The savage as living ghost: representations of Native Americans and scholarly failures to dismantle the notion of the savage
Chen, C.

Citation
Chen, C. (2017, March 21). *The savage as living ghost: representations of Native Americans and scholarly failures to dismantle the notion of the savage*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/47360

Cover Page

Universiteit Leiden

The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/47360 holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Chen, C.
Title: The savage as living ghost: representations of Native Americans and scholarly failures to dismantle the notion of the savage
Issue Date: 2017-03-21

Chapter One

The Savage Hierarchy: *Lord of the Flies* and *The Savage Mind*

Introduction

In his study published in 1962 entitled *La pensée sauvage* (*The Savage Mind*), the French structuralist anthropologist Lévi-Strauss worked with the opposition between the civilized and not-civilized, or to be more precise between the industrialized scientific mindset and the savage one.[1] He did so not so much to dismantle the very opposition or to propose another image of what can be called "savage," but to lay out another way of thinking that corresponds to the "savage mind." He thus distinguished between two modes of thinking and knowing: "modern scientific inquiry" and the "science of the concrete," the latter of which he also referred to as "magic," "mythical" or "savage" thought. His use of the term "savage" to characterize the latter science may create the impression that he placed these two modes in a hierarchical opposition to each other and/or in a scale of temporal development whereby savage or mythical thought was prior and inferior to scientific thought. However, this was not the case, rather, in an attempt to uncouple the opposition between civilization and savagery from an ideologically underpinned hierarchy, he saw these modes as two autonomous and equally valid ways of thinking and acquiring knowledge. In fact, his intention was to consider the savage equal to modern man.

In order to test the implications of this attempt to consider the savage on a par with the civilized, I will bring Lévi-Strauss's argument in *The Savage Mind* in dialogue with Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954), a paradigmatic *literary* text on the difference between the two but also their disturbing intertwinement. The novel tells a story of a group of children who become savages after being abandoned on an uninhabited island following an aircraft crash. As the novel was written almost a decade after the Second World War, many critics read it as a reflection on people's depression and disillusionment due to witnessing, or going through the war. As Henri Talon, for example, argued: "Morally wounded by the extreme barbarity and sadism that the Second World War disclosed in the heart of *supposedly civilized Man*, Golding chose to project his spiritual uneasiness into a picture of children's hatred and deadly combats" (emphasis added, 296). And indeed, what Lévi-Strauss would call a substratum of this *supposedly civilized Man*, was embodied in the novel by

---

[1] Although the popular English translation of the title is *The Savage Mind*, Dan Sperber, a student as well as critic of Lévi-Strauss, argues that it is more suitable to translate the title as *Untamed Thinking*, as *'The Savage Mind'* may suggest that "there may be other kinds of mind besides 'savage' one," which is what Lévi-Strauss argues against (Sperber 26).

children; children acting savagely.

In *Lord of the Flies*, at first, the lost and abandoned children are eager to be rescued by the adults and to return to their former world. In order to be rescued, they try to maintain the same order as their parents did and imitate the British system as much as possible. Under Ralph's leadership, they lay down basic rules to make their world as orderly and organized as English society. For example, during their first meeting, the children agree that as a rule only the one who holds the conch has the right to speak. To be saved by a passing-by ship, the children have some of them watch over the fire and make sure that there is enough smoke. To eat meat, they have their own hunting group and raise fire to cook the meat. However, after living on the island for a few days, the children find it difficult to maintain an orderly situation as in their former world and begin to break the rules. For instance, the meeting held by Ralph is no longer taken seriously and the conch loses its power to endow people with the right to speak. The group led by Ralph collapses and Jack overturns Ralph's position to become leader himself. Under Jack's leadership, the children gradually forget about getting rescued and pay little attention to the smoke. They begin to paint themselves like "Indians"—stereotypical savages, perform a hunting game, kill their peers such as the kind-hearted Simon and the intelligent Piggy, and plan to kill Ralph. It is mere coincidence that they are rescued by a navy ship in the end, as it was not something they actively sought at that point in the narrative.

