imply a peculiar form of relationship between *fiction* and politics. More specifically, both terms, utopia and dystopia, entail political features. Dystopian narratives are literally grown in the same ground of *fin-de-siècle* utopias (Stock 2019). Thus, the political use of the dichotomy utopia/dystopia is not limited to rhetorical assists to the *realpolitik* (for the sake of accuracy,

the "dystopian" counterpart in this case, see Mill 1868). In order to properly consider the relationship between utopian literary forms—which represent the conceptual field where dystopian fictions are embedded—and politics, it is necessary to stress one specific factor: despite their (possible) didactic message, utopian fictions do not have *textual resolution* (Widdicombe 1990). This implies that utopian works (and fictional ones, in general) do not lead to an ultimate meaning (or *truth*) that every person agrees upon.[1] More specifically, utopian fictions offer potential, imaginable futures, whose realization is not imminent, nor practicable in the here and now.[2] Although it is possible to reckon that this kind of fictional works might have a didactic purpose—or a political one—, such is not linked to any univocal interpretation. The fact of being open to interpretation does not imply that a certain novel—and/or its storytelling—is particularly promiscuous or obscure (or easily to manipulate). This issue is strictly connected to the nature of specific narratives: the form of certain cultural representations seems to deal with a physical/material/rational component and an ideological ("*irrational*") one. Political themes and narratives—with utopian and dystopian characters—show how these two parts can be conjugated. According to a peculiar interpretation of history, some *cultural artifacts* express an "active form of political desire" (Stock 2019), which also includes the utopian urge to wish for a better world (or society, see Bloch 1988). Thus, the rational/physical component (the artifact itself) is matched with the ideal/irrational one (the utopian *impulse*, see Bloch 1988). This tension between these two parts prevents conceiving of literary works as static representations of history (whether this latter is fictional or not), where a definitive ending or interpretation is given. Utopian literary forms become an active manifestation of socio-political tensions through their storytelling. Given their hybrid nature—where *reality* meets halfway with *virtuality*—, it is possible to consider utopian fictions as a peculiar expression of the collective imaginary of a community.

1 This is equally valid for the political consensus.
2 Although it is possible to notice here some favorable conditions for the outset of the so-called "utopianism" (or Rawlsian ideal theory), there is not enough room to treat the subject properly. Therefore, the description of "utopian fictions" offered herein is mainly borrowed from Corin Braga's analysis (see Braga 2006).

Thus, utopian fictions become an open field for the single individual as well as whole communities to project themself into. However, this *virtuality* of utopia does not imply a single interpretation. Politically speaking, the purpose of the narrative form might be addressed. Just as the utopian impulse manifests itself through fictions, this implies that the converse is also possible. If it is possible to conceive these narratives as a reflection of the political life of the community, then Mill's speech actually introduced a new, crucial element to our politico-symbolic analysis: the English philosopher rhetorically coined—and adopted—the opposite conception of *Utopia*. In addition, scholars of political narratives have considered different literary forms—and deviations—other than the utopian ones. This is the case of anti-utopian and dystopian novels. Although today it is still difficult to find a generally accepted definition of both, the conceptual evolution of these narratives is quite enlightening. According to the British sociologist Krishan Kumar, anti-utopia is the "malevolent and grimacing doppelgänger" of utopia (Kumar 1987). However, these two forms of political narratives are connected to each other and—like dystopia—share the same historic-conceptual ground. Kumar affirmed that utopia and anti-utopia, which are conceived as peculiar declinations of a main storytelling process, are influenced by the idea of progress. In other words, optimistic and pessimistic representations of possible worlds and societies are shaped according to a peculiar, cultural(-symbolic) *forma mentis*. This feature—despite the reference to colonialism or particular socio-historical phenomena that might have had an influence on the way storytelling was developed throughout the course of history—defines and interconnects these two types of narratives. In Kumar's words: "Anti-utopia shares in the fate of utopia. As utopia loses its vitality, so too does anti-utopia. The power and imagery of utopia have always been the driving force and indispensable material of anti-utopia." (Kumar 1987.)

