

## GOLDING'S *LORD OF THE FLIES*: PRIDE AS ORIGINAL SIN

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"Just as the mathematicians say the rainbow is an appearance of the sun embellished by its reflection into a cloud, so the present myth is the appearance of a reality which turns the mind back to other thoughts."

— Plutarch —  
*Isis et Osiris*

In "Fable," William Golding avers that *Lord of the Flies* is a multilayered work and open to various interpretations.<sup>1</sup> The novel has been plausibly interpreted as a Christian parable<sup>2</sup> and Greek tragedy, and less plausibly with reference to neo-Freudian, Jungian, and Marxian concepts.<sup>3</sup> In what has become the authoritative interpretation of *Lord of the Flies*, James R. Baker and Bernard Dick, who base their respective arguments on textual evidence and Golding's professed admiration for Greek tragedy,<sup>4</sup> conclude that the form and substance of Golding's myth owes much to Euripides's *Bacchae*.<sup>5</sup> Both Baker and Dick argue that *Lord of the Flies* is an allegory on the disintegration of society due to a tragic flaw in human nature: man fails to recognize, and thereby appease, the irrational part of his soul.

Ralph at the end of the novel, on the precipice, stares uncomprehendingly into the irrational darkness of his soul. He cries for the loss of innocence. He cries for the loss of his rational friend Piggy, who also denied the irrational. The boys have committed the sin of Pentheus, according to Baker, by trying to impose "in their innocent pride" an order on the "vital chaos of their own nature."<sup>6</sup> Their attempt took the form of a parliamentary government, and it failed. They regress into barbarism. The plight of the boys becomes an allegory for the plight of modern man, who denies and fears the irrational. Mankind's essential illness is irrational fear.

But such a conclusion does not adequately account for Golding's emphasis on "off-campus history",<sup>7</sup> the concept through which he explores the meaning of

*Lord of the Flies*. Indeed, Dick candidly admits that he is “vexed” by Golding’s emphasis.<sup>8</sup> Off-campus history, which Golding distinguishes from academic history, is characterized by prejudice for and pride in one’s own. The partisan and the sport-fan alike are moved by the fortunes of their heroes; their passion for their own agitates them and clouds their judgment, whereas the scholar’s objectivity inures him to partisan passions. Fear, the dead parachutist, and the various other manifestations of the beast are symbols of off-campus history and point to the vital core of this fabulist’s tale.

No interpretation of *Lord of the Flies*, however, has sought an Egyptian influence. Yet Golding’s interest in ancient Egypt and the Osiris myth is well documented.<sup>9</sup> This myth apparently left an indelible impression upon Golding, and its influence reverberates in the symbolism of *Lord of the Flies*. But most importantly, an Osirian interpretation illuminates man’s fallen nature, while explaining the importance attached by Golding to off-campus history. The “trite, obvious and familiar” moral lesson of Golding’s novel<sup>10</sup> is that we are capable of the most heinous cruelties in the service of our pride.

The “beastie” appears to the reader in a variety of guises: as a “snake-thing,” “beast from water,” “beast from air,” and, finally, as an aspect of human nature. The nature of the beast is also implied by the suggestive symbolism of the title, *Lord of the Flies*.<sup>11</sup> The “lord of the flies,” or Beelzebub, has been associated with the Christian devil.<sup>12</sup> Leaving aside the pregnant symbolism of the decaying pig-head, the beastie as a snake-thing invites comparison to the serpent of the Garden of Eden.<sup>13</sup> However, in the Osiris myth the Egyptian daemon Set-Typhon is also represented by “snakes,”<sup>14</sup> and with the ascent of Christianity he was transfigured into Baal or Beelzebub.<sup>15</sup>

A biblical interpretation of the symbolism of the snake is not at variance with an Osirian interpretation. Golding imputes that the fallen nature of man is related to his temptation by the subtle serpent in mythical Eden. Mankind’s fallen nature is his desire to be “wise” and “as gods.”<sup>16</sup> This would reduce the fallen nature of man to pride. May we then attribute man’s ills, including war, to his vanity?

