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The Beast Inside:
Trauma Theory and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*

"They transmitted only the wound to their children to whom the memory had been refused"
(Caruth 402).

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Following World War II and the horrible devastation in Europe, especially in London, Britain began to rebuild. The country was attempting to come back from war, and the culture reflected a bleak, disheartening feeling. Literature written during this time period, which so often reflects the culture directly, showed that very same bleakness. British novelist, and one who lived through that time, William Golding, writing in the 1960's, recreated the dystopia brought into European countries from living through the destruction of the war. Creating a vision of the future -- one of dysfunction and chaos -- Golding's characters from *Lord of the Flies*, having gone through the trauma of lost normalcy, lost companions, and eventually lost society, plunge into this same dystopian view of the future reflected in European society after World War II. Through the lens of trauma theory, *Lord of the Flies* shows the breakdown of not only the society created by the characters, but the loss of each character's normal psyche because of this breakdown.

In order to truly engage with trauma theory, specifically for *Lord of the Flies*, one must first be introduced to the genre within which this novel is so easily placed -- dystopia. Dystopia genre is one in which the world created is the worst-case scenario. A dystopian world is one of complete destruction and usually totalitarian control. William Golding created such a world in *Lord of the Flies*. The boys -- and through his service in World War II inadvertently Golding -- are thrown into a chaotic, dystopic space because they were attempting to escape another chaotic, space: that of World War II in England. Golding was pushed into this space after he served in the war for England, the result of which affected his writing greatly and is shown in the trauma the boys go through in *Lord of the Flies*.

Because of the Golding's view of life and the novels written, specifically after the war, it is worth noting Golding's upbringing and history before he wrote *Lord of the Flies*. The

influences from his parents when he was a small child point to his superstitions and possible reasons for his dystopic view of the future for the human race as reflected in *Lord of the Flies*. In his review of John Carey's book, Jesús Saavedra Carballido states, "His [Golding's] father, Alec, was a schoolmaster. He was an atheistic rationalist, a socialist and a pacifist. Mildred, Golding's mother, had the same views. She tried to inoculate young Billy against irrational superstition by telling him ghost stories, though that only 'compounded his supernatural terrors'" (149). These influences from his parents compounded Golding's imagination which surfaced after his traumatic experiences from the war. Because Golding experienced various traumatic situations, the very fears his parents tried to rid him of came back after serving in World War II. The same fears affect the boys in *Lord of the Flies* and could be the inspiration for the fear driven characters in the text.

Golding attempted to capture the feeling of the time in which he was writing, and over the years he has come to be known as a typically dystopic writer; a writer with an incredibly dark and bleak outlook on life and society. Based on *Lord of the Flies*, it would seem that Golding did believe the world was unable to achieve salvation from itself; yet Golding didn't ever see himself in that light. When he spoke after being awarded the Nobel Peace in Literature in 1983, he stated, "Twenty-five years ago I accepted the label 'pessimist' thoughtlessly without realizing that it was going to be tied to my tail, as it were...Rachmaninoff's famous Prelude in C sharp minor was tied to him...Similarly critics have dug into my books until they could come up with something that looked hopeless. I can't think of why. I don't feel hopeless myself" (Nobelprize.org, par. 3). Even through his service in World War II, the traumatic experiences he went through, and the possibility of post-traumatic stress disorder surfacing in his own life, Golding still hung onto even a small bit of hope for the world. He, as he said, didn't want to see

the world as hopeless. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature for *Lord of the Flies* and his other works not because of the hope woven throughout, nor the fact that he had overcome extreme situations which his characters also, in a sense, overcame, but because he saw the society of the time and represented an often overlooked society -- that of the survivors of a traumatic event attempting to deal with the situation and the after-effects: “The Nobel Prize in Literature 1983 was awarded to William Golding ‘for his novels which, with the perspicuity of realistic narrative art and the diversity and universality of myth, illuminate the human condition in the world of today’” (Nobelprize.org). Golding was granted this honor because of his involvement in the field of what became known as trauma studies.

Although trauma studies has had the most significant discoveries post World War II, the study of trauma was around long before its popularity rose after World War II. Sigmund Freud, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, discusses World War I soldiers who had recurring nightmares, showing the repetition of traumatic experiences to the human psyche; yet each time the nightmares -- the traumatic experiences -- were repeated, the memory changed. Thus, as shown in Cathy Caruth’s article, “Review of *Lost in Transmission: Studies of Trauma across Generations*,” looks specifically at Freud when he concludes, “traumatic memories do not *represent* but rather *enact* history; they *make* history by also erasing it” (403). Many who suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, “have forgotten” parts of their lives, especially the particularly traumatic pieces. This rings true throughout *Lord of the Flies* where on the island the boys often forget their common past of the War. There is little to no mention of the war in England, perhaps because Golding wanted to highlight the fact that the boys are essentially erasing the memory of war. Many of the boys on the island begin to forget when they are on the island too long. Toward the end of the novel, Ralph even forgets his main goal with the fire. At

first he knew that to make a fire would give the boys a better chance of being rescued if someone saw their signal; however, as he continues to live on the island and the trauma symptoms take over more of him, he forgets the point of the fire. In the same sentence, he explains and forgets the importance of the fire: “Without the fire we can’t be rescued...The fire’s the most important thing on the island, because, because -- He paused again and the silence became full of doubt and wonder” (Golding 142). The idea of rescue and even the reason they were on the island in the first place -- World War II -- is eventually secondary to the new traumas they have to deal with on the island.

World War II caused a shift in the trauma studies field to a focus not only on the soldiers in the midst of combat, but to all who were affected by war, such as the Jewish survivors in the concentration camps who had similar symptoms. Trauma theory was rarely, if at all, considered before the twentieth century: “After World War I, Abram Kardiner began to treat soldiers returning from the war who suffered from ‘shell-shock’” (Ringel and Brandell 3). Eventually, many patients suffering from similar symptoms of those who were in war, but were not involved in any type of battle themselves, were treated in a similar way. Because any traumatic experience was beginning to be treated the same as the PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) patients from the war, trauma studies, specific to treating those with PTSD or Shell-Shock, began to grow as a field.