Although different definitions and interpretations have been offered in recent years, one thing is certain: utopia and anti-utopia (and dystopia as it will be shown) are interconnected. No matter whether anti-utopia was concealed within its counterpart since the publication of Thomas More's masterpiece (Braga 2006) or anti-utopia authors already existed since late antiquity (Sargent 2010), the point is that these two narratives share a mutual existence throughout modernity.

Some scholars have also argued that anti-utopia is the total denial—of the political premises and/or of intentions—of utopia (Braga 2006). Unfortunately, it is beyond the focus of this article to consider this specific aspect of political narratives. Yet, it is indeed crucial to stress how this opposition establishes a sort of dialogue between these two types of fictional works. More precisely, the openness to interpretation of utopian literacy leads to a singular or collective identification of the community (i.e., collective imaginary), as well as the projection of a series of irrational/ideal aspects. Now, the most important fact about the impossibility of textual resolution is not the unfeasibility of the (anti-utopian, utopian, or dystopian) project, but rather that this impossibility of the work (along with its virtual status as cultural representation within the collective imaginary) turns storytelling into an *in fieri* process. Because of its impossibility, this story has yet to be told. On a politico-symbolic level, this virtual (un-ended) status of utopian projects and narratives harbors peculiar implications. This dialogue between utopia and anti-utopia implies two different political features: how fiction storytelling might or not result in being convincing—and then create partial or total consensus (i.e., how the positivistic or pessimistic nature of the fictional novel might address collective expectations, hopes, fears—or even nightmares). The first aspect implies a strict relationship with the domain of *realpolitik*, and, in the worst-case scenario, this factor also leads to the manipulation of the fictional work (or media, see Riker 1986). The other aspect still concerns the consensus, but, as mentioned above, it also involves power legitimization. Thus, the creation of consensus is not linked to the most convincing truth cultural representations might offer, but rather how the conception of politics itself is therein represented and conveyed. Once again, the cultural codes of a society are the main way for dealing with *kratophanic* dynamics and the political sphere.

At this point, it may be said that utopian fictions do not lead to an ultimate truth or meaning. Moreover, the openness of this literary form allows (on the politico-symbolic level) the single individual—and/or the whole community—to identify with-in the virtual projections/representation of the imaginary. It has been shown that not only utopian fictions make up a part of political processes (i.e., power legitimization), but their own nature is politically connoted. However, the direction of these series of "possible political and/

or societal representations" is not univocal. In other words, utopia—and its related cultural artifacts—differs from anti-utopia. If utopia is often associated with the portrayal of an unachievable society, whose characters are entirely positive, then anti-utopia is its opposite. Normally, anti-utopian novels envision inhumane societies, where the individuals suffer unspeakable treatments, experience shameful events, or are simply doomed to a hellish fate. To name two examples, which are strictly related to the individual and collective deprivation of human character: *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1897) and *Limbo* (1952) perfectly represent this complete opposition to the utopian pole. Although it shares the same conceptual nest, anti-utopia denies the general characterization and purpose of utopia. On the politico-symbolic level, this dialogue-contrast has some serious implications. The Irish-American scholar Tom Moylan conceives anti-utopia as "the textual form that critiques and rejects not only Utopia but also the political thought and practice that is produced and motivated by Utopia as a force of societal transformation" (Moylan 2000). This means that, just as utopian literacy manifests a (positive) political desire, so do anti-utopian fictions also channel socio-historical expectations, albeit in critical form.