Set-Typhon, intriguingly, is also associated with the sea. The “beast from the air” comes, as it were, from “a sudden bright explosion” carried by the changing winds to its resting place on the island. Typhon, who is also regarded as “fire,” (367C) later became the god of winds. The narrator also informs us that the boys arrived on the island by some “enchantment. Some act of God—a typhoon perhaps.”<sup>17</sup> It strikes us as more than coincidental that typhoon is derived from Typhon. Moreover, this passage appears to refer to the arrival of the boys, or Ralph, on the island. Given the construction of this passage, “his” could refer to the arrival of a god.

The beast’s manifestations as “from the sea,” “from the air,” and “in us” are all associated with war. Rescue, long awaited and desperately needed, comes in the form of a trim warship off-shore; that is, rescue comes from the sea. The dead parachutist bears a message from the adult world, to the boys, from a “battle

fought at ten miles' height." This sign descends upon the boys just as their society is disintegrating, and just as Ralph cries out for a sign from the supposedly well-ordered adult world, a world which, the narrator informs us, is embroiled in a cataclysmic war.<sup>18</sup> Our diseased nature, the beast "in us," leads the boys to war and barbarism just as it does in the adult world.<sup>19</sup>

The Osiris myth accounts for the emergence of discord and, hence, war. It thereby demonstrates the precariousness of civilization. According to Plutarch, while reigning as king on earth, the god Osiris gave the Egyptians civilization by introducing laws, worship of the gods, marriage, and agriculture. Before Osiris gave them agriculture the Egyptians had been savages and cannibals. Osiris's brother, the daemon Set-Typhon, filled with envy and pride, sought to usurp his throne. Frustrated in his attempt to take his brother's place, Typhon tricked Osiris and drowned him. Isis, the wife of Osiris, searched for the body, regained it and concealed it in the woods. Typhon, while hunting pig during a full moon, discovered and mutilated it. A war, punctuated with "terrible deeds" and "confusion," ensued until Horus, son of Osiris, appears to have defeated Typhon. But as Plutarch notes, although "weakened and shattered [the] power of Typhon still gasps and struggles" (362E).

Plutarch informs us that the wise interpret the myth as an explanation of entirely natural phenomena: the Nile is Osiris, Isis the earth, and Typhon the sea. The yearly inundation of the Nile valley marks the victory of Osiris and Horus over Typhon. But Plutarch also makes it quite clear that a strict allegory is an insufficient guide to understanding. The "wisest," Plutarch continues, "think that nature must contain in itself the creation and origin of evil as well as good" (369D). Osiris, then, represents good in the universe and Typhon evil. The creative, fertilizing, and nourishing aspects of nature are represented by Osiris as is the order of the universe. Typhon symbolizes "everything harmful and destructive in nature" (369A).

Plutarch also states that this myth, "because it is inbred into the body and into the soul of the universe," reverberates with meaning for the soul of man. Osiris represents reason and mind (*nous kai logos*) in addition to creativity (371A). Moreover, Plutarch concludes that Osiris and Dionysus are the same deity (356). They either represent the same qualities within the soul or have the same origin and source. The identification of Osiris with both the reasonable and creative elements of the soul (373B) poses a problem, because Osiris as both the creative principle and dispassionate reason questions our modern disassociation of reason from creativity or reason from intuition.

Typhon represents "the element of soul which is passionate, akin to the Titans, without reason, and brutish" (371B). He personifies the overpowering, violent, and proud (371B). On account of these qualities, Typhon lusted after Osiris's preferred position. His desire to garner power was described by Plutarch as a "mad frenzy" (368D). The ritual slaughter of animals becomes identified with Typhon through this myth.

The dramatic movement of the Osiris myth flows from the character of the daemon Typhon. Typhon's desire to rule leads him to wage war against his brother. If this myth does speak to the soul of man, and man like nature contains both Osirian and Typhonic traits, then we can conclude that man is by nature proud.<sup>20</sup> Man can, therefore, be said to be a fallen creature because of his desire to be preferred. Pride leads some, in this myth Typhon, to heroic exertions, but also to harm others. Thus, Typhon may be said to be heroic and sick. Pride leads to war.