As an adventure story, *Lord of the Flies* has a similar plot and structure as its precedents *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) by Daniel Defoe, *The Coral Island* (1858) by R. M. Ballantyne and other novels. All of these works describe how human beings survive on an uninhabited island after disasters. However, contrary to R*obinson Crusoe* and *The Coral Island*, which depict the successful survival of human beings after disasters, *Lord of the Flies* tells how a group of English children fail to maintain the order of their former world and become savages in the face of a harsh environment. The novel does not present any Native Americans, but it alludes to them through the imagination of these English children, who through their cultural training would be inclined to regard Native Americans as savages, and thus assume a "savage" identity themselves in the end.

The very fact that children are chosen as subjects acting savagely allows Golding to bring in a host of stereotypes concerning the savage. In doing so, the novel plays with the mapping of two pivotal tenets in the European imagination of the "savage other": the savage's belonging to another place, an alien "elsewhere," which in this case is an isolated and uninhabited island, and the savage's belonging to another time, the earlier. The implications of the savage's double removal, spatial and temporal, from civilization were examined to the full by the ethnographer Johannes Fabian in a study called *Time and the Other: How anthropology makes its objects*. This study focused on the fact that, from a European perspective, the savage elsewhere on this planet was equated with the primitive European ancestors, back in time. In the novel this shift is, in a sense, made literal and figural at the same time. It is literal because in its focus on children, the story presents, from an adult perspective, an

earlier phase, which is one that is supposedly less developed and less civilized. In eighteenth century and nineteenth century European evolutionary models, savagery commonly represented the first stage in human development and was correspondingly seen as the "childhood" of humanity.

The novel's focus on children literalizes this metaphor of the savage as the childhood stage of man, while it also evokes the infantilism in the colonialist attitude towards the colonized "savages": the tendency to reduce them to children and deny them an adult status and the ability to rule themselves (Acheraïou 70). The child was in fact a widely popular trope in colonial literature and colonialist discourse, where it functioned as a double symbol, "both 'unformed' and evil-like," and was used to define the colonized races (70). At the same time the children in the novel metaphorically present the acts of savage behavior of *adults*. The dynamic between the two—civilization and savagery—and the mapping of the two shifts in time and place produce an unease.

This unease, or dis-ease, does not so much concern a reaction to the conventional savage as the inferior opposite of the civilized, here, however. It was captured by Golding himself as follows: "I must say that anyone who moved through those years without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head" (qtd. in Bloom 56). The trope brought in play by Golding, of the bee producing honey, is also an uneasy one, since it equates the sweet of honey with the bitterness of evil. It may be, then, that the unease provoked by the savage-civilized dynamic constantly needs to be covered up by tropes, or allegories, which themselves produce unease. Through my reading of the novel, I will explore the implications of the novel's use of tropes that involve the savage and the unease that the novel produces as it iterates these tropes. Bringing the novel's treatment of the "savage" in dialogue with Lévi-Strauss's attempt to de-hierarchize the savage and claim the autonomy of savage thinking, I assess the potential but also the limits of this structuralist attempt to consider the savage as structurally both opposite to, and parallel with, the civilized. Finally, I employ Lévi-Strauss's notion of the "bricoleur"—which he used as a metaphor to elucidate the operation of savage or mythical knowledge—in order to test the way the novel deals with the figure of the savage and the implications of its approach for the kind of knowledge it produces about the (European) self and its others.