Golding, a soldier for Britain, experienced war first-hand and was greatly affected by his service. After Golding experienced the trauma of war, as most soldiers experience, although he did return to a hopeful view of the world, he turned after the war to a darker and more cynical view of humanity, particularly while writing *Lord of the Flies*. The product of this feeling was *Lord of the Flies* which looks deeply into the effect of trauma on an individual’s psyche and

behavior. His most well-known novel was written not long after World War II ended, and was published in 1954. Golding uses the boys on the island to express symptoms and effects of PTSD, possibly the very same symptoms and effects from which Golding himself suffered. Trauma studies grew as a direct result of psychologists, sociologists, and other recognizing if and how traumatic experiences affect the human psyche. Kai Erikson, an American sociologist and former president of the American Sociological Association, developed the field of trauma studies during the 1990's. His work added to the ongoing discussion dating back to Sigmund Freud (1920) and recently re-developed by Cathy Caruth (2015). According to Erikson, "trauma" has a double meaning. The effects from trauma, then, have become the focus for scholars, rather than the actual event itself. This shift, or the recognizing that trauma affects the human psyche and potentially personality, in the field of trauma study, although fairly recent, has refocused scholars and essentially changed the thought process of dealing with PTSD patients. Scholars Greg Forter, Henry Krystal, and others discuss the developments in trauma theory in their various writing. These works all contribute to the discourse surrounding Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

Greg Forter states in his article, "Freud, Faulkner, Caruth: Trauma and the Politics of Literary Form," "Caruth and others have helped us see how a historical moment might be experienced...as a punctual blow to the psyche that overwhelms its functioning, disables its defenses, and absents it from direct contact with the brutalizing event itself" (259). As cited in the introduction to Shoshana Ringel and Jerrold Brandell's anthology *Trauma: Contemporary Directions in Theory, Practice, and Research*, trauma scholar Henry Krystal observes, "traumatized patients come to experience emotional reactions merely as somatic states, without being able to interpret the meaning of what they are feeling" (3). According to a study published

in 2002, the “National Comorbidity Replication Survey in the USA showed that between 10% and 55% of chronic pain patients suffered from PTSD symptoms” (Rzeszute et al. 13). Typical PTSD symptoms, and many experienced by the boys on the island, include the following: “sleep disorders (Kendall-Tackett, 2001), depression (Baskin, Lipchik, & Smitherman, 2006), anxiety (Tsang et al., 2008)” (Rzeszute et al. 13). According to these studies, many who have experienced a traumatic situation, such as war, death of another, famine, etc. are at an increased risk of developing PTSD and experiencing the aforementioned symptoms. Most people who suffer from PTSD “respond with fear and avoidance” (Rzeszute et al. 13) rather than addressing the psychological issues. The boys on the island show the typical PTSD symptoms and throughout the novel attempt to avoid dealing with these issues, but because they are children, cannot. As will be discussed later, the boys end up not being able to deal with their symptoms or the trauma they experienced without completely breaking the society they created. Golding recognizes his own symptoms from PTSD and attempts to deal with them through his writing. His writing changed after World War II because of his attempt to work through his PTSD. In the end, however, and discussed in more detail later, the boys find no escape or peace in the world even after they are rescued.

Other than Henry Krystal, many contemporary studies of trauma have been created as new findings have occurred. Figley (1978) and Shay (1994) contributed to the field of trauma studies with a look into Vietnam War veterans suffering from the newly labeled, PTSD. Diagnosis such as PTSD did not even appear in the psychological world of study until 1980 (*Trauma: Contemporary* 5). A more recent study showed that an individual’s society could heighten the symptoms of PTSD (Ozer, et.al, 2003), much like the breakdown of the boys’

society hindered healing for the boys on the island after dealing with the traumatic experience of the plane crash and suddenly becoming stranded.

Not until the end of the novel do the boys recognize, or re-recognize, the war in England and its effect on their situation. The war is the reason they are on the island in the first place, and from the war comes the man with the parachute which launches the boys, particularly Simon, into their fear and savagery. There are subtle reminders of the war and the outside world which just cause the boys more stress and trauma. Beyond the hope of rescue, they cannot handle the reminders from the world they left behind as soon as they crashed on the island. Their own world, and its own problems, eventually take over their entire existences and when they are reminded of the other society outside they island, they begin to lose their sanity. They don't understand, nor consciously want to understand, the trauma they experienced from the war, and so they push anything that is a part of the outside world outside of their memories until the "communication" is glaring them in the face. One such instance comes while the boys are sleeping, which they turn into a manifestation of "the beast":

There were other lights in the sky, that moved fast, winked, or went out, though not even a faint popping came down from the battle fought at ten miles' height. But a sign came down from the world of grown-ups, though at the time there was no child awake to read it. There was a sudden bright explosion and corkscrew trail across the sky; then darkness again and stars. There was a speck above the island, a figure dropping swiftly beneath a parachute, a figure that hung with dangling limbs...The figure fell and crumpled among toward the mountain. The figure fell and

crumpled...till it lay huddled among the shattered rocks of the
mountaintop. (Golding 96)

The fallen parachutist is one of the only contacts with the grown-up world the boys encounter until they are rescued at the end. This instance is not one of comfort, but becomes a thing of tribulation and suffering for the boys. They realize, even if subconsciously, that this man came from the War, which means World War II is still wreaking havoc on their lives. They cannot escape the island, which is a new place of trauma and difficulty, but they also cannot escape the reason they had to travel away from home in the first place: World War II. The boys become terribly frightened of this “beast,” not being able to face the fact that even if they were to be saved, they would be placed directly back into danger from the War. These feelings, however, get pushed out of their minds because they don’t want to admit they may be involved in such traumatic experiences. Even after this event, that of a physical presence of a possible beast, the boys continue to ignore their symptoms of trauma. The suffering from trauma doesn’t surface right away, instead the boys’ symptoms from trauma resurface long after they attempt to rebuild a stable society; the suffering comes when and from the civilization they built breaks down.

The trauma William Golding experienced during World War II created, in his mind, a society that could only function based on the Darwinistic “survival of the fittest.” The attitude reflected in the boys’ need for survival helped Golding develop a society divided by class in *Lord of the Flies*. The boys created a society on the island where none originally existed because they had an innate responsibility to continue their lives as they lived them in England. Because of the trauma the boys experienced, and their psychological suffering from the trauma of being stranded on the island, they created a society so they could feel as if nothing had changed. When suffering from PTSD, as stated previously, “most people respond with fear and avoidance”

(Rzeszute et al. 13). The boys try to set up a society based on the same social classes they knew growing up, but because the trauma was still a part of each of them, the society did not function.