The Typhonic element of human nature, in *Lord of the Flies*, is represented by Jack. Jack is red-haired, freckled, hence ruddy, and prone to blush when angry and frustrated. Typhon, according to the tradition, is described as red and ruddy. Indeed, red-haired men were burned and abused in ancient Egypt because they represented Typhon.<sup>21</sup> When Jack's face "blushes with mortification," on the election of Ralph, he can be said to be red. And as Golding again describes, after the second vote, "Jack turned, red in face," because he had been outwitted (p. 115).<sup>22</sup> Jack desires to be preferred, and when his pride is offended he blushes. It should also be noted that when Ralph's moral superiority is in doubt he too blushes (p. 137). Thus, blushing appears as a manifestation of wounded pride. Golding's depiction of the character Jack, and blushing, accords well with Plutarch's description of Typhon as envious, proud, and red.

Jack's soul is also Typhonic. He evinces an overweening ambition and a burning desire to be chief, demonstrated by his competition with Ralph both when the boys first selected a chief and when Jack calls for a vote of "no confidence" in Ralph. After his second parliamentary defeat, Jack responds by creating his own society and waging war on Ralph's. Jack's successful society is dedicated to hunting, war, protection from the beast, but most importantly to placating Jack's ego. Jack's regime reverts to savagery, and the narrator describes it as "demented" (p. 92). It is the antithesis of the society he opposes, the society made possible by Piggy and his specs.

Ralph seems to be the civilized counterpart to Jack: Osiris to Jack's Typhon. Ralph blows the conch, articulates the idea for a rescue fire, and, according to Jack, "gives the orders." Ralph certainly looks the part of a leader and, unlike Piggy, he comes from the class expected to lead.<sup>23</sup> He insists that the boys must have and follow rules.

Yet after arriving on the island, Ralph does not know how he got there. The opening conversation makes it pellucid that Piggy does. Although Ralph discovers the conch, Piggy knows what it is and how to use it. But perhaps, most important of all, Piggy sees the need for a meeting. Once the boys are gathered, Piggy "moved among the crowd asking names and frowning to remember them" (p. 17). Not Ralph, but Piggy knows the importance of assemblies. Piggy can, for these reasons, be deemed the true founder of the parliamentary society created by the assembly. At the start of the novel, the narrator states, "what intelligence had been shown was traceable to Piggy" (p. 21).

Damning to the interpretation that Ralph is the reasonable character is his attraction to the seductions of hunting, fierce exhilaration, and ambition. In the incident where Ralph almost maims Robert in the ecstasy of a pig killing ritual, he was "carried away by a sudden thick excitement" and overmastered by a "desire to squeeze and hurt" (p. 104). More damning is his participation in yet another pig killing ritual: the murder of Simon. His self-forgetting in the irrational, frenzy of the boy's orgiastic rituals conspires against the *Bacchae* interpretation, discussed above, for the authors of that interpretation concluded that Ralph was Pentheus who tried to repress irrationality causing his downfall.<sup>24</sup> He demonstrates that he too can be carried away by mad frenzy.

If Ralph does not represent the Osirian elements, what does he represent? Following Golding, we agree that Ralph is "the average rather more than average, man of goodwill and commonsense."<sup>25</sup> Ralph represents better than average humanity,<sup>26</sup> his tale is ours.

Golding represents the duality of Osiris's nature with Simon and Piggy. They together embody that mixture of reason and intuition, which is the root of creativity. It should be recalled that the distinction made in Plutarch's *Isis et Osiris* was between the destructive and passionate, on the one hand, and creative and rational, on the other. Again, unlike modern perceptions, the Osiris myth, does not disassociate reason and creativity. Golding insists that art and reason are connected. As he related: "this business that the artist as a sort of starry-eyed inspired creature, dancing along with his feet two or three feet above the surface of the earth, not really knowing what sort of prince he's leaving behind him, is nothing like the truth."<sup>27</sup>

Golding may have felt it necessary to bifurcate Osiris to make this myth accessible to a modern audience. Golding has supported this "reduction" of Simon and Piggy to the same root by stating that Simon is "Simon called Peter," and that this character was derived, in part, from the character Peterkin Gay of Ballantyne's *Coral Island*.<sup>28</sup> Piggy is also an odd contraction of Peterkin's name by combining the first initial and one vowel of each part of his name to form PiGy.

