

## Psychological Trauma of Ralph in William Golding's The Lord of the Flies: A Carl Jung Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

*This study analyzes the psychological trauma experienced by Ralph in Lord of the Flies by William Golding through Gustav Jung's literary psychology. It focuses on how trauma shapes Ralph's character development using Jungian concepts: shadow, individuation, and collective unconscious. The research applies a qualitative descriptive method. The main source is the novel itself, supported by literature on trauma theory and Jungian psychology. Data is collected through literature review and text analysis. The analysis uses Jung's theory to interpret Ralph's psychological journey. Findings show that Ralph's trauma is linked to violence, loss, and destruction, which affect his growth. The shadow concept reveals Ralph's inner conflict between savage instincts and his effort to stay civilized. His individuation emerges as he faces internal darkness, especially when mourning Piggy and witnessing the island's ruin. The study concludes that trauma significantly influences personal identity and group dynamics. It also highlights the relevance of psychological analysis in literature.*

**Keyword:** Psychological trauma, Ralph, Literary psychology, Gustav Jung

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## INTRODUCTION

Literature is an art that uses language to express human emotions and social realities with its own unique beauty (Lafamane, 2020). In addition to serving as a medium of entertainment, literature also represents the complexity of characters. By employing approaches such as psychology, readers can explore the psychological aspects of the characters, allowing a deeper understanding of their inner conflicts and behaviors.

Literary psychology aids in exploring the meaning of life as it relates to psychological attitudes (Prawira, 2018). Carl Gustav Jung, a Swiss psychologist, developed analytical psychology, which emphasizes the reality of the unconscious within the psyche (Felina Eliza Kasemtan, 2022). Jung became influential through concepts like the collective unconscious and archetypes. Unlike Freud, Jung viewed the psyche as a symbolic space, highlighting the role of symbols and myths in shaping consciousness.

The literary psychology approach developed by Jung offers a unique perspective in understanding trauma in fictional characters. Jungian theory introduces concepts such as the collective unconscious, archetypes, and the 'shadow' (Frenlihado, 2025). Ralph's trauma can be examined archetypically, where the conflict between conscious and unconscious aspects reflects the universal struggle to confront inner darkness.

Previous research applying Jung's theory in literature shows that trauma can manifest as the collective unconscious, connecting individual and universal experiences (Garcia, 2020). Auliya (2021) analyzed consciousness and unconscious personality in *Supernova* using Jung's psychology. Nasywa (2024) explored dual personality in *Rumah Lebah*, while Abror and Mahdalena (2024) examined a female character's personality structure using Jungian theory.

In fiction, psychological trauma reflects emotional complexity and internal conflict. *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding portrays boys stranded on an island facing intense conflict and trauma, especially Ralph. He undergoes psychological changes in a survival setting that triggers deep emotional distress, aligning with trauma as a response to threatening events (Ramadhanti, 2020).

"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." (*Lord of The Flies*, Chapter 12, Page 249). At the end, Ralph is rescued, yet he weeps not with relief, but sorrow. He realizes the loss of childhood and innocence, having witnessed the dark side of humanity and lost Piggy, his wise friend. This moment shows Ralph's trauma, rooted in the chaos and the collapse of morality.

The novelty of this research lies in its in-depth approach to the archetypal and shadow aspects of Ralph's personality, offering a comprehensive trauma analysis and new interpretation of psychological experiences in fiction. It also reflects how trauma in literature can resonate with real-life experiences.

This study explores Ralph's trauma using Jungian literary psychology. While previous research has discussed trauma and archetypes, this study addresses the gap regarding how trauma in Ralph reflects the collective unconscious and inner conflict. Many analyses lack depth in exploring Ralph as an archetypal figure of fear and darkness. Thus, this study fills that gap and offers a new perspective in literary psychology.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study, titled *Psychological Trauma in the Character of Ralph in William Golding's Novel Lord of the Flies: A Literary Psychology Study of Gustav Jung*, aims to analyze the psychological trauma

experienced by the character Ralph. It uses a qualitative method, with data consisting of quotations words, sentences, and paragraphs from the novel Lord of the Flies that depict Ralph's psychological trauma. The data sources include primary data from the novel itself and secondary sources such as books, journals, and scientific articles discussing literary psychology and Jung's psychological theories, especially those related to trauma and fictional character dynamics.

