

## Freud's idea of psychoanalysis in Lord of flies

### (Application of id, ego and superego)

William Golding's Lord of Flies is loaded with many modern elements. Freud's psychoanalysis is one of the most striking modern features in Lord of flies. Sigmund Freud was the founder of psychoanalysis. This school of thought emphasizes the influence of the unconscious mind on man's behavior. Lord of Flies presents Freud's psychoanalytic theory in behavior of various characters. Freud believed that the thoughts of people can be broken down into three categories called **levels of consciousness**. According to him, the subconscious is composed of three levels known as the id (instincts), ego (reality), and superego (morality). These divisions however are not structural parts of the brain but are three aspects of the way our mind thinks. In William Golding's novel Lord of the Flies, these three levels of consciousness can be observed. William Golding presents the conflicting personalities of the key characters, representing the elements of Freud's concept.

Novel begins with the conflict between three boys to have a control on a deserted island, which shows three divisions of mind. First form of thinking illustrated by William Golding is 'id'. Id is *'The part of the personality reflecting unorganized, instinctual impulses. If unbridled, it seeks immediate gratification of primitive needs.'* According to Freud, id is the state of mind in which one thinks only to get pleasure. The id leads a person to act on his urges and satisfy his needs regardless of anything or anyone. In Lord of flies, Jack clearly represents the concept of Id, overpowering the Ego and Super Ego. Jack is presented as a violent character, following his desires, killing others only to get pleasure and taking negative steps most of the times. Jack found pleasure in violence as his thoughts are reflected in the scene when Ralph was setting rules for everyone to maintain discipline. Jack was not interested in obeying those rules but he was excited with the thought of violence punishment as he says : **"We all have rules!" he cried excitedly. "Then when any one breaks' em ---"** (pg:36). Another thing of interest for Jack was 'killing'. Every time first thought came to his mind was to kill or hunt others. In the discussion of beast, his words : **'There isn't a snake thing. But if there was a snake we'd hunt it and kill it. We are going to kill pigs'** (pg:40). These lines show that he was obsessed with such thoughts of killing and hurting others. He was led by his id rather than ego or super ego.

At an occasion he shows a bit sensible behavior but that doesn't remain constant. Before started killing he tried to maintain his civility. As stated in the novel: **'We've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages. We're English, and English are best at every thing. So we got to do the right things'**. This conversation shows a glimpse of civic sense in his personality. But it fades soon when he let his desires to drive him. He himself gave a way to id to overpower him. Jack was so much indulged in hunting that he cared for none. The time when ship came, he had

gone for hunting along with his team. Later on he was cursed by all of them as they could be saved if he did not let the fire out. **‘There was a ship out there’..... ‘you and your blood Jack Merridew ! We might have gone home’ (pg : 76&77).** It is clear that Jack’s carelessness and greed for desires became a reason of losing a chance of savior. He put many of them to death. Jack wanted to fulfill his desires, even if those desires were not allowed or looked down upon by the society. His main purpose on the island was to get pleasure. According to Freud Id seeks to avoid pain or unpleasantness. It is responsible for our basic needs such as food and water. Same idea is depicted here. **“Kill the pig! Cut her throat! Bash her in” (page 82).** This was obviously not a primary need. It was a very violent and futile and only meant for joy and pleasure. Firstly It is bad enough to have the desire to kill others, but it is worst to act upon it. Jack does so to a mother sow, **“Her belly was fringed with a row of piglets that slept or burrowed and squeaked” (page 134).** **“Jack was on top of the sow, stabbing downward with his knife...then [he] found the throat and the hot blood spouted over his hands” (page 135).** The pig was a mother and was nursing piglets. The death of any pig on the island seemed unnecessary, as there was plenty of fruit to survive on. **‘its wizard, there is food and drink to survive on’ (pg:38). ‘cooked fruit, that’s what we will have to eat’ (pg:50).** They could maintain their civility by confining their lust for food but they couldn’t stop themselves. This event seems the turning point i.e. a turn from civilization to savagery, which is obviously created by dominance of id in their personalities. And even if the death of a pig was necessary, it doesn’t have to be killed in such a violent manner as Jack did. All these actions show that id overpowered Jack and his fellows. **“The desire to squeeze and hurt was over mastering”**