It is well attested by now how the opposition/dialogue between utopia and anti-utopia has various important politico-symbolic implications. Utopian and anti-utopian novels fight their ground to defend (and represent) social, historical, ideological positions. Cultural representations are imbued with a political characteristic as well: they belong to a collective dimension, their hybrid nature, and their purpose, are politically relevant to definite extents. However, these two narratives represent to another extent an extreme of some aspects of this storytelling. Therefore, it is necessary to find "the golden mean" among different forms of political narratives. According to Moylan, the kind of fictional work that belongs to the same cultural foreground (utopia) and offers a critical position and perspective at once is the dystopian:

> Dystopias negotiate the social terrain of Utopia and Anti-Utopia in a less stable and more contentious fashion than many of their eutopian and antiutopian counterparts. As a literary form that works between these historical antinomies and draws on the textual qualities of both

> subgenres to do so, the typical dystopian text is an exercise in a politically charged form of hybrid textuality. (Moylan 2000.)

Although such is not a generally accepted position (and definition, see Vieira 2013), dystopia is an ideal medium for considering some socio-historical implications of the collective imaginary. Besides this, it is crucial to verify a substantial character to the end of this analysis, its political component. If, on the one hand, it is self-intuitive how fictions might contribute to the collective imaginary, then, on the other hand, the influence of utopian/dystopian novels over the political domain is not entirely clear. It is necessary to focus on this fictional genre, namely, dystopia. According to the English literature scholar Adam Stock, "dystopian narratives are a form of political and politicized writing":

> I argue that dystopian narratives are a form of political and politicized writing. As rhetorical structures they can help readers to think about political questions of their day through a generic narrative framework, and because of their obvious political engagement they can and have been appealed to in wider arguments both in everyday life and in the media. (Stock 2019.)

The crucial point of the argument introduced by Stock, who gets along with other scholars on the same point, is that "story telling is itself not a politically neutral act" (Stock 2019). In this case, the way, by which thoughts, symbols, and ideas are represented, can have a political value. This implies not only the influence that narrative frameworks—and media, in general—might exert on individuals, but the mutual, reciprocal exchange between politics and literature. Fictions—more exactly, dystopian ones—are not mere "appendices" to *realpolitik*. The way some topics and themes are treated is crucial to envision imaginary—dramatic or not—scenarios, as well as to specific conceptions of politics. In the introductory part of his book, Stock stresses once more this point:

> I trace a history of modern dystopian fiction to learn more about the political upheavals, social crises and cultural anxieties which provide the context in which such literature is produced, and how they in turn perceive past experiences and possible futures alike. I contend that such texts provide an opportunity for us to enrich our understanding of the competing ideas at play during these historical moments. (Stock 2019.)

This mutual exchange between dystopias and the socio-political environment implies two further considerations: political topics and themes are fitting for this kind of narrative framework; personal and collective projection (i.e., expectations, feelings, etc.) concur to create the approach both to political topics and the political realm at large. In other words, dystopias are the perfect means to treat political topics and dynamics, since storytelling involves the political dimension. The openness of dystopian fictions deals with the same political existence of the individual, who finds themself involved in the construction of the story. This means that not only "cultural representations are active participants in the production of political discourses," but some representations are—per se—*politicized* expressions of a collective self. Thus, dystopias are the eligible mean to conduct this analysis, because its narrativity locates itself "one step from reality."

2. Between the state of nature and the exercise of power: *Lord of the Flies*

In the preceding, we have considered the connection between literature and politics. Besides the instrumental (and political) use of dystopian fictions, the nature of these cultural representations is politicized. It has been argued that there are two main factors that make this type of novels politicized: the involvement of part or the totality of the audience—through the dimension of the collective imaginary (Bellini 2011); and the way dystopias deal with political topics and dynamics (Stock 2019). Therefore, dystopian narratives are an ideal medium to

experiment with some possible (i.e., virtual),[3] extreme, unachievable (at least, at the moment) scenarios. This field of experimentation might highly contribute both to political theory and political sciences (Mayborn 2019). For instance, a specific politicized dystopia can deal with political themes while avoiding any direct references to specific politico-historical situations. This is the case of the *Lord of the Flies* (1954) by William Golding (1911–1993).