The data collection was conducted through a literature review by reading and thoroughly understanding the novel, identifying and categorizing relevant quotations. The data were then analyzed using a descriptive-analytical approach based on Jungian concepts such as the collective unconscious, archetypes, and the shadow, to explore the psychological impact of trauma on Ralph's character development. The final research report compiles the analysis results and is expected to offer a deeper understanding of Ralph's trauma and how it can be explained through Jung's psychological theories.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

CATEGORY	QUOTE	SOURCE
Shadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“He found himself understanding the wearisomeness of this life, where every path was an improvisation and a considerable part of one's waking life was spent watching one's feet.”</li> </ul>	Chapter 5, Page 91
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away.”</li> </ul>	Chapter 5, Page 109
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That was murder.”</li> </ul> <p>“You stop it!” said Piggy, shrilly. “What good're you doing talking like that?”</p>	Chapter 10, Page 191
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I'm frightened. Of us. I want to go home.”</li> </ul>	Chapter 10, Page 192
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Ralph screamed, a scream of fright and anger and desperation.”</li> </ul>	Chapter 12, Page 246
Arcetype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too.”</li> </ul>	Chapter 12, Page 249
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>there was a stillness about Ralph as he sat that marked him out: there was his size, and attractive appearance; and most obscurely, yet most powerfully, there was the conch</li> </ul>	Chapter 1, Page 25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“maybe there is a beast.”</li> <li>“maybe it's only us.”</li> </ul>	Chapter 5, page 106, 107

	• “What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages?”	Chapter 5, page 109
	• Simon found for them the fruit they could not reach, pulled off the choicest from up in the foliage, passed them back down to the endless, outstretched hands	Chapter 5, page 67
	• "Bollocks to the rules! We're strong—we hunt! If there's a beast, we'll hunt it down! We'll close in and beat and beat and beat—!"	Chapter 5, page 110
Collective Unconscious	• “Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!”	Chapter 9, Page 186
	• “The mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness.”	Chapter 4, page 75
	• Roger gathered a handful of stones and began to throw them. Yet there was a space round Henry, perhaps six yards in diameter, into which he dare not throw. Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life.	Chapter 4, page 73-74

## DISCUSSION

### 1) Shadow

**“He found himself understanding the wearisomeness of this life, where every path was an improvisation and a considerable part of one’s waking life was spent watching one’s feet.”** (The Lord Of The Flies, William Golding, Chapter 5, Page 91).

**Terjemahan:** Dia mendapati dirinya memahami keletihan hidup ini, di mana setiap jalan adalah improvisasi dan sebagian besar waktu yang dihabiskan seseorang dihabiskan untuk memperhatikan kakinya.

Ralph experiences emotional and mental exhaustion due to the uncertainty of life on the island, which forces him to constantly stay alert and improvise. From Jung’s perspective, this reflects the emergence of the “shadow” or the darker side within him, such as fear and uncertainty, which had previously been hidden. The pressure and fatigue serve as triggers for this inner conflict. In the context of the “hero’s journey,” Ralph’s struggle to face his fears and adapt to a new reality becomes an internal trial that marks his journey toward maturity.

**“The world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away.”** (The Lord Of The Flies, William Golding, Chapter 5, Page 109).

**Terjemahan:** Dunia, dunia yang dapat dimengerti dan penuh hukum itu, sedang perlahan menghilang.

Ralph realizes that the world he once knew as structured and comprehensible is starting to disappear, reflecting his confusion and uncertainty as a result of the psychological trauma he has experienced. In Jungian literary psychological analysis, this relates to the collective unconscious and the emergence of inner symbols, where the loss of structure represents a shift toward awareness of the darker side within himself (the shadow). Fear and anxiety begin to dominate his mind, marking an important stage in his journey of facing uncertainty and searching for identity amid chaos.

**“That was murder.”**

**“You stop it!” said Piggy, shrilly. “What good’re you doing talking like that?”** (The Lord Of The Flies, William Golding, Chapter 10, Page 191).

**Terjemahan:** Itu pembunuhan.

Kau hentikan!” kata Piggy dengan suara melengking. “Apa untungnya bicara seperti itu?”

This passage marks a crucial moment in Ralph’s psychological development, as he comes to a horrifying realization that their actions have crossed a moral boundary, expressed in the statement “That was murder.” This awareness signifies a sharp shift from his former role as a moral leader to someone forced to confront the brutal reality of violence and chaos. Piggy’s reaction, rejecting the conversation, reflects a denial mechanism to avoid facing the trauma. From a Jungian perspective, this is a critical stage where Ralph begins to confront his “shadow” the dark side of himself and the recognition of their violent acts becomes part of the process of integrating the conscious and unconscious aspects of the self, leading toward a deeper understanding of his own identity.