Much like Golding after WWII, the boys' outlook on life soon changed from one of hope to one of horror and despair. Thus, the society begins to break down and the "stronger" boys take over; however, because the stronger boys went through the same trauma as Ralph's group of children -- the weaker ones of society -- their society breaks down as well. Golding shows no true "winner" in this situation because of the trauma experienced by the characters. The bleak and dystopic view of the future disrupts the boys' hopeful view for a *eutopia* on the island without parents, school, or rules, and in the end, the boys, Ralph specifically, are left crying on the beach while they are being taken from one traumatic situation, stranded on the island, back to the society they know, which is yet another traumatic situation. England in the middle of WWII is the same traumatic situation the boys were attempting to escape when they were stranded.

Even at the very beginning of the novel, Golding writes in such a way that foreshadows the impending doom of the boys because of the trauma from their plane crash. The book opens with Ralph ("the boy with fair hair") reviewing his surroundings. He has taken off his school sweater probably because of the heat, but this is the first clue that he is not in a familiar society. If he were somewhere "civilized," or at least to the degree that he has become accustomed to in his English upbringing, he would have kept his sweater on because of the school rules. This shedding of his "civilized" school sweater is the first clue that Ralph is no longer in a familiar place, nor a place that is even remotely like what he has grown up knowing. He observes the devastation from the plane crash on the island: "All round him the long scar smashed into the jungle was a bath of heat" (Golding 7). The language Golding uses to

describe this scene is not that of the typical language to describe a peaceful island, or even an adventurous new place. Instead, this language is that of war or, at least, trauma: “scar,” “smashed.” The violence echoed in the landscape from the effects of war shows Golding’s first attempt to place the boys in their states of trauma. Ralph almost immediately tries to focus not on the horrors of the violent scar, but instead on a bird which flies near him; however, even this bird turns on him into a more violent piece of nature when it utters a “witch-like cry” (Golding 7).

Not only are the boys affected by the trauma from being stranded on the island, but as the plot progresses, the island is affected in a similar way. The initial traumatic event -- the “long scar smashed into the jungle” from the very first page of the novel -- develops into the eventual burning of a large portion of the island. As the boys, Ralph and Piggy, first begin to explore the island, the geographical formation that stands out most to Ralph is down by the ocean a place where a possible camp could be made. Ralph, at this point, is still very much concerned with finding other survivors, building shelter, and most importantly, being rescued. He and Piggy observe: “Beyond the platform there was more enchantment. Some act of God -- a typhoon perhaps, or the storm that had accompanied his own arrival -- had banked sand inside the lagoon so that there was a long, deep pool in the beach with a high ledge of pink granite at the further end” (Golding 12). Even the place that may give comfort through shelter is plagued with past trauma: “Beyond falls and cliffs there was a gash visible in the trees; there were the splintered trunks and then the drag, leaving only a fringe of palm between the scar and the sea” (Golding 29). The island itself, even upon first look, is affected by some form of trauma -- harsh weather, war, plane crash.

After Ralph's initial reaction to the island, that of possible adventure however terrifying, he is brought back to the reality of being stranded when Piggy, the first boy Ralph encounters, immediately asks about adults. As threatening as the "long scar" or the "witch-cry" from the island is to Ralph, perhaps even more threatening to both Ralph and Piggy is Ralph's reply, "Perhaps there aren't any grownups anywhere" (Golding 8). Incredulous, Piggy continues to ask questions with increasing panic while Ralph begins to explore further their situation. Ralph begins to realize the implications of "no grownups" and uses this possible reality to allow him to push aside his fears and give into his lust for adventure; Piggy, on the other hand, focuses on the difficulties, including death, the boys could face because of the very real possibility that there are no grownups to take care of them.

A dystopic novel cannot exist without a comment on the society in which it is set. Golding placed this novel in World War II to make a comment not only on the effect of war on just the soldiers as it was often thought of, but the lasting effect of the trauma of war on all society -- children included. This novel, because of its inclusion in the dystopian genre, reflects the society in which it is set. Defining the dystopian genre, Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan state, "most dystopian texts offer a detailed and pessimistic presentation of the very worst of social alternatives" (6). In this case, the boys of the novel create a society which cannot be successful because of the corruption, or beast, in the society. The society these boys created, unwittingly, infused with a class system giving way for discrimination and the overall breakdown of society. The society created in the midst of the trauma the boys experience cannot be sustained as a eutopian society -- that is eutopian for a group of young boys in charge of themselves with no grownup intervention, perhaps the dream of any young group of children. This society turns drastically into a warring society because of corruption: particularly

for those who may not be in the privileged class (Piggy, Simon, and even Ralph) while the privileged class (Jack and the hunters) become corrupted. When stranded on the island, the boys are “denied the sustaining and repressing authority of parents, church, and state, they form a new culture” (Rosenfield 1). These boys create their new society with all the “typical” aspects a society needs to function: a division of labor, a form of government, rules and regulations, and perhaps inadvertently, a class system. With the construction of their society the boys have hope to survive; however Golding disrupts this push towards eutopia in the style of the dystopian genre when some of the boys become corrupted by their power, thus destroying the society created.

Breaking away from the genre, popular before the travesties of World War II, the new genre throws the characters directly into the chaos of a new life on the island. Baccolini and Moylan state, “The dystopian text usually begins directly in the terrible new world” (5). The very first paragraph catapults the story, and thus the boys, into this new world. Ralph begins to explore his new setting from the very first, “The boy with fair hair lowered himself down...All round him the long scar smashed into the jungle was a bath of heat. He was clambering heavily among the creepers and broken trunks when a bird...lashed upwards with a witch-like cry” (Golding 1). This language of the description of the setting seems to work exactly as dystopia. The “scar smashed into the jungle was a bath of heat”, “creepers”, “witch-like cry”, gives a description which is a horrifying “terrible new world”. “It is already 'scarred' by the crash-landing aeroplane which marked the children's arrival, and is subject to decay” (Van Vuuren 8). This devastating landscape is the setting to which the boys must try to create a society in order to survive.