1.1 Mythical Knowledge Versus Modern Science: A Groundbreaking Distinction and Its Discontents

To showcase the innovation behind Lévi-Strauss's re-casting of the savage through his distinction between mythical and modern science, it is worth comparing Lévi-Strauss's approach to the common understanding of the "savage" in Western thought in more detail, especially in the way the notion of the savage was formed during the Enlightenment and has persisted since. Exploring the imagination about the savage in Enlightenment thought, Tony C. Brown stresses the function of the

savage other as indispensable for the completeness of the (civilized, European) self: "Along with an anthropological emphasis central to the Enlightenment came an understanding of the self's others as serving a particular function for the self such that it now maintains an unavoidable relation to those others" (70). At the same time, the savage is dependent on the civilized as it contributes to the construction of the European self. The placing of savagery and civilization in a temporal evolutionary scale of progress, which was particularly popular during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe, also makes these categories appear somewhat autonomous: "Rousseau posits the savage as an anterior form of the European, giving each a certain autonomy. The savage presents an external category of identity different to that of the European" (70). Although this autonomy may seem to contradict the codependency of the savage and the civilized, Brown argues that it actually supports this codependency: "Through its exterior position," the savage "closes the circle of European self-constitution" (70). That is, the prior savage state is a necessary step in the evolution toward civilized progress and marks the origins of civilized society—a primitive, less advanced state that has to be superseded by other stages so that the civilized subject can eventually emerge. Thus, the temporal and spatial distance of the savage (as a previous stage but also the subject of alien faraway places), which I already laid out in the introduction, does not entail the savage's autonomy but enhances its function as a means of self-constitution. "The savage," Brown writes, "points both to the European self and away from that self; it presents, precisely, the not- or pre-European" (70).

Following this logic, the savage's mode of being and knowing, as conceptualized by many thinkers of the Enlightenment, primarily helped to make a point about civilized modes of social organization and knowledge acquisition: i.e. savages proved the superiority of European civilization, or in the case of critiques to European societies, illustrated the flaws and corruption of European societies through their innocence, naivety, and pure state. But even when savages were mobilized as a means of critique of European societies, they were still defined based on what they lacked, not based on positive qualities. Already in the late sixteenth century, Montaigne's description of the Tupi tribe is exemplary of this casting of Native American "savages" through negative categories, even when they are being admired:

> This is a nation … in which there is no kind of commerce, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers, no title of magistrate or of political superior, no habit of service, riches or poverty, no contracts, no inheritance, no divisions of property, only leisurely occupations, no respect for any kinship but the common ties, no clothes, no agriculture, no metals, no use of corn or wine. (110)

In line with this logic, even though the savage was considered as the "pre" of civilization, belonging to another phase in time, savages themselves were denied history; not only did they lack history, but they were even seen as lacking the capacity to reflect on the past, condemned to living in an eternal present: "savages

never look before or behind themselves, to the past or to the future. Living in a condition of apparent unhistorical immanence, they belong to the present alone" (T. Brown 67).

Lévi-Strauss thus sets out to counter a series of common assumptions about "savages" and their languages, many of which owe their popularization to narratives formed during the Enlightenment. He thus rejects the common claim that savage languages—a term with which Lévi-Strauss mainly referred to languages of Native Americans—are poor in abstraction, which is supposedly the "monopoly of civilized languages" (1966, 1). These languages do not lack in intellectual capacity compared with civilized languages (8). Their systematic organization of knowledge does not only serve practical purposes and satisfy practical needs, but further meets complex "intellectual requirements": things "are not known as a result of their usefulness" but are considered "useful or interesting because they are first of all known" (9). In an attempt to relativize essentialist attitudes of cultural superiority that, as we saw, tend to utilize the category of the savage as a means of constructing a superior self, he notes that "every civilization tends to overestimate the objective orientation of its thought […] When we make the mistake of thinking that the Savage is governed solely by organic or economic needs, we forget that he levels the same reproach at us" (3).