An Osirian interpretation also avoids the difficulty of explaining why Golding deviated from Euripides over the choice of "scapegoats." Golding, according to the authors of the "*Bacchae*" interpretation, assigned the scapegoat role to Simon, but from the logic of their analysis the scapegoat should have been Ralph, "the Pentheus in embryo."<sup>29</sup> Neither Dick nor Baker offer a satisfactory solution to this problem of Golding's choice. Golding also passionately denies that Simon is a scapegoat.<sup>30</sup>

From the moment we first see the boys on the island, Piggy appears as a knower. Piggy has an inkling of the chaos into which the adult world has fallen. He understands that their coming to be on the island is linked to the war raging outside. He attempts to dispel the irrational fear of the littluns by offering a rational account of fear and the beast. Speaking of "doctors . . . for the inside of your mind," Piggy concludes that fear is in the beholder; it does not result from

a healthy apprehension of the unknown. The author has Piggy proclaim the credo of scientific humanism, "Life is scientific, that's what it is" (p. 76).

Piggy's knowledge is, however, quite limited.<sup>31</sup> Its roots are modern science and deductions from empirical observations. Only that which can be demonstrated in the light of day is real and rational. Piggy, moreover, lacks practical wisdom; he doesn't understand people. For example, he questions whether the island can sustain a beast. He asks, "What would a beast eat?" (p. 75). The obvious, and ironic, answer is that it would eat pig. He goes on to precipitate the debate that marks the boy's undoing by asking Phil to recount his experience of the beast. Phil's tortured rambling initiates a chain of events that would lead the narrator to relate, "That the world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away" (p. 82). Had Piggy been an acute observer of men, or boys, he would have realized how fragile the island society had become and foreseen the impact of Phil's tale.

Piggy's lack of prudence points to another fatal flaw in his understanding. He proves incapable of diagnosing the disease that afflicts the boys: he cannot see the beast for what it is. Piggy refuses to admit that Simon's death was murder. Calling it an accident, he refuses even to acknowledge his participation. He rationalizes the entire incident by arguing, "He hadn't no business crawling like that out of the dark. He was batty. He asked for it" (p. 143). Piggy denies the moral implication of their collective guilt. He coldly declares, "We never done nothing, we never seen nothing." Piggy's reason ill-equips him to understand the nature and origin of evil. Indeed, Piggy's scientific humanism precludes him from seeing the beast in us.

Scientific humanism, which is faith in the progressive and liberating power of science and man's ability to rationally posit values, has stripped man naked of the religious context which gave his life meaning. Confidence in mankind's ability to conquer nature and prejudice gave modern man the sensation that hitherto undreamed of possibilities were now opened to him. However, recent history and the myriad of variations on the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche indicate that scientific humanism precludes us from positing any value; that is, it precludes us from seeing evil for what it is.<sup>32</sup> The scientific humanist, the "model intellectual," is "literally in a state of free fall."<sup>33</sup>

However, there is one character who sees, but the status and nature of his understanding disturbs modern sensibilities. Golding's "saint" Simon knows the truth about the beast.<sup>34</sup> He arrives at the novel's truth about the fallen nature of man. As the lord of the flies asserts:

"There isn't anyone to help you. Only me. And I'm the Beast."

Simon's mouth labored, brought forth audible words.

"Pig's head on a stick."

"Fancy thinking that 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 a 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?" (p. 130)

This truth comes to Simon in the form of a revelation.<sup>35</sup> He had also intuited it earlier. In the disastrous assembly, which signaled the collapse of Ralph's regime, we learned that Simon knew the truth about the beast. But the boys, principally Piggy, shout him down.