The introduction of the protagonist shows the hope for a society which will thrive, a more utopian view. “Ralph is the natural leader by virtue of his superior height, his superior strength, his superior beauty” (Rosenfield 1). Ralph has the capability to create and lead a new society in this new world in which the boys have landed. Ralph is given privilege over the other boys because of his leadership and is therefore put in a higher class than the others almost immediately. Since Ralph holds this power, there is hope that the society will be a success because of the rules, jobs, and duties he has set up. Ralph seems to know that the only way to survive is to be responsible for each other and for certain rules. Piggy assists Ralph in this because Piggy is a representation of intelligence and need for authority. He hangs on Ralph's every word because he needs authority close to him. This hope is that the society will work because Ralph, with Piggy's help (who cannot be totally corrupted it seems) has the rules set and the order intact.

Only pages later, however, Golding reveals how unstable their society is. When there is fighting about the rules, Piggy exclaims, “We've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages. We're English, and the English are best at everything. So we've got to do the right things” (Golding 40). Golding gives the boys a false sense of hope that simply because they are English, they will be successful as England has been successful. Contradicting this success, however, is the backdrop of the war England is fighting. The possible reason for the boys even being on the island because of the push to get young children out of London during the bombing of London (London Blitz) in World War II (Scholes 1). During the war, the boys lived in a less successful and more frightening world than they had known before. The island eventually becomes an extension of the same war-torn England from which the boys ran. This home they have been safe in, England, is currently being destroyed, with little sense of

hope. Thus, the boys still find themselves, with hope or not, in the midst of a “terrible new world”, back into the dystopian.

The possible source of corruption in the boys’ society is Jack who walked, or better yet, marched into the first meeting and into a privileged position of power with incredible command over the choir boys he was leading. The very first description of this event foreshadows this corruption power has over Jack by the end of the novel. Golding writes, “The creature was a party of boys, marching approximately in set in two parallel lines...The boy who controlled them was dressed in the same way...he shouted an order and they halted” (19-20). From the very beginning, Jack exerts his power over the other boys. The language used by Golding shows Jack's thirst for power more than anything: “the boy who controlled them...he shouted an order” (Golding 19-20). Jack seems to be already corrupted by the power he holds over the other boys; he seems to be already becoming “the beast.”

When Jack is given a little power, he picks it up and runs with it, which creates the horrible and dangerous new world in which the boys have been placed. Jack is given control over the decisions of the choir boys by Ralph: “Jack's in charge of the choir...what do you want them to be?' 'Hunters'” (Golding 23). Almost immediately, this hope for order and society, after a democratic vote determining the leader, is disrupted when Ralph gives Jack the choir. Golding created a character who cannot see through into his own psychological issues and attempt to deal with his trauma; instead, Golding’s character in Jack pushes his anxiety and fear aside in order to show power and strength. Eventually Jack gives into total corruption of power beginning with his decision to turn his choir into hunters. Jack’s initial response as to how the choir should contribute to this society is to hunt; thus, they become the savage army of this island, reflective of the war wreaking havoc over Europe at that very moment. This new island society places the

boys right back in the midst of traumatic war which eventually destroys any hope of society, or even sanctuary, that the boys created.

In this new society, because of Jack's corruption, the privileged class takes over. In true Darwinian form, the stronger, not necessarily the wiser, take over the society. If Jack, and perhaps Ralph, represent the privileged class, Simon becomes the easy target, along with Piggy, to be labeled as the lower, less privileged class. Jack wastes no time showing his authority over this lower class. He makes fun of Piggy and seems to dislike Simon from the beginning (Golding 25). Marijke Van Vuuren, in his article "Good Grief: *Lord of the Flies* as a Post-War Rewriting of Salvation History," states, "Simon is set apart almost immediately when he faints...He also finds it difficult to speak in assembly, and is soon shouted down when his words are too hard to hear" (20-21). Because Simon is perceived as "weak" but actually knows and admits the truth, Jack has no problem making him part of, and other than the unnamed "littlun's", the lowest being, the less privileged class. However, Simon is still chosen to go with Jack and Ralph at the beginning to first scope out the island (Golding 24). Because of his pre-determined social class, Simon is made an outcast from society by the boys and begins to alienate himself from them.

An article titled, "Memory and photography: Rethinking postcolonial trauma studies" from the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* discusses Kai Erikson's 1994 piece, *A New Species of Trouble: Explorations in Disaster, Trauma, and Community*:

Erikson singles out four principal findings in his study over the past 30 years of disaster and its resulting traumas. The first is that within communities that are collective and individual traumas that occur as a result of disaster...The second is that disasters caused by

something unseen...make[ing] the experience of trauma more severe. Thirdly...the experience of trauma is conditioned in part by whether or not the cause of the disaster is deemed natural or man-made...Finally...a resulting sense of betrayal can lead to a 'traumatic worldview,' which perceives the world suspiciously as operating 'in ways of which we have no knowledge and over which we have no control'. Baxter 20

According to Katherine Baxter, a main symptom from a traumatic experience includes, what she calls, "self-alienation," or a lack of trust in oneself because of the dysfunctionality of the situation (20). Ralph and Simon, especially, experience this same self-distrust throughout the novel. Their actions reflect characters who have been exposed to traumatic situations while failing to recognize their effects on themselves. Ralph attempts to alienate himself from Piggy from the very beginning, knowing Piggy will be the object of ridicule for the rest of the boys. Ralph doesn't want to go through any more trauma, especially from his peers, on top of the trauma he has already experienced by being stranded on an island during a war. Ralph almost immediately tries to get rid of Piggy in the first few pages (Golding 7-20). Although Piggy becomes one of the few boys Ralph is able to trust, Ralph does attempt to alienate himself from Piggy at the beginning because of the rest of the boys. Ralph doesn't exactly alienate himself at the end of the novel, but instead, Jack forces Ralph to be an outsider. Ralph is ostracized because of his beliefs for the island and his confrontation with Jack. The very end of the novel, for Ralph, is his moment of self-alienation. He is no longer the young, innocent boy who was excited about an adventure on the island with the other boys. Now, he is one of the only ones left living to understand what they truly went through on the island: "The tears began

to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island...Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy" (Golding 202). Ralph finally understands the trauma they went through and submits to the symptoms they had all been suffering while on the island. Ralph is alienated at this point because the rest of the boys are either hiding or turned "savage." Ralph becomes alienated by the trauma he experienced and the final attempt at pushing through the trauma, but failing.