Furthermore, Jack is presented as a first one to break the rules. He is powerless and depressed but he can’t find the means to handle the boys. **“Jack! You are breaking the rules”, “Who cares?”..... Jack was shouting against him.’ (pg:100). ‘We don’t need conch anymore. We know who ought to say things’(pg:111).** These lines show the violence and free will in Jack’s character. A person operating at the id level may be motivated by hunger, jealousy, or the desire for something, based on instinct. Jack had an instinct for power and leadership that led him to violate the rules. He found difficult to accept Ralph as a chief and it led him to break up with Ralph. He had a conflict with Ralph in the beginning for becoming a chief. He had a desire to have a control on the whole island. This desire chased him throughout, and led him to get separate from Ralph later in the novel. So again id was dominating ego and he could not control himself from hunting his pleasures and desires. **“I’m not going to be part of Ralph’s lot”(pg:140).** This statement by Jack shows the Id being the most powerful Freudian division in Jack. By breaking away, Jack is disregarding the fact that he is destroying the island’s peace and decreasing their chances of rescue and survival. Though he was powerful as he was the leader of hunting team but he wanted to be more powerful. His lust for power shows that his actions are highly driven by id. Because of it, he was turning from ‘civilized to barbaric’. He was forgetting the former civilization taught in his society. He had two central goals on the island i.e. To kill and to lead. He was killing animals and humans just for the lust of blood. The boys with him also begin to act on the id of their personalities more than ego or super ego. As a result they also lost discipline and order in their lives. They lost touch with their rules and civilization. They started to indulge in the killing of people.

Another example of his behavior is when he snatches Piggy's glasses. **'His specs, use them as burning glasses' (pg:44)**. Again he was not concerned with the fact that how he was hurting and teasing others rather he was more interested to enjoy the situation. He was only **'exulting in his achievements'**. He disliked Piggy and he found pleasure in teasing him. More he passed time in island, more he became primitive. He often acted so irrationally just to fulfill his desires. Even at the end he lost the sense of humanity. Human lives became very cheap for him. His desires overpowered him to such an extent that he failed to value human lives. He preferred his desires over them. After the rock killed the piggy he rejoiced and intended to kill Ralph. **"Viciously, with full intention, he hurled his spear at Ralph"**. The same death instinct is viewed in boys when they killed Simon. Furthermore, the novel *'Lord of flies'* is named on the sow's head that Jack's gang hangs on a stake and erects in the forest as an offer to the beast **"This head is for beast, its a gift"(pg:151)**. So the topic itself symbolizes the instincts of power and cruelty that take control of Jack's tribe i.e. the overwhelming of id on their personalities.

Another character portraying the Freud idea of id is Roger. He was also following his desires many times. He caused destruction and teased the littluns who were already worried. **Roger led the way straight through the castles, kicking them over, burying the flowers, scattering the chosen stones' (pg:65)** He was doing this destruction just for the sake of pleasure. His act shows the dominance of id over ego and super ego in his personality. Later, id completely dominates the ego when he brutally murders Piggy. According to Freud, *'id also contains death instinct, which is viewed as a set of destructive forces present in all human beings' (Freud, 1920)*. So Roger was acting completely on his instincts. He was acting on the pleasure principle rather than reality or morality.

Another form of thinking is 'ego'. Ego is *'the part of the personality corresponding most nearly to the perceived self, the controlling self that holds back the impulsiveness of the id in the effort to delay gratification until it can be found in socially approved ways.'* The ego contains the abilities to calculate, reason, and plan. Freud describes ego as **being like a rider on a horse (the Id), trying to hold the horse in check**. The ego satisfies the urges of id in a practical manner. In *Lord of flies* Golding represents Ralph as a true embodiment of ego. He was one of the most influential boys on the island. He thinks appropriately and has abilities of leadership. He knows better ways of being rescued. As ego is the agreement between the id and superego, so Golding presents similar characteristics in personality of Ralph. The instant when he was elected as a chief, he knew about the desire of Jack to become a chief. **"I ought to be a chief," said Jack with simple arrogance"(p:23)**. He felt that the decision of boys of making him a chief affected Jack and made him embarrassed: **"the freckles on Jack's face disappeared under a blush of mortification"**. Realizing it, Ralph gave him control of hunting team as stated in the novel: **"Ralph looked at him eager to offer something. 'the choir belongs to you, of course". The suffusion drains away from Jack's face'(pg:24)**. Here the 'ego' satisfies the urges of 'id' in a socially accepted manner. He did what was allowed by the society and what was realistic. At the same time he fulfilled the desire of Jack to be a leader to some extent. This reasonable act of Ralph lessened the chance of enmity between the two: **"Jack and Ralph smiled at each other with shy liking"(pg:25)**.