Simon attempts to articulate his vision of the beast with, "What is the dirtiest thing there is?" Jack's crude, monosyllabic response literally ruins Simon's effort. The reader is left to wonder what the dirtiest thing is, Jack's response, and how they relate to the beast. From the vantage point of a young boy we may infer that excrement, which can be conveyed in one crude syllable, is the dirtiest thing.<sup>36</sup> "Shit" is in us, entirely natural, and yet invisible like the beast. Like the beast, it too evokes revulsion when it becomes manifest. Simon's inspired image and Jack's reply are altogether apt. Simon may not be able to articulate his message, because, by its very nature, it can not be rationally defended.<sup>37</sup> Simon would have been unable to persuade the other boys even if he could find the words. He is ridiculed, later mistaken for the beast, and eventually beaten to death for his insight and effort.

Simon's death symbolically marks the death of the god Osiris by the power of Typhon. Just as Simon's murder is prefigured by the pig-hunting ritual, by moonlight, so too is Osiris's body discovered by Typhon during a moonlit pig hunt. A similar fate befalls Piggy, the rational face of Osiris, in the mad, ego-driven frenzy that sweeps away the last vestiges of sanity. Again, on the surface, both the similarity of Pig to Piggy and that animal's association with Osiris support an Osirian interpretation. The sea claimed the battered bodies of Piggy and Simon just as the sea had claimed the body of Osiris.

We are not, however, offering up either Simon or Piggy as scapegoats.<sup>38</sup> A scapegoat unwillingly becomes a surrogate for the god; he appeases the god by being sacrificed to him. Given the situation on the island at the time of their deaths, we witness the stuff out of which new cults and their attendant rituals are made. We observe the death of the "gods," not their scapegoats who will come later. The return of "civilization" in the guise of the naval officer neither precludes the destruction of Western civilization, as we know it, nor that Ralph will pass on his new found knowledge in the form of a myth.

Golding appears to contradict the foregoing interpretation by insisting that Simon is a saint. His depiction of Simon as a "saint" carries definite Christian connotations. But a saint is, as Chesterton revealed, "a medicine because he is an antidote. Indeed that is why the saint is often a martyr; he is mistaken for a poison because he is an antidote."<sup>39</sup> Simon represents the antidote for a rationalism that cannot see. Simon's insight into the beast offers the boys the possibility of

salvation on the island, not, insofar as we know, in heaven. Simon's knowledge, had it been believed, would have made up for the defects in Piggy's. Piggy's knowledge coupled with the ability to see beyond mere appearance would have made Ralph's regime resilient to the inroads of Jack's barbarism.

As Leo Strauss observed, "The very life of Western civilization is the life between two codes [the biblical and Greek philosophic], a fundamental tension."<sup>40</sup> The separation of rational and revelatory knowledge, from Golding's perspective,<sup>41</sup> is both the essence and the illness of the West. It "has begotten that lame giant we call civilization as Frankenstein created his monster."<sup>42</sup> The ascendancy of scientific humanism, its inability to see or to posit eternal verities, leaves modern man free falling in the abyss of nihilism. We confront, through our excavation of Golding's myth, the value problem. Until Simon and Piggy together comprise an Osiris, Western civilization cannot diagnose, let alone cure, its essential illness.

The narrator reveals mankind's essential illness with compelling clarity in the following scene:

"This was fascinating to Henry. He poked about with a bit of stick, that itself was wave-torn and whitened and a vagrant, and tried to control the motions of the scavengers. He made little runnels that the tide filled and tried to crowd them with creatures. He became absorbed beyond mere happiness as he felt himself exercising control over living things. He talked to them, urging them, ordering them. Driven back by the tide, his footprints became bays in which they were trapped and gave him the illusion of mastery." (p. 56)

Henry, who is a child, the modern apotheosis of innocence, seeks mastery over other living things, and he too is marked by the beast. The root of his will to mastery is vanity. Henry may be distinguished from Jack, or Typhon, but only in power and magnitude. This is the terrible, dark truth that resides at the heart of *Lord of the Flies*.

Pride has various manifestations, among them honor, prestige, fame, and wealth. Off-campus history, or nationalism, is but one manifestation of this deeper tragic flaw. But perhaps even more troubling for modern man, pride in our ideas has "thrust our world into a mental straitjacket from which we can escape only by the most anarchic violence."<sup>43</sup> The virulent, global atrocities of the twentieth century were caused by both ideological pride and nationalism. But these otherwise impressive edifices are merely projections out from the self, which seeks to have its views sanctified. They are mirrors, if you will, that reflect back to us our own petty prejudices. Modern man, who can explain everything in entirely antiseptic, sanitary ways cannot, no matter how often he cleanses himself, rid himself of the decay that comes from within.