Simon, specifically, seeks solitude many times throughout the novel. Rather than working through the traumatic experiences with the other boys, Simon draws away from the group and into himself, which is ultimately his downfall. Simon is divided from his society, through his fainting spells and the secret hut he builds for himself in the woods, yet is still part of the society. In her discussion on photographers who are in traumatic situations, Baxter states, "These men remain divided, willingly and unwillingly, from each other and from the communities around them. The experience of this division is alienating yet that experience of alienation is one that is held in common, one that creates a tentative bond of understanding" (27). Simon has alienated himself, but still shares a bond with the other boys on the island because they share the traumatic experience; however, because Simon continues to pull away he becomes what the boys fear the most: "the beast." Whereas Simon recognizes "the beast" comes from within the boys themselves, he becomes the victim of the society because he has removed himself, thinks differently, and exposes the truth: thus he is the threat to what little society the boys managed to create.

Simon is one of the only characters in the novel who acknowledges and attempts to work through the trauma the boys experienced on the island. From early on in the novel, Simon makes

it obvious that he believes in the beast: “‘As if,’ said Simon... ‘the beastie or the snake-thing, was real” (Golding 52). The rest of the boys don’t want to admit that there might be something dangerous on the island in their “perfect” adult-less lives. Simon alone comes to realize they went through some trauma with the plane crash and need to do something about it. He recognizes his fear in “the beast” and instead of running away, tries to pin point where this fear is coming from. He acknowledges “the beast” may be in the boys: “‘maybe there is a beast...What I mean is . . . maybe it’s only us” (Golding 89). Simon understands the change that could happen in a human when one undergoes extreme trauma, as the boys did. He is the only one who realizes what could happen if one ignores the trauma one experienced. Simon tries to find sanctuary on his own, away from the suffering of the other boys. He builds a fortress in the forest to escape from the rest of the boys and figure out why he is suffering from fear, anxiety, sleeplessness, and all the other typical symptoms of PTSD (Golding 55-57). Simon attempts to confront this trauma after he realizes there is a chance “the beast” is inside him; however, his plan backfires when “the lord of the flies” takes over his consciousness.

Simon’s disconnect is not only with the other boys on the island, but with himself as well. Simon’s hallucinated discussion with the “lord of the flies,” or the pig head, shows his disconnect with his own reality. Golding is showing the lower class system has some hope to rise up towards the privileged class, not that of a dystopian society. Simon tries to process what has happened, but cannot come to the conclusion that in order to deal with the trauma the boys went through, one needs to recognize that trauma occurred. Simon comes close when he builds a shelter to stay hidden and think (Golding 56-57); however, because of the fear and the psychological issues trauma causes him, he is, in a sense, defeated by his symptoms which eventually leads to his downfall. His discussion with “the lord of the flies” brings him to realize

“the beast” is actually inside each of the boys: ““Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill...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?”” (Golding 143). Rather than “the beast” attacking the boys, “the beast” has completely taken over the boys. This psychological mind game Simon is caught in the midst of points directly to the previously ignored symptoms of PTSD.

Because Simon is one of the most civil and one of the very few boys who stays civil, Golding is showing some hope for the lower class of this island society. Instead of letting Simon live; however, giving hope to the lower class and hope in the novel, the boys destroy Simon because, in the boys' eyes he has become the beast -- that which the boys have created, or their societal taboo, to be afraid of and that which Jack feeds into in order to gain more power. Simon is killed by the boys during a reenactment at the feast of killing the sow. At the beginning of the novel, when the boys hunt the pig, they shout the tribal chant, “Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Bash her in” (Golding 75), later, during the feast on the beach, their chant transforms into, “Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!” (Golding 152). The boys have become even more and more savage, culminating in killing one of their own. The simple word changes of the war cry show this fall into savagery. “Pig” to “beast,” and “her” to “his,” show this devolution into savagery. The boys don't seem to care what they are killing, pig/beast, or female/male, as long as they are able to kill. In this horrifying scene where Simon is murdered, Simon turns into beast: “Yet Simon himself is referred to throughout this horrifying scene as the 'beast' (152-153), as he becomes the beast they need him to be” (Van Vuuren 21). Simon has been turned into the beast which the others will hunt and destroy, because they have become so corrupted, they are ready to kill anything or anyone to fulfill their need for violence.

After Simon is murdered, and his body is washed out to sea, forgotten, Piggy, Ralph, and Samneric bond together as a force against Jack and his tribe. In order for murdering Simon to make sense, the boys need to take that traumatic experience and place it as far away from themselves as possible. Rather than recognizing and attempting to deal with the trauma of what they did, they ignore the trauma of Simon's murder and continue their lives as if they were uninvolved. They try to escape this reality by pretending they are on the outskirts of the horrible dance: "Memory of the dance that none of them had attended shook all four boys convulsively. 'We left early'" (Golding 158). It is true they were not involved in the crashing of the plane or even the killing of the littlun' with the birthmark on his face (Golding 46-47), or even the killing of the sow (Golding 134-137), but they *were* involved in murdering Simon.

Baccolini and Moylan state, "Language is a key weapon for the reigning dystopian power structure. Therefore, the dystopian protagonist's resistance often begins with a verbal confrontation and the reappropriation of language" (5-6). Because Jack is given power, the society breaks down almost immediately. Jack is privileged and already power-hungry, as he showed during the voting on chief: "I ought to be chief,' said Jack with simple arrogance, 'because I'm chapter chorister and head boy. I can sing a C sharp'" (Golding 22), demonstrate the first of the verbal confrontations between him and Ralph. Before the society is even created, Jack seems to be forcibly taking over control. He contradicts and argues with Ralph at future assemblies and eventually forms his own tribe. This division of the boys sends their society into turmoil, essentially to war. Jack has perhaps unknowingly entered total corruption, the first step breaking away, the next killing Simon, then killing Piggy, then hunting Ralph. The boys of Jack's class exert their power over the other boys because it is easy for them to do so. When Samneric, the twins, are captured, since they are of the lower class, these two boys are forced

into service, by torture, of Jack (Golding 179). Because of the language-driven confrontation between Ralph and Jack, the corruption of Jack seems to lead the charge with the breakdown of society.