**“I’m frightened. Of us. I want to go home.”** (The Lord Of The Flies, William Golding, Chapter 10, Page 192).

**Terjemahan:** Aku takut. Pada kita. Aku ingin pulang.

This passage illustrates a turning point in Ralph’s psychological state, as he begins to fear himself and his group due to the growing chaos. His desire to go home reflects a longing for peace and order. From a Jungian perspective, this fear signifies an awareness of his inner dark side (the shadow), marking the beginning of the individuation process toward a deeper understanding of the self.

**“Ralph screamed, a scream of fright and anger and desperation.”**

(The Lord Of The Flies, William Golding, Chapter 12, Page 246).

**Terjemahan:** Ralph berteriak, sebuah teriakan ketakutan, kemarahan, dan keputusan.

Ralph’s scream reflects the peak of his psychological trauma and identity crisis, as he loses control over himself and his group. From a Jungian perspective, this scream symbolizes the emergence of the “shadow” or the darker side of himself that had long been repressed. This emotional outburst is part of the individuation process the integration of the light and dark aspects of the self and marks a major transformation in Ralph’s character due to the pressure and chaos 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; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too.”** (The Lord Of The Flies, William Golding, Chapter 12, Page 249).

**Terjemahan:** Air mata mulai mengalir dan isak tangis mengguncangnya. Untuk pertama kalinya di pulau itu, dia menyerahkan dirinya pada tangisan itu; kejang-kejang besar yang mengguncang tubuhnya, seakan menarik seluruh tubuhnya. Suaranya terdengar di bawah asap hitam di depan puing-puing pulau yang terbakar; dan terinfeksi oleh emosi itu, anak-anak kecil lainnya mulai gemetar dan menangis juga.

This passage represents the peak of Ralph’s psychological trauma, as he finally cries and releases his deep sorrow caused by the chaos on the island. His tears reflect an acceptance of the dark side within himself (the shadow) that he had long suppressed. From a Jungian psychological perspective, this moment marks an important step toward a complete understanding and acceptance of the self. Ralph’s crying also triggers a collective emotional awareness among the other boys, signifying the end of his psychologically intense journey filled with pressure and loss.

## 2) Archetypes

**“There was a stillness about Ralph as he sat that marked him out: there was his size, and attractive appearance; and most obscurely, yet most powerfully, there was the conch.”**

**Terjemahan:** Ada suatu ketenangan dalam diri Ralph saat ia duduk yang membuatnya tampak berbeda: ada posturnya yang besar, penampilan yang menarik; dan yang paling samar, namun paling kuat, adalah keberadaan sangkakala (conch).

Ralph represents the archetype of “The Hero” in Jungian psychology, a central figure who brings hope and upholds noble values. From the beginning, he is naturally respected without needing to assert himself, showing an inner calling to lead. The conch he holds becomes a symbol of authority and legitimacy. In facing the chaos and violence from Jack’s group, Ralph continues to strive to maintain social order, democratic discussion, and morality, reflecting the hero’s struggle against inner turmoil.

**“Maybe there is a beast... maybe it’s only us.”**

**Terjemahan:** Mungkin memang ada monster... mungkin itu hanya kita sendiri.

In Jungian psychology, the archetype of “The Shadow” represents the dark side of human nature wild instincts, aggression, and intense desires that are often denied by the conscious mind. In the novel, “The Beast” is not a real creature, but rather a projection of the boys’ inner darkness. Simon realizes this when he says, “maybe the monster is just us,” indicating that true fear comes from within human beings themselves. Thus, The Beast becomes a symbol of collective fear and the dark side of humanity a manifestation of the Shadow.

**“What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages?”**

**Terjemahan:** Apa kita ini? Manusia? Atau hewan? Atau orang-orang biadab?

Piggy represents the archetype of “The Wise Old Man” in Jungian psychology a wise figure who brings insight and guidance. Although still a child, Piggy consistently promotes a rational approach and upholds the values of civilization. He often reminds the group of the importance of logic and social order. However, as in many archetypal narratives, his wisdom is ignored by the group, which is driven by emotion and chaos, until eventually, he becomes a victim of the group’s brutal and unconscious instincts.