## NOTES

- 1 See "Fable," in *The Hot Gates and Other Occasional Pieces* (New York: Harcourt, 1966), p. 98 (hereafter *HG*). Golding also invites speculation on the moral lesson by arguing that "the novelist ought not to preach overtly in a fable" (p. 94). See also "Belief and Creativity," in *A Moving Target* (New York: Farrar, 1982), p. 198 (hereafter *MT*). He indicates, however, that not all of these diverse interpretations are equally correct.
- 2 See for example Howard S. Babb, *The Novels of William Golding*, 2d ed. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1986); Peter Bien, "Visions of a Latter-Day Modernist: William Golding's Nobel Prize," *World Literature Review* 58 (1982):165-66; and Virginia Tiger, *William Golding: The Dark Fields of Discovery* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1974). In support of this view, Golding points out that Simon is a "Christ-figure" and a "saint." See "Fable," p. 96, and Golding's BBC interview with Frank Kermode, "The Meaning of It All," *Books and Bookman* 5 (1959):9-10.
- 3 James J. Whitley, *Golding: Lord of the Flies* (London: Edward Arnold, 1970); E. L. Epstein, "Notes on *Lord of the Flies*," in *Golding's Lord of the Flies* (New York: Perigree Books, 1954); Leighton Hodson, *William Golding* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1969), pp. 30-31. See also Golding's own comments on the over-interpretation of *Lord of the Flies* in *MT*, pp. 171, 198.
- 4 William Golding and James R. Baker, "An Interview with William Golding," *Twentieth Century Literature* 28 (1982):165-66.
- 5 Bernard Dick, *William Golding* (New York: Twayne, 1967), pp. 26-33, and James R. Baker, "Why It's No Go," in *Critical Essays on William Golding*, ed. James R. Baker (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1988).
- 6 Baker, pp. 25ff. We may impute to the boys pride in English superiority. As Jack says, "We're English, and the English are best at everything." Howard Babb, on the other hand, argues that the "innocent pride" attributed to the boys is pride in their own wisdom (p.33 n. 8).
- 7 "Fable," p. 90.
- 8 Dick, p. 36.
- 9 See William Golding, *An Egyptian Journal* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1985), pp. 10-12, 161-62. Golding makes it clear that he is fond of Plutarch's account of the Osiris myth; indeed, he calls the absence of it on his voyage down the Nile a "disaster" (p. 12). See also Golding and Baker, "An Interview," pp. 157-58, 160, and "Egypt From My Inside," in *HG*, pp. 71-73. For additional examples of his interest in things Egyptian see William Golding, "Egypt From My Outside," in *MT*, and William Golding, *The Scorpion God: Three Short Novels* (New York: Harcourt, 1972).
- 10 "Fable," p. 88.
- 11 Whitley, p. 48.
- 12 Samuel Hynes, "William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*," in *Critical Essays on William Golding*, ed. James R. Baker (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1988) and Epstein, p. 187.
- 13 See Stephen Metcalf, *William Golding* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1975), pp. 11-12.
- 14 John Gywnn Griffiths, "Commentary," in *De Isis et Osiris*, by Plutarch (Cambridge: Univ. of Wales Press, 1970), p. 388. All references to Plutarch will be from this edition by line number in text.