This total breakdown of society is typical of the dystopian genre. Golding plays with dystopia throughout the novel; at first, atypical of a dystopian novel, the items in this novel seem to bring hope and order to the still-forming society. Although this novel is very bleak, one of the few hopeful symbol, the conch, represents order and rules: “Ralph grasped the idea and hit the shell with air from his diaphragm. Immediately the thing sounded. A deep, harsh note boomed under the palms, spread through the intricacies of the forest, and echoed back from the pink granite of the mountain. Clouds of birds rose from the treetops, and something squealed and ran in the undergrowth...’Gosh!’ His ordinary voice sounded like a whisper after the harsh note of the conch” (Golding 17). Ralph becomes chief because he found the conch and uses it to create the rules. Piggy is almost in good graces because he was with Ralph when the conch was found. Ralph creates rules around the conch -- quiet when the conch is held in the air, only he who has the conch can speak at the assembly (Golding 33). This conch is used to give power to the one holding it. Throughout, the boys use this conch to speak in front of the council, “We can't have everybody talking at once...I'll give the conch to the next person to speak. He can hold it when he's speaking” (Golding 33). This representation of hope for a society seems to work well, at first, because the boys respect the authority the conch brings.

The symbols set up in Golding's novel portray specific things at first, mostly those that allude to hope, which is a trope not typical in a novel of dystopia; however, these symbols play a specific role in the overall destruction or dystopia of the novel. As the novel progresses and the society the boys have created breaks down, the symbolic items break down, culminating in the

total destruction of the symbols when the society is completely broken. This pattern of the destruction of the symbols seems to equal the destruction of the society. As time goes on, the society the boys have created breaks down as the conch cracks, fades, and breaks. The rules begin to bend for certain, privileged boys, and Ralph tries to keep the rules from breaking apart. Piggy seems to be the only character who may never break away from the rules; however, even Piggy suggests he, Ralph, and Samneric should join Jack's party for the feast (Golding 148). Ralph seeming to be the most responsible and focused on rescue, even forgets the word rescue at one point; he forgets the point of the fire, "Ralph tried indignantly to remember. There was something good about a fire. Something overwhelmingly good" (Golding 163). Ralph still has hope of rescue throughout the novel, but this instance of forgetting reveals that even the hope Ralph has may be slipping into non-existence. Even the one who seems to be the central point of rescue, who has been concerned with rescue the entire story, is breaking away and forgetting what needs to happen, as the society is slipping away from him.

Another symbol which, at first, represents hope and salvation in the novel, is Piggy's glasses. Piggy's glasses, representative of intelligence and rational ideas; since Piggy seems to be the most intelligent and rational of the boys, his glasses are represented as thus. This intelligence and rational thinking gives the boys hope because as long as Piggy's glasses are in the picture, the chance for survival is a possibility due to the signal fire made from Piggy's glasses. The signal fire is supposedly going to be used to get passing ships to see that the boys are on the island; however, the boys don't know how to make a fire until they use their intelligence and, in turn, Piggy's specs, "His specs – use them as burning glasses!" (Golding 40). Piggy's glasses have been cracked, broken, stolen, and at last destroyed. When the glasses are destroyed, all reason and intelligence goes with them. Piggy's glasses are destroyed in Jack's

effort to assert his dominance and steal the fire. Golding, atypical of a dystopian novel, still gives a glint of hope because Piggy is alive and functioning without his glasses. However, Golding soon returns to the genre of dystopia at the climax of the story. The conch is smashed against the rocks soon followed closely by Piggy's body. Both symbols of reason and rules are destroyed at this point: "The conch is broken... [and the only thing left is] the pursuit of the figure representing law and order" (Rosenfield 6). Ralph, possibly all that is left on the island which represents rules and order, is being hunted just like a pig. Finally, all civility is destroyed when the boys hunt Ralph in his form of "beast".

The signal fire is representative of rescue from the island. Certain boys are elected to guard the signal fire and keep it ablaze. Ralph knows there is perhaps no chance for survival without a fire to lead any boat which may pass towards the island. "If a ship comes near the island they may not notice us. So we must make smoke on top of the mountain. We must make a fire" (Golding 38). In order to have a hope for rescue, the boys decide a fire must be kept going. Ironically, something which becomes so devastating, almost destroying the entire island including the boys, is the one thing they entrust with hope.

The signal fire becomes a beast, much like the boys themselves: "The burning island, 'shuddering with flame', the 'great heaviness of smoke' lying 'between the island and the sun' (p 201) would be freshly reminiscent, in 1954, of the first nuclear bombs" (Van Vuuren 17). Once again, the boys find themselves in a place of war. Although they are not directly in the battle, as the parachutist or the naval officer or even the boys at the beginning of the novel were, they are in a war on the island. The hunt for the pig has now become a hunt for Ralph. Ralph has become a sacrifice to "the beast" from "the savages," with Jack leading the way. In order to lure Ralph out of hiding, Jack sets fire to the island. The fire has taken over the island: "The sky was

black' (p 201)...The children have used Piggy's glasses to make their fire; now they have turned their science to death" (Van Vuuren 17-18). Piggy's glasses, or the only symbol besides the conch for order, intelligence, and reason are used as a destructive instrument to cause further suffering. The intelligence of Piggy's glasses has been turned into an act similar to the intelligence behind the nuclear bombs of World War II: both hugely intelligent but both completely destructive. The rescue fire has turned into a blazing fire which does help to rescue the boys, but almost kills them in the process. This fire, blazing out of control, set by Jack, shows the total meltdown of the society and Jack's final corrupt act. He seems to stop at nothing to take out any other authority figure, privileged or, not without regard to human life.

A typical symptom of PTSD is sleeplessness. The boys on the island, beyond being young boys without the safety of an adult, are so frightened if they sleep at all it is a completely restless sleep. Ralph notices the young ones have trouble sleeping because they are afraid: "“You've noticed, haven't you?'...'They're frightened.'...'I mean the way things are. They dream. You can hear 'em. Have you been awake at night?'...'They talk and scream. The littluns. Even some of the others" (Golding 52). Ralph understands the fear of the "littluns" because he has the same fears. He can relay how the "littluns" are acting at night because he is awake from fear as well. Unlike Ralph, Jack doesn't understand anyone else on the island. When he takes over with the choir, he thinks of himself and only himself. Most of the time, Jack pretends not to know fear.