**“Simon found for them the fruit they could not reach, pulled off the choicest from up in the foliage, passed them back down to the endless, outstretched hands.”**

**Terjemahan:** Simon memetikkan buah untuk mereka yang tidak bisa mereka jangkau, memetik yang terbaik dari atas dedaunan, lalu memberikannya kembali ke tangan-tangan kecil yang terentang tanpa henti.

Simon represents the archetype of “The Innocent” in Jungian psychology a figure who is pure, loving, and never harms anyone. His actions, full of compassion and self-sacrifice, along with his spiritual depth as he isolates himself and understands the truth about the “beast,” reflect a purity and insight that set him apart from the other boys. However, due to their own fear, Simon is tragically killed by his own friends.

**“Bollocks to the rules! We’re strong we hunt! If there’s a beast, we’ll hunt it down! We’ll close in and beat and beat and beat!”**

**Terjemahan:** Persetan dengan aturan! Kita kuat, kita berburu! Kalau memang ada monster, kita akan memburunya! Kita akan mengepung dan memukul, memukul, dan memukul!

Jack represents the archetype of “The Trickster” in Jungian psychology a figure who creates chaos, rejects rules, and awakens the wild side of human nature. From a choir leader, he transforms into a power-hungry tyrant who rejects logic and order, choosing violence and domination instead. He incites savagery among the other boys and becomes Ralph’s main rival, embodying the conflict between the Hero and the Trickster in the story.



### 3) Collective Unconscious

**“Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!”**

**Terjemahan:** Bunuh monsternya! Gorok lehernya! Tumpahkan darahnya!

This sentence reflects the moment when the boys lost their individual consciousness and were absorbed into a collective primitive instinct, ultimately leading to Simon's murder. In Jungian theory, this indicates the emergence of the Collective Unconscious ancient and aggressive instincts stored in the human psyche since ancestral times. The chant marks their transformation from humans into wild creatures driven by primal urges.

**“The mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness.”**

**Terjemahan:** Topeng itu seperti memiliki nyawanya sendiri, di baliknya Jack bersembunyi, terbebas dari rasa malu dan kesadaran diri.

The mask in this quote holds a very powerful symbolic meaning. After putting on the black and red face paint, Jack feels a total freedom from shame and self-consciousness. He no longer feels bound by social norms or moral rules. In Jungian psychology, the mask (persona) is the aspect of the self presented to the world but here, Jack wears the mask not to conform, but to break free from norms and reveal his primitive side.

The mask grants him access to the layers of the collective unconscious the deepest layer of the human psyche that stores savagery, aggressive impulses, and animalistic desires usually restrained by social norms. Once he puts on the mask, Jack becomes a ‘different creature,’ released from morality and free to follow his buried wild instincts.

**“Roger gathered a handful of stones and began to throw them. Yet there was a space round Henry, perhaps six yards in diameter, into which he dare not throw. Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life.”**

**Terjemahan:** Roger mengumpulkan segenggam batu dan mulai melemparkannya. Namun, ada ruang di sekitar Henry, mungkin berdiameter sekitar enam yard, yang tidak berani ia lempari. Di sini, tak terlihat namun kuat, terdapat tabu dari kehidupan lama.

This quote illustrates Roger's character development, who at first is still influenced by the norms and moral values instilled since childhood depicted through the “invisible circle” around Henry. In Jungian psychology, this reflects the influence of the Collective Unconscious in the form of collective moral prohibitions. However, as social supervision on the island disappears, that influence fades, leading Roger to eventually kill Piggy. This shows how archetypes of norms within the collective unconscious shape human behavior, but can dissolve when social rules collapse.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the character Ralph in Lord of the Flies undergoes a complex psychological development as a result of the trauma he experiences while living on the island. Based on literary psychology analysis using Gustav Jung's approach, Ralph's trauma can be understood through concepts such as the shadow, individuation, and the collective unconscious. Over time, Ralph becomes trapped in an inner conflict between maintaining his role as a leader and confronting the darker aspects of himself that emerge due to violence and loss.

Through a series of violent events, betrayals, and social breakdowns, Ralph ultimately experiences a process of self-acceptance, marked by his tears and acknowledgment of his vulnerability. This moment illustrates that although psychological trauma has shaped his character, it also opens a path toward deeper self-understanding and inner transformation. Understanding Ralph's trauma provides insight into broader psychological dynamics, especially the impact of traumatic events on both individuals and groups, and highlights the importance of accepting and integrating the darker aspects within oneself.

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