As already explained in the introduction, "mythical," "savage" or "magical" thought for Lévi-Strauss is not defined as the inferior and negative opposite of modern science—that which *lacks* what modern science has—but as an autonomous, equally valid mode of knowing. Emphatically asserting the autonomy of savage or magical thought, he presents it as "complete in itself" and "a well-articulated system," "independent of that other system which constitutes science" (13). It is worth looking closer at the passage in chapter one, where Lévi-Strauss is comparing these two forms of knowledge in order to establish the autonomy of savage or mythical thought:

> I am not however commending a return to the popular belief (although it has some validity in its own narrow context) according to which magic is a timid and stuttering form of science. One deprives oneself of all means of understanding magical thought if one tries to reduce it to a moment or stage in technical and scientific revolution. Like a shadow moving ahead of its owner it is in a sense complete in itself, and as finished and coherent in its immateriality as the substantial being which it precedes. … It is therefore better, instead of contrasting magic and science, to compare them as two parallel modes of acquiring knowledge. Their theoretical and practical results differ in value, for it is true that science is more successful than magic from this point of view, although magic foreshadows science in that it is sometimes also successful. Both science and magic however require the same sort of mental operations and they differ not so much in kind as in the different types of phenomena to which they are applied. (13)

In the context of the Western tradition of thinking about the relation between the savage and the civilized, several aspects are telling in this quote, including a remarkable ambiguity. First of all, there is Lévi-Strauss's reference to the common idea that magic would be a prefiguration of what later would fully develop into science—an idea that he considers inadequate. This idea in fact, would nicely fit in with the shift in time that Fabian addressed: the idea of the savage mind belonging to an earlier phase of humanity's development. By contrast, Lévi-Strauss explicitly rejects the evolutionary scheme in which the savage had been implicated since the eighteenth century—for him, savage thought and science are "two parallel modes of acquiring knowledge" (13). He thus appears to argue that magic is a fully developed practice on its own. Yet two times in the same paragraph, there is a metaphor that complicates this assertion, which is the metaphor of the shadow. This metaphor suggests that the one haunts the other, suggesting a degree of codependency between them, and seems to equate, by analogy, science with the substantial, and magic with the ungraspable or immaterial. If this metaphor seems to re-establish a certain hierarchy between the two (with magic as an immaterial, incomplete shadow, anticipating modern science) this suggestion is then explicitly countered again when the two are described as "parallel" in terms of the human potential to acquire knowledge. Although such equality between magic and science is somewhat contradicted again when the *success* of both appears to be unequal, the two become equal again as one of a kind in terms of mental operations, only differing as to the things to which they are applied.

Thus as we can see, even as Lévi-Strauss claims the equality of mythical (or savage) and modern science and their respective autonomy, thereby going against a long tradition in European thought, he cannot fully escape the hierarchical assumptions that are imbued in the categories he uses. These assumptions create contradictions and ambiguities in his use of these categories. Succeeding in developing a new use of the "savage" is not merely a matter of individual intention, as all the categories involved in Lévi-Strauss's distinctions carry a deep-rooted history: the ideological underpinnings of this history become manifest in the metaphors and tropes that Lévi-Strauss uses in the above passage, which make it clear that every attempt to radically redefine savagery and civilization is haunted by the "shadow" of the previous established meanings and connotations of these categories.

Nevertheless, the tactic of Lévi-Strauss is clear regarding his dealing with the problem of the savage. The general gist of his argument in this book is that what is savage is not something of the past, or of the non-civilized other elsewhere. Similar to civilized thinking, savage thinking is also structural and follows similar mental operations that are based on binary oppositions. Considered as such the two are indeed parallel and their difference is not absolute (19). At the same time there are clear differences in play in terms of their materiality, success, or objects of application. Later on in the chapter, he elaborates on those differences. For example although these are "two distinct modes of scientific thought," magic thought is based

more on "sensible intuition" than modern science (15), which is also why Lévi-Strauss calls magic thought "the science of the concrete" (16). This science is not devoid of speculation and abstraction. Myths and rites are part of it, since Lévi-Strauss sees mythical thinking not as a removal from reality but as a valid mode of knowing that preserves "the remains of methods of observation and reflection which were (and no doubt still are) precisely adapted to discoveries of a certain type" (16). Magic science also tends to presume causal relationships between similarities among members of a species (16). As a mode of inquiry, it has a "heterogeneous repertoire" which is, however "limited" (17). "It has to use this repertoire ... whatever the task in hand because it has nothing else at its disposal" (17).