Ralph has his Id-like moments like all other Ego-driven people as he also gets pleasure by teasing piggy in the beginning, but he never reaches to the extent where id becomes dominant over ego. The first thing he did to get pleasure was by telling his name 'piggy' to others. The name sounded odd and piggy forbade him to tell any one but despite of it he told his name to other fellows and humiliated him. But later on when he realized that piggy got hurt by this action, he made him realized that piggy sounded better than fatty and also apologized. **'Ralph looking with more understanding at piggy, saw that he was hurt and crushed. He hovered between the two courses of apology or further insult. "Better piggy than Fatty" he said with the directness of genuine leadership "and anyway i am sorry if you feel like that".(p:27)'**. These lines show that how intelligently Ralph molded the situation. It seems that Ralph realized his mistake but perhaps he was certain that now every one knows piggy's name. So no one will avoid to hurt him. Everyone will deliberately call him piggy. In order to compensate his mistake, he tried to input the idea in piggy's mind that piggy is better than fatty. It reflects quite realistic and practical approach of Ralph. Ralph did what he felt that the outside world will allow. And it satisfied Piggy as well. It reflects the Freud concept of Ego in his character.

Another occasion when Jack announced three boys to go on an expedition, Piggy also showed a desire to go with them. But three of them gave no attention to him rather they humiliated him. Ralph perhaps did not intend to humiliate him rather he was the only one to know about the Asthma of Piggy. His words **"You are no good on a job like this"** reveals that he was not cruel or evil like Jack but he was conscious about Piggy's health and physical strength. Because of his Asthma and his obesity he could not do that job actively. That's why Ralph was not willing to bring him with them. He was thinking realistically but Piggy couldn't understand the depth of his denial. He was hurt by the words of Jack **"We don't want you, three's enough"**. Jack clearly showed his dis-likeliness for Piggy and humiliated him. Reader may misinterpret the words of Ralph in the context but Ralph seems quite practical here, and Jack is the one who is serving his desire. Piggy also misinterpreted Ralph's statement and felt humiliated. **"you can't come." Piggy's glasses were misted again this time with humiliation.(pg:26)**. But later on Ralph realized the situation, he again satisfies piggy by giving him a job of taking names. **"Now go back, Piggy and take names. That's your job. So long."..... Piggy stood and the rose of indignation faded slowly from his cheeks. He went back to platform.(pg:27)**. This act of Ralph again handled the situation. Piggy desired to do the job which did not suit him. He made Piggy to feel that he has another important job to do. He is not totally worthless. This feeling faded anger from Piggy's face. At the same time he suppressed his desire to go with them on the expedition. Here ego overturns the urges of id in practical manner.

Another glimpse of Ralph as an embodiment of ego is depicted in the scene when he and Jack were about to fight at the time of making shelters. **'Now antagonism was audible. "but i shall! Next time! I've got to get a barb on this spear!" They were both red in face, found looking at each other difficult. Ralph rolled his stomach and began to play with the grass. "if it rains like when we dropped in..... We need shelters because of the-----"he paused for a moment and they both pushed their anger away. Then he went on safe, changed the subject.(pg:56)**. It shows