This work literally consecrated the British novelist to fame. The success of the novel consolidated the identity of Golding in the intellectual field to the point that his later works never altered this situation (Baker 2000). Golding remained during his lifetime first and foremost the author of the *Lord of the Flies*. There are two factors to consider before plunging into the plot of this volume. The first factor concerns the purpose of his work, which Golding described in a statement to the American publisher as consisting of:

> an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. The moral is that the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable. (Golding 1964.)

This statement self-evidently refers to a classic theme of political theory, namely, the "state of nature." Although this negative attitude towards "human nature" would immediately hint at some resemblance with the philosophical considerations of Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), Golding's conception is somewhat more "complex." According to Hobbes, the state of nature in its pure form was characterized by "continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes 1960). More exactly, this is what characterizes a state of nature without any societal form or government—in other words, an authentic state of anarchy. However, the main point of Golding's statement concerns another aspect of this "anarchic" state: "What does this descent towards this state of nature entail?" and "When does

3 This refers to the conception of virtuality, which is connected to the hybrid nature of political narratives and collective imaginary, and has been introduced in the previous paragraph.

it start?" This is where the moral issue begins to morph into a properly political one. In a lecture delivered to a class of American students in December 1961 (Carey 2009), Golding said:

> Before the Second World War I believed in the perfectibility of social man; that a correct structure of society would produce goodwill; and that therefore you could remove all social ills by a reorganization of society. It is possible that today I believe something of the same again; but after the war I did not because I was unable to. I had discovered what one man could do to another. I am not talking of one man killing another with a gun, or dropping a bomb on him or blowing him up or torpedoing him. I am thinking of the vileness beyond all words that went on, year after year, in the totalitarian states. It is bad enough to say that so many Jews were exterminated in this way and that, so many people liquidated—lovely, elegant word—but there were things done during that period from which I still have to avert my mind lest I should be physically sick. They were not done by the head-hunters of New Guinea, or by some primitive tribe in the Amazon. They were done, skillfully, coldly, by educated men, doctors, lawyers, by men with a tradition of civilization behind them, to beings of their own kind. […] I must say that anyone who moved through those years without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head. […] I believed then, that man was sick—not exceptional man, but average man. I believed that the condition of man was to be a morally diseased creation and that the best job I could do at the time was to trace the connection between his diseased nature and the international mess he gets himself into. (Golding 2013.)

This passage defines even more the conception of state of nature offered by Golding. One of the main features of dystopian novels that emerges here is the idea of progress. The way Golding remarks on the difference between the so-called primitive men and "educated" ones is quite indicative of the relationship with modernity. On the basis of his conception of the intrinsic, corrupted morality of men, Golding focuses on this lurking evil component in mankind.

This implies a further aspect: the purpose is to "trace a connection" between an individual dimension and the "international mess" (i.e., the global geopolitical situation at the time). The experience of the Second World War and totalitarian regimes not only strengthened Golding's conception of inner evil, but also represented the point of reference of his masterpiece. Such a noteworthy fact played an inspirational role for the genesis of the *Lord of the Flies* (see: Baker 2000; Carey 2009), as well as provided the British author with a unique chance to consider the individual in extreme socio-political conditions. To understand this deviant nature of the man, it is necessary to reproduce and observe his relationship with a "primordial state of nature."

In order to do so, Golding established some literary conditions. First of all, he selected a group of people with certain features to be introduced in the story: namely a class of British schoolboys in their adolescence. Golding voluntarily attributed them this feature, in order to exclude overtly sexual situations (Spitz 1970). Then, he located them on a desert island with an abundance of water, food, and material for sheltering themselves from weather alterations. This led to the avoidance of any peculiar survival issue or accident. Last but not least, he wanted all the boys to be "equal," meaning no classes or status inequalities. In sum, Golding wanted to recreate the circumstances of an ideal society—in David Spitz's words, "a veritable utopia" (Spitz 1970). Besides the purpose of investigating the programmatic emergence of evil within mankind, the British author intended to show such within the socio-political context. More exactly, the whole plot of the book revolves around a specific political question: the legitimacy of power (Spitz 1970).