- 15 Epstein, pp. 418-19. Beelzebub is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Ba'alzevuv*.
- 16 Genesis 3:3-7.
- 17 William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (New York: Perigee Books, 1954), p. 12. All subsequent references will be from this edition by page number in text.
- 18 Had the boys seen the descending parachutist, whom Golding equates with "history that won't lie down" and off-campus history, their situation could have worsened. It was sufficiently difficult for Ralph to convince the boys to keep the fire going in the hope of being rescued. Had the boys known that the adult world was in flames, itself in need of rescue, their descent into barbarism would have been hastened. For Golding's connection between "history that won't lie down" and the dead parachutist see "The Meaning of It All," pp. 9-10.
- 19 "Fable," pp. 87-88.
- 20 The foregoing interpretation of the Osiris myth loosely resembles the view of man advanced by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan*, and obliquely attacked by Jean Jacques Rousseau in *Discours sur l'origine de l'inegalite*. Man is a fallen creature, destined to prey upon his kind, because he is vain.
- 21 James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: The Roots of Religion and Folklore* (New York: Avenel Books, 1981), vol. 2, p. 59.
- 22 There are numerous other examples where the narrator describes Jack as "red." See pp. 21, 37, and 127.
- 23 S. J. Boyd, *The Novels of William Golding* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), p. 11.
- 24 See Baker, pp. 27-28, and Dick, p. 31. See pp. 2-4 above.
- 25 "Fable," p. 89.
- 26 Alternatively, the two boys whose last names are given by the author—Jack Meridew and Percival Weyms Madison—are the poles of the adult world. Jack is bullying, competitive, and aggressive, while Percival is frightened, overwhelmed, and diffident. Only a Hobbean theoretical framework divides man into two such starkly contrasting character types: the mad man of great vain glory and the common man of fear. See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 8 and ch. 13.
- 27 "The Meaning of It All," p. 9.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 29 Dick, p. 31.
- 30 "The Meaning of It All," p. 9.
- 31 Whitley, pp. 26-27; Babb, pp. 21-22; and Boyd, p. 8.
- 32 We live, for example, in an age that refuses to call young, brutal rapists, who leave their victim lying in a park bloody and comatose, evil. Instead we rationalize their behavior by finding socioeconomic factors to explain it.
- 33 Jack I. Biles, *Talk: Conversations with William Golding* (New York: Harcourt, 1970), pp. 79-80.

- 34 Roger too knows our natures, he knows what moves men. When Samneric are captured Roger stops Jack from seriously injuring them, not out of human kindness, but because he realizes they will prove useful. Roger tortures and apparently converts them. Roger does this to nab Ralph. He knows that Ralph will smell the meat, hunger for it, and this in addition to his isolation will draw him to Castle Rock. Roger posts the two recent converts on watch, but he watches them. Roger's manipulation of Ralph's hunger and isolation is all the more troubling because he is only a boy.
- 35 This is not, of course, Simon's only revelation. Simon also prophesized that Ralph would get rescued. As Simon put it, "You'll get back to where you came from" (p. 101).
- 36 Following a similar line of reasoning, Whitley argues that lord of the flies could be rendered in English as "lord of dung" (p. 43).
- 37 There are two ways of knowing: reason and revelation. Reason, by definition, is a logical demonstration based upon orderly deductions or inductions. Revelation is a mysterious way of knowing that is implanted in the receiver, who as a consequence becomes a knower. A revelation is neither speculation nor a chain a reasoning based upon observation. Moses, for example, faithfully accepts Yahweh's revelation that he will lead the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. Yahweh's message admits neither theoretical speculation nor logical demonstration. It is not that words cannot describe the prophetic vision, but rather the veracity of its claim is questionable. Scientific humanism, which is based upon empirical observation, has demoted revealed religion to the status of opinion.
- 38 The scapegoat is usually an unwilling participant in the ritual. Golding vigorously denies that Simon is a scapegoat. Simon willingly accepts his fate like a saint ("The Meaning of It All," p. 9).
- 39 G. K. Chesterton, *St. Thomas Aquinas: The Dumb Ox* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 23.
- 40 Leo Strauss, "The Mutual Influence of Philosophy and Theology," *The Independent Journal of Philosophy* 3 (1979): 111.
- 41 Golding makes clear his opposition to scientific humanism in "A Moving Target," in *MT*, p. 163; "Belief and Creativity," pp. 186-87; and "On the Crest of the Wave," in *HG*, pp. 129-31. See also James R. Baker, "Three Decades of Criticism," in *Critical Essays on William Golding*, p. 2.
- 42 "Egypt from My Inside," p. 72.
- 43 "Belief and Creativity," p. 187.