that their conflict made them furious and both were enraged. But Ralph suppressed his id, and he did not let himself drive by his anger. He acted wisely, controlling himself, started playing with grass and changed the subject to divert the attention of Jack. It faded the flames of hostility between them and both were calm. It shows the control of Ralph over himself and his consciousness about situation. He was trying to **'hold the horse(id) in check'**. It is also depicted in the novel that Ralph was more concerned in saving human lives. His thoughts were focused on being rescued. Consciously he knows that fire is the only means to satisfy his need of being safe. He is conscious for rescue but Jack and his hunters were taking things easy and playful. They were enjoying their violence and hunt. Ralph's 'ego' let him to become worried about their lives and he wanted to plan something. He tried to make them understand that fire is the most important thing to rescue them. **'You hunters! You can laugh! But i tell you the smoke is more important than pig'**. More over Ralph was not pleased with the destruction of Island as stated in the novel : **'We nearly set the whole island on fire. And we waste time.....we won't have a fire anywhere but on the mountain. Ever.'**(pg:88). Ralph seems to control or tame his 'id'. He is not as blind as hunters are. He deals quite realistically. Ralph also tried to make them realize that the blind following of their desires are leading them towards incivility and evil. As he said: **'Things are breaking up. I don't understand why. We began well; we were happy. And then.....'**(pg:89). They began well because they had control on themselves in the beginning. As the time passed they started forgetting their rules and obligations. They started chasing their dreams and desires which led them to the lowest level of their personality. They were caught with fear and anxiety. Also, When the boys are discussing the beast, naturally, everyone is frightened by the beast, but Ralph shows his qualities when he says **"I'm frightened myself sometimes, only that's nonsense!"** His id and natural instincts tell him that he should be frightened, but his ego and common sense tells him that the beast is "nonsense".

Ralph had a also a good sense of responsibility and consciousness. His conversation with Piggy **'Supposing i got like others-- not caring. What'ud become of us'**(pg:154) shows that as a leader he has acute sense of responsibility. He was more conscious about public rather than himself. His ultimate goal was to save civil society. But he failed to maintain discipline for a long time. It is because boys could not suppress their desires for a long time. *'According to Freud, the very act of entering into civilized society entails the repression of various archaic primitive desires' (Dino Felluga)*. The repression of these desires was too hard to maintain for an extended period of time for the boys. The time Jack found no one against Ralph, and excluded himself from the assembly, Ralph seemed quite conscious. Though Jack insulted him, and Ralph could have pleasure on his humiliation but Ralph kept control on himself and he seemed worry about his antagonist fellow. **'Softly looking at Piggy and not seeing him ,Ralph spoke to himself, "He will come back. When the sun goes down he will come."**(pg:141). As a leader he was neutral. He was trying to repress his feelings of hatred and anger and he had to deal with situation wisely. He was also concerned about the long term consequences. The more Super Ego side of the Ego can be seen when Ralph says, **"You pinched Piggy's specs. You've got to give them back...You played a dirty trick-we'd have given you fire if you'd asked for it...You could have had fire whenever you wanted. But you didn't. You came sneaking up like a thief and stole Piggy's**

**glasses**". Ralph understands that stealing is wrong and demands that Jack return Piggy's glasses so that he can see, two very righteous things in his personality indeed.

Another Freudian Division of the Human Mind is the Super Ego. Superego is : *'The part of the personality corresponding most nearly to conscience, controlling through moral scruples rather than by way of social expediency. The superego is said to be an uncompromising and punishing conscience'* According to Freud superego represents our learned knowledge of what is right and wrong, moral and immoral, acceptable and not acceptable in any given situation. In **Lord of Flies** Piggy and Simon are the two main characters who reflect Freud's concept of super ego most of the times. Freud believed that *'Children internalize parental restrictions on impulse satisfaction, thereby forming the Superego.'* Piggy was referring his aunt again and again in the beginning of the novel which shows that his super ego dominates because of his aunt's restrictions. **'My auntie told me not to run.... On account of my asthma'(pg:9).** The superego in piggy's character moralized him and he was quite sympathetic and sensible. Moreover, at the time of assembly when the small boy wanted to convey the chief about beast , everyone was laughing at him. Piggy was the only one who considered it a wrong deed to make fun of him. His superego led him to help the boy to convey his message effectively. **'The small boy held out his hands for the conch and the assembly shouted with laughter; at once he snatched back his hand and started to cry. "Let him have a conch!" shouted Piggy"Let him have it". ..... Piggy knelt by him, one hand on the great shell, listening and interpreting to the assembly"(pg:39).** It shows the goodness in Piggy's character. He was able to understand others feelings. He was able to distinct between right and wrong and he had courage to choose right. This represents superego in his character.