However, before taking any further steps in the politico-symbolic analysis of the *Lord of the Flies*, a brief summary of the book is necessary. The story opens with a plane, which—flying away from the part of the world where a global war seems to have broken out—crashes on a remote, isolated island in the Pacific Ocean. Apparently, it seems that the only survivors are two of the schoolboys, the first characters to appear in the novel, Ralph and Piggy. They are both stranded on a tropical beach. Ralph regains consciousness and almost immediately finds a conch. He blows it and, suddenly, several other children gather on the beach, having followed the sound of the conch. After regrouping a little, an assembly of all the survivors is summoned. A group

of children (namely the choirboys) join the assembly. The leader of this latter group, Jack, would like to become the head of the whole community of survivors. A vote is requested, and Ralph is elected leader of the whole group of schoolboys. One of the "littluns" (i.e., the younger children of the group) makes reference to a "beastie," which nightly roams the island. However, no one seems to pay too much attention to this fact. Then, the first decision Ralph makes is to start a fire and keep it constantly alight, in order to signal their presence on the island to any passing vessel. Notwithstanding Ralph's order, the boys neglect to keep the fire lit. This event causes a plane not to detect them. Ralph and Piggy are upset, whereas the rest of the children seem to enjoy the meat Jack and his fellow hunters gathered. Ralph tries to summon another assembly, in order to regroup all the children, but this attempt miserably fails when Jack neglects the assembly—and their rules. The hot issue to deal with is the "beast," for which the majority of the children intend to organize a search. Jack and Ralph go to a remote part of the island where, notwithstanding nightfall, they keep searching for the "beastie" and climb up a mountain. Reaching the top, they come across a waving dark figure that scares them to death. They believe they have seen the "beast," and run back to the beach. Jack and his fellow hunters form their own group, leaving Ralph and Piggy aside. After a successful hunt, the group returns to their "rocky place at the end of the island" and mounts a pig head on a sharpened stick. This is an offering to the "beast," the "Lord of the Flies," named after a swarm of flies starts to constantly fly around the head. While wandering around the island, Simon reaches the top of the mountain and comes across a "parachute-borne" figure, whom he discovers to be a dead fighter pilot, hanged by his parachute on a tree, whose waving is due to the wind. That night, some celebrations are arranged by the hunters. When Simon returns to the hunters' feast from his trip, he first comes across the pig's head and has a visionary conversation with the "Lord of the Flies." Then, the group of hunters, inebriated by the feast, mistakes him for the "beast" and kills him. In the meanwhile, Jack's group becomes more and more estranged, and Ralph's group keeps its distance. Then, it happens that Jack steals Piggy's spectacles. Ralph and the blind Piggy go to the "rocky place" to confront Jack: they want Piggy's spectacles back. Jack assaults Ralph, and they start

to fight. One of Ralph's hunters, who lurks above the two, pushes a boulder down the mountain and kills Piggy. Scared to death, Ralph is hunted down by Jack and his hunters. At dawn, Ralph makes it to the beach, the rest of the children chasing him. Ralph is about to be killed as well, when suddenly a naval officer comes to his rescue. When the officer asks the children what happened to them, Ralph and all the other children burst out in tears.