There are moments, however, when Jack's fear comes through, but even when this happens, he still cannot completely put this feeling into words. Instead of being able to describe his feelings, he denies any feelings of fear and anxiety blaming these feelings on weakness: "“All the same -- in the forest. I mean when you're hunting, not when you're getting fruit, of course,

but when you're on your own --' He paused for a moment, not sure if Ralph would take him seriously...'If you're hunting something you catch yourself feeling as if --' He flushed suddenly. 'There's nothing in it of course.'" (Golding 53). Even back to the first pig hunt, Jack wasn't able to kill the sow. Ralph and Simon understood why Jack couldn't kill the sow, but Jack never truly understood: "They knew very well why he hadn't: because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood...next time there would be no mercy" (Golding 31). The other boys understand that once Jack kills the first pig, they cannot go back to their old lives. Before they take the life of another living thing, they still have a chance to return to their society; however, as soon as Jack kills a pig, they have submitted to life on the island with no hope of return. Jack, on the other hand, does not recognize the need for society to remain, nor the necessity of acknowledging the trauma they have gone through without adding to that trauma will killing. The last part of that passage, "next time there would be no mercy" (Golding 31), comes from Jack. This scene not only begins Jack's descent into tyranny, causing more trauma for the boys, but it also begins to unleash the true "beastie" which Simon discovers may not be what the boys originally thought it to be.

Many of the boys are frightened of not just "the beast," but the fact that there are no grown-ups nor seemingly any possible way to escape the island. Jack has taken control and is ruling with a totalitarian government, controlling every aspect of the boys' remaining society. The trauma of the plane crash for the boys is dwarfed in comparison at the end of the novel by the trauma of being stranded on an island and having all society, created by them or not, break down around them. The boys don't realize the effect of the war on them and on their country. With the symbols of order and reason destroyed, Jack turns into a type of beast himself. Jack has been trying all along to mold the lower class, the outcasts (Ralph, Piggy, Simon, and Samneric)

into the beast, but in turn, represents the beast himself because of the corruption into which he has fallen. Rosenfield states, “The rest of the group, however, shifts its allegiance to Jack because he has given them meat rather than something useless like fire.... [the boys are now] described as 'shadows' or 'masks' or 'savages' or 'demoniac figures' and, like Jack” (4). This group of boys has led itself, or has been led by Jack and corruption, into a world where there is little hope. Golding paints this picture of a terrifying society which has no refuge, a part of the dystopian genre, but contradictorily, still seems to show a glimmer of hope as long as the fire stays lit and the boys, the lower-class boys, stay together to keep the idea of rescue a possible reality with Ralph as the un-corruptable leader.

The society the boys created seems to end with Jack; however, Ralph breaks down numerous times throughout the novel. Ralph hunts with the other boys, which he enjoys, “I hit him all right. The spear stuck in. I wounded him!” (Golding 113). Golding doesn't show a pure side and a corrupt side, much like what a dystopian novel generally shows. Instead, he blurs the lines between innocence and corruption. Ralph is seemingly good, but does delve into savagery, especially in his participation at the horrible, satanic dance the boys participate in which causes Simon's death: “Piggy and Ralph...found themselves eager to take a place in this demented but partly secure society...'That was Simon' [Ralph says later]...That was murder” (Golding 152-156). Ralph seems to understand this corruption which has grabbed hold of Jack and is bleeding into the society they created, utterly destroying it with murder; however, because of his participation in Simon's death, Ralph blurs the lines of good and evil: “Ralph went for the 'end of innocence'...his body becomes the battleground where reason and instinct struggle, each to assert itself” (Rosenfield 1). This struggle inside Ralph seems to stem from the horrible setting, this new island, this dystopia where the boys have found themselves. Golding's participation in the

genre of dystopia is clear when the novel complicates the society's corruption, leaving little hope for the boys' survival. Because of Jack and his complete corruption, the symbols are destroyed as the society is destroyed. In each case, Jack uses his privileged status to exert his dominance over the other boys: Jack ignores the conch's rules, Jack steals and destroys Piggy's glasses, and Jack sets the island on fire to hunt for Ralph.

The boys' society begins to break down because of the oppressive societal control from Jack. Jack and the chorus toward the end of the novel have complete control of the island. With Simon dead, Ralph and Piggy are essentially alone. Not even the twins continue to support Ralph; Samneric were possibly tortured to disown Ralph and side with Jack. At the beginning of the novel, the boys believe they have the perfect society; however, this vision is just an illusion of a perfect society. The boys, at first, celebrate no parental control, or even grown-ups for that matter. Ralph eventually realizes, when the society is crumbling around him, that their island society is not perfect. Jack is still under the impression that the island is the perfect society. Jack has all the control because he has the power of the meat. Because he and the rest of the choir were placed in charge of hunting, Jack is able to control who gets food and when. Rather than sharing fairly with the rest of the boys, Jack exerts his control totally. He rules with utter totalitarian control where he seeks to control every aspect of society, especially over those which he doesn't yet have control. Jack not only attempts to control his own chorus -- hunters, but after the boys divide into two "tribes," he tries to take over Ralph's group as well. Empowered by killing the sow, Jack decides it is time to take over Ralph and his loyal followers. Jack begins with fire: "We'll raid them and take fire...We'll put on paint and sneak up" (Golding 136). He is far beyond any rescue at this point. Jack still doesn't recognize the

trauma he went through with the plane crash, and now he has added trauma of killing a living being.

Jack is so invigorated by his kill that he gives into his fears about “the beast” and believes it real. He even goes so far as to make a sacrifice of the sow’s head to “the beast.” This scene, with a, “sharpen[ed] stick at both ends” (Golding 136) foreshadows Ralph’s almost death at the end of the novel. The society surrounding the boys, specifically Jack, is so influential that their PTSD symptoms are heightened. Because of the fear they have in the first place of being stranded on a desert island, and the fact that the boys’ society has been destroyed, their fear takes over. Rather than attempting to work through their symptoms and their PTSD, Jack gives into his fear of “the beast,” making it real.