Other incident when all boys rushed to make a fire like untamed kids, Piggy stood by with his chief. Jack led all of them to make noise and rush. **'Ralph was left, holding the conch, with no one but Piggy'..... 'like kids!' he said scornfully, 'acting like a crowd of kids'(pg:42).** It shows that Piggy is disgusted with the immaturity of the boys. He himself behaved in a right and decent manner. He found it immoral and useless to rush in such a way. His superego is again dominated and he stood alone with Ralph. Like other boys he did not follow jack in over excitement, rather he kept calm. Piggy is the character who wants to maintain civilization more than all others. He displays constant attention and appreciation of societal rulings. He knew the importance of conch more than any other character. He considered it as a symbol of authority and he respected it. He was more concerned with making shelters and getting a safer place for everyone. Piggy's clashes with Jack shows the continuous struggle between id and superego. 'Id' always leads to follow desires and violence while superego raises the voice of conscience, thus realizing the person what is wrong and what is right. When Jack departed, Piggy was happy to contribute freely for social decorum. **"Piggy was so full of delight and expanding liberty in Jack's departure, so full of pride in his contribution to the good of society, that he helped to fetch wood"(pg:143).** He also brought fruits with littluns and presented them to Ralph. This shows moral goodness and devoted nature of Piggy which is the gift of super ego.

Another character who embodies Freud's super ego is Simon. He also acts rightly and sympathetically. At the time

of setting fire, Jack underestimated Piggy and called him lazy. Simon favored Piggy at once which shows his sympathy towards him. **‘A fat lot you tired’, said Jack contemptuously. ‘You just sat’. “We used his specs” said Simon, smearing a black cheek with his forearm. “He helped that way.”(pg:46)** . It shows his good behavior and good nature. He has the ability to comprehend emotions and looks beyond the surface facts by understanding the feelings of others. He thought it morally wrong to underestimate and abuse his fellow. His rely more in his super ego than his id . He exhibited exemplary behavior till the end. When the littluns were unable to reach the fruits, Simon picked fruits for them **‘Found for them the fruit they could not reach, pulled off the choicest from up in the foliage, passed them back down to endless, outstretched hands.’** It shows the helping nature of Simon which is obviously driven by his conscience. His super ego made him morally good and he preferred right over wrong. Giving Piggy his share of meat when Jack didn’t: **“shoved his piece of meat over the rocks to Piggy, who grabbed it” (page 80)** ,getting back piggy’s glasses when jack snatched them: **‘Simon who got there first, found them for him’ (pg:78)** etc.All this shows dominance of super ego in his character. While looking for the beast, Ralph asked someone to go to Piggy to save him from any harm or fear, Simon proposed himself for this service. **‘ Simon pushed his way to Ralph’s elbow.“I will go if you like, I don’t mind honestly.”(pg:129).’** Such an angelic behavior of Simon distinguishes him and places him at high level of morality. He accepted danger and preferred others on his own self. He did not let his desires overpower him rather he listens to his conscience and controls the environment around him. So he well presents the Freudian concept of superego.

Maurice also reflects superego in his character to some extent. When roger and Maurice destroyed the littluns small castles and flowers, Maurice was quite dissatisfied by his act later on. **‘Now though there was no parent to let fall a heavy hand, Maurice still felt the unease of wrong-doing. At the back of his mind formed the uncertain outline of an excuse.’(pg:65).** It shows that restrictions of his parents were still influencing his personality. It is according to Freud’s idea that parent’s restrictions forms the super ego.His conscience was pinching him for his wrong act and it seems that Maurice was easily influenced by the evil present in Roger and Jack, otherwise he was a good boy having a sense of right and wrong. Also when they went for hunting leaving Piggy behind, Maurice was the first one to think worriedly about Piggy. It shows his care for his fellows. **‘Shouldn’t we go back to Piggy’ said Maurice, ‘before dark’(pg:127).**