Lord of the Flies presents itself as a parodied version of a nineteenth-century classic, namely *The Coral Island* (1857) by Robert Michael Ballantyne (1825–1894). Besides the fact that in Golding's novel the main three characters carry the same name of those in Ballantyne's, *Lord of the Flies* is an evident distortion of the latter. When the naval officer sees the other children, who look like "savages," he asks Ralph whether the situation on the island was like in Ballantyne's novel. He then exclaims "I know. Jolly good show. Like the Coral Island." (Golding 1964.) However, the reality is far different from that. Besides the nightmarish descent into a primitive state of nature, where—per the Hobbesian conception—"*Homo homini lupus est*" is thoroughly applied to the social context, this dystopian novel offers a realistic insight into the legitimacy of power. According to Hobbes, what confers power to an individual is authority (Hobbes 1960). Thus, the quest for authority is the core of the *Lord of the Flies*. More exactly, the dystopia poses a specific question (according to Spitz's vision as well, see Spitz 1970): "What confers authority to an individual?" Therefore, the evolution of the story implies a series of politico-symbolic steps that grapple with this issue.

According to certain historic-political circumstances, such authority is derived directly from God (Chiodi 2011). Thus, a prophet anoints and proclaims a king by the power he receives from the divine sphere. Over time, literary critics have offered several interpretations of Golding's masterpiece, nonetheless all agreeing on one point: Simon is the Christ-figure of the *Lord of the Flies* (see: Spitz 1970; Baker 2000; Carey 2009). Probably epileptic, Simon is the one who talks to the apparition of the "Lord of the Flies" who reveals to the boy that the "beast" is inside them and not lurking somewhere else in the forest. He is the one who discovers that the dead pilot hanging on the tree is not the "beast," but just a corpse: he is not deceived by a "false god." According to Spitz's interpretation, he is killed by men/children who do not recognize him.

If authority does not come from God himself, then it should definitely be associated with reason. Piggy, portrayed as a chubby schoolboy, is the philosopher-figure of the novel (a "Socrates," as Spitz puts it). He is the one who advises Ralph to use the conch to gather the assembly of children and start a democratic process. He is the one who wears spectacles, which are also used to light the fire at the children's camp on the beach. He "calls for order and justice," he is the one who understands the symbolic value of the conch in its connection with power legitimacy. He is also the one who recognizes, by way of theoretical reasoning, that there is no "beast" on the island. Piggy is the incarnation of reason in the social context with a "fragile structure," where reason is soon overthrown by the insurgence of other *necessities*. When Piggy is deprived of his spectacles, he cannot see a thing and is completely useless to Ralph's cause.

At this point, what confers the individual authority, should definitely be consent. Ralph symbolizes this democratic/political virtue. He is a born leader, and he is the one who uses the conch to gather the assembly. He is charismatic and has "the directness of genuine leadership." He chooses Piggy as his advisor and wins the election against Jack. He is the advocate of the democratic process on the island. However, Ralph is rejected as well. In addition, he resorts to physical violence when he confronts Jack—to give Piggy back his spectacles.

This is when the main feature of the Hobbesian (anarchic) state of nature triumphs and identifies completely with the authority of might, force. Jack is the manifestation of brutal force. He is the one who uses the knife, which is the symbol of illegitimate force and might. He is the leader of the hunters and rejects Ralph and his rule. For instance, he leaves the assembly and founds his own community, of which the resemblance to Canetti's *Jagdmeute* (Canetti 1960) is quite indicative. Although he founds his own community at the "rocky place at the end of the island," he craves for the only two things he does not have: Piggy's spectacles and Ralph's conch. He is the representation of brutal force which arises against any form of reason. Jack's authority is the incarnation of the irrational forces that populate the obscure part of humankind (Golding 1964).

At the end of the novel, when the naval officer saves Ralph's life, Jack and the other children look like savages. According to the British author, their

appearance is related to this degeneration in the power governance. Might and violence is the only form of authority they know, and Golding depicts Jack as follows: “Power lay in the brown swell of his forearms: authority sat on his shoulder and chattered in his ear like an ape.” Jack himself has morphed into the *beast*. According to a specific interpretation of the novel, it can be said that the descent into this state of nature—which in Golding’s work features as brutal because of the inner, corrupted dimension of the individual—is a remarkable insight into the political extremization of contemporary society.

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