At the beginning, the fire seems to be the only hope of rescue for the boys. Ralph insists multiple times that in order for his father to see them, they must keep the fire going. The boys decide the best way to keep the signal fire burning is to take turns keeping watch. When the twins, Sam and Eric, are watching the fires toward the beginning of the novel, the fire begins to burn out of control (39-40). The fire soon takes over part of the island: “Beneath the capering boys a quarter of a mile square of forest was savage with smoke and flame. The separate noises of the fire merged into a drum-roll that seemed to shake the mountain...a tree exploded in the fire like a bomb. Tall swathes of creepers rose for a moment into view, agonized, and went down again” (Golding 44-46). This fire, which was once a hopeful signal to potential passersby, is now a raging fire of destruction and foreshadows the fire which lights up most of the island at the end of the novel. The boys have once again experienced trauma in the form of fire. They had to leave London because of the fire of bombs. They left a place of fire and are now stranded in one. The hope of rescue, after this first fire, seems to be still possible because they have just set

up their society; however, by the time their society has broken down, and the island is ablaze with a fire burning completely out of control, the hope of rescue seems farther than they ever thought.

The society and all hope, it seems, are dead for Ralph -- Simon and Piggy are dead while Samneric have been forced against Ralph -- Ralph finds himself on his own. This pig hunt is the height of trauma for Ralph: Simon was murdered, Piggy was murdered, Samneric have abandoned him, and all seems lost. The sacrificial pig hunt for Ralph turns to emotions exploding because finally the boys realize they have been experiencing PTSD symptoms from the trauma of being stranded on the island. Although the boys don't know what they are feeling is could actually be classified as PTSD, they are nonetheless affected by the very same symptoms which are typical to PTSD.

Ralph is the only piece of the society kept from the beginning. Golding grants this only hope for salvation his name. The story focuses on Ralph, following the only named character for the rest of the novel. The names of the boys in Jack's tribe are disregarded and they are only referred to as, "the savage" (Golding 195-200). This re-naming of the boys could be a coping mechanism created by Golding to express his experiences in World War II. As Ralph has experienced murder at the hands of those he knows, so too did Golding experience war with comrades. Instead of naming those who have done harm, Ralph only sees "the others" as "savages," as almost an excuse for their behavior. He doesn't want to admit that he knows the ones who committed such horrible crimes, like murder -- of which he also took place, yet forgets until the very end; instead, Ralph doesn't associate himself nor anyone he knew with the other tribal savages.

It is interesting that it is at this point in the novel that the boys are rescued: “What have you been doing? Having a war or something?” this representative of the grown-up world does not understand...The ultimate irrationality is war” (Rosenfield 6). This naval officer who “saves” the boys shows there is no safety from this corruption nor peace from this war-like instinct humans have. The boys are “saved” from the island in the middle of their hunt for Ralph. At the height when all authority and civility seem to be lost, the boys find themselves face to face with both, in the naval officer who finds them on the beach. However, this “savior” may not be the road to peace and safety the boys need. Golding creates “a bleak, depressing ... with little space for hope within the story” (Rosenfield 7), as a dystopian novel should be. But, the dystopian genre should also have “hope outside their pages...for it is only if we consider dystopia as a warning that we as readers can hope to escape its pessimistic future” (Rosenfield 7). Golding detracts from the idea that dystopia can be a warning for the future, because he seems to destroy the hope for the future at the end of the novel. The boys are “saved” by the naval officer, who is, himself, in the middle of a war.

The ending of this novel, however, detracts from this genre because the possibility for any hope at all is not present. The boys are not saved because of the murders and crimes they have committed, they are perhaps only transported to a different world where they may be forced to live with what had happened on the island; a world already in the midst of a terrible fight, World War II. Van Vuuren states, “Golding's pessimism does not grant the reader the illusion of the dawning of a new millennium...The adult world can offer no salvation, but only further destruction on a much larger scale” (19-20). This world the boys are eventually transported into, doesn't give much hope for the future of the English society, on a large scale, nor on a smaller scale, for the boys' lives. Golding takes what typically exists in the genre, a hint of some hope at

the end, but then throws the boys from one war based on corruption and societal class politics, into another. The boys are thrown back into the terrifying World War II England where even though they survived the island, they are not saved. Since “the children in the novel represent a race already fallen, and their relationship to the natural world is...destructive. They pollute, violate and finally destroy it by fire” (Van Vuuren 8-9). This is the world the boys have been saved from, yet are only placed into the same disheartening, horrifying terrors of war on the mainland.

The final attempt to deal with the trauma experienced isn't even allowed to occur because the boys, focused through Ralph, completely break down into raw emotion. Ralph's tears flow freely on the beach in front of the soldier (Golding 202). Despite his attempt to survive, and thrive in the society created by the boys, Ralph has submitted to the trauma he experienced on the island – the friends he lost, the innocence that was destroyed, and the future inability to return to normalcy. Ralph is focalized at this point in the novel because he finally submits to the trauma the boys experienced. This is the only way the boys can handle their PTSD, through Ralph's emotional breakdown and even Ralph's inability to express into words his emotions and what happened on the island (Golding 202). He is finally able to express the trauma he and the rest of the boys have gone through, if only through his tears and the anguish on his face. Golding created a world where the boys would never truly escape from their trauma not just because they never dealt with the initial trauma, but because they continued to add layers of trauma on top of it; however, there is a glimmer of hope at the end of Golding's novel: Ralph continues to feel human emotions and weeps for all that has happened. Because Ralph feels so deeply, and has finally recognized the trauma that has occurred, there is hope for all the boys who were kept alive to live beyond the experiences. It is only through Ralph, and his tears over,

“the end of innocence [and] the darkness of man’s heart” (Golding 202) that the boys can hope to be saved from “the beast” inside each of them. The only way the boys will be able to achieve the salvation they need to from “the beast” which lives inside is to recognize the evil in society, as Ralph realizes at the end of the novel, and reject that evil. Of all the boys, Ralph becomes the one who could find this salvation, for he is the only one who recognizes the evil in the lives lost, the innocence destroyed, and the dystopian world in which he lives. He knows the evil involved in society through Jack and his ruthlessness, so he can therefore reject this evil to gain salvation.

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