Aside from using characters to illustrate the Freudian Concept of the Human Mind, William Golding also attempted to say things about the human psyche through events in the novel Lord of the Flies. The vision of beast is one of events that represents Freud’s psychoanalysis. In a Freudian reading, it can represent the id, the instinctual urges,fear and desires of the human unconscious mind. However we interpret the beast as the littlun’s idea of the monster rising from the sea. It terrifies the boys because it represents the beast’s emergence from their own unconscious minds. Freud said that some events and desires were often too frightening or painful to acknowledge. He believed that such information is stored in a region he called the unconscious mind. This happens through the process of repression.His psychoanalytic view holds that there are inner forces beyond your awareness that are directing your

behavior. The vision of beast follows same idea of Freud. The beast was nothing in it self rather it was an illusion. It was an imaginary thing that came from unconscious of the boys and frightened them. Jack and Ralph did not believe in a beast in the beginning. They claimed to have seen it on the mountain, but what they actually saw was a parachute, moving because of the stormy weather. They interpret it as beast just because they have this idea in their unconscious. Moreover, perhaps this idea was strengthened by surrounding environment as they face a trauma and they were continuously talking about beast. This continuous talk became a stimulus and they became unable to consider things realistically. So beast was just the revelation of their unconscious mind.

A Freudian explanation why the boys felt such strong fear towards the beast is that *'their reality-testing apparatus had seized to function properly'*. If their reality-testing would have worked properly, the nightmares would have remained nightmares and the thought of the beast would not have become embodied. Therefore, since the reality apparatus was not working, the evil force became something more concrete for them. It is to be noted that idea of beast first emerged in the minds of littluns. According to Freud, It is common that children feel that an evil force is after them when their parents are absent, and this is exactly what we see among the children on the island. The reason why the older children did not start to believe in the beast at first is because due to their age they had gotten further in their psychological development, and therefore their reality-testing apparatus worked better. Simon was the only character who got to the reality of the beast to a great extent. **'Simon thought of the beast, there rose before his inward sight the picture of a human at one heroic and sick'(pg:113)**. It shows that instinctively Simon associates beast with human beings. Perhaps he equalizes beast with man's inward evil. But Simon's superego was conflicting with his id and let him to speak words: **'I don't believe in the beast'(pg:115)**. Jack was very strongly believing in the existence of beast as his ego was suppressed. **'Jack muttered: I've been all over. It must be here.'**(pg:114). As the idea of the beast increasingly fills the boys with dread, Jack and the hunters enforced the boys' fear of the beast to their own advantage. Later when he encountered with lord of flies, all were his imaginary thoughts that beast was talking to him. **'Run away, said the head silently'(pg:152)**. Head is saying 'silently'. It shows that Simon's inner mind was fancying it. Head was silent but what speaking was his unconscious. It was nothing more than a delusion. Perhaps his repressed fears were revealing, and he was unable to overpower it. But soon he interpreted it as evil part of man's self. **"You knew, didn't you? I'm a part of you? Close, close, close! i am the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?"(pg:158)**. It shows that Simon realizes the beast is not necessarily something that exists outside in the jungle. Rather, it already exists inside each boy's mind and soul, the capacity for savagery and evil that slowly overwhelms them. So in the end Simon came to know about the reality of beast. But he didn't find time to tell his fellows.

Throughout the novel, it is presented that the Id is continuously trying to overpower the Ego and the Super Ego. And in the end death of Simon and Piggy show that beast-kind and evilness in the nature of humans defeated the superego. Morality, truth and conscience became victim of the beast inside human nature and id overpowers everything. In conclusion, the human mind can be divided into three levels, the Id, the Ego, and the Super Ego. The Id is considered as a "pot" of human desires, the Ego is considered as the "tamer" of the Id, but keeps the Super Ego in

consideration, and the Super Ego is the “list” of values, which is gained by parental restrictions and is accepted by the society. Characters from William Golding’s novel Lord of the Flies can fit into this Freudian concept of the Id, Ego, and Super Ego. Jack embodies the Id as he has violent urges to kill, Piggy and Simon embody the Super Ego as they have logic and emotional understanding, and Ralph embodies the Ego, comes between the Id and the Super Ego, the bad and the good.