For Lévi-Strauss, the differences between these two modes of thinking and knowing need not be hierarchized, as it almost automatically happens for instance in an opposition between primitive and civilized (and let me note that this was the very reason why Lévi-Strauss refused to use the term "primitive"). In his attempt to de-hierarchize the distinction between the savage and the civilized—also taking into account the discontents and problematic aspects of this attempt—I consider Lévi-Strauss's text paradigmatic for a structuralist way of dealing with the problem of the savage.

1.2 The Powers of *Vraisemblablisation*

As said, I will bring Lévi-Strauss's text in dialogue with Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. The dystopia depicted in *Lord of the Flies* will allow me to test the structuralist attempt to move away from the use of the Western concept of the savage as the inferior part of a hierarchical opposition with civilization, as we see it in Lévi-Strauss. In order to scrutinize the ways the novel deals with, and frames, the "savage," first it is necessary to revisit the novel's own framing by other critics, given the fact that it is considered as a canonical work and has attracted much literary criticism. This will allow me to situate my own approach and differentiate it from previous readings. In order to frame my account of the novel's reception, I will turn to one of the great scholars of literary theory and potential of the structuralist approach in the domain of the humanities: Culler, and his study *Structuralist Poetics*.

Culler is very clear on the ideological implications of culture's ability to make logical structures on the basis of oppositions. When confronted with new material, anyone trained in a culture is inclined to assimilate or interpret it in such a way that the new element is brought "within the modes of order which culture makes available, and this is usually done by talking about it in a mode of discourse which a culture takes as natural" (1975, 137). This is to say that in the case of texts, the interpretation of one text will take place in the context of other texts, which are culturally available and, because they are so well known, come to be taken as self-evident, likely, and in the ultimate sense as natural. Aspects of this process of interpretation and assimilation get different names in structuralist writing, such as "recuperation, naturalization, motivation," but Culler is especially interested in the process he calls *vraisemblablisation* (138). In this section, I will use the term

vraisemblablisation, which "stresses the importance of cultural models of the *vraisemblable* as sources of meaning and coherence" (138). The way readers make sense of *Lord of the Flies*, I argue, is based on "*vraisemblablisation*": despite the obvious absurdity of the situation (a group of children as the only survivors on an uninhabited island), the situation in the novel manages to come across as somehow "likely." This, at least, is evidenced by critical responses to the novel.

   Vraisemblance is one of the best-known notions in the poetic demands of French classicism, that in turn found its inspiration in Aristotle's demands that a plot be true to reality.[2] In French classicism the demand was that a theatre play should offer a story and a plot that would be *vraisemblable*, or "likely," conceivable, probable, trustworthy. Formally this also implied that an actor on stage could not address the audience because this would breach the likelihood of the *diegesis*. Taking up that notion in the context of structuralism, Culler argues that strategies of vraisamblablisation are aimed towards correspondence, and in that context he introduces five levels of this strategy in a chapter entitled "Convention and Naturalization":

> First there is the socially given text, that which is taken as the 'real world.' Second, but in some cases difficult to distinguish from the first, is a general cultural text: shared knowledge which would be recognized by participants as part of culture and hence subject to correction or modification but which none the less serves as a kind of 'nature'. Third, there are the texts or conventions of a genre, a specifically literary and artificial *vraisemblance.* Fourth comes what might be called the natural attitude to the artificial, where the text explicitly cites and exposes *vraisemblance* of the third kind so as to reinforce its own authority. And finally, there is the complex *vraisemblance* of specific intertextualities, where one work takes another as its basis or point of departure and must be assimilated in relation to it. (1975, 140)

Before discussing how different critics interpret the novel, I would like to illustrate first how *vraisemblablisation* works on these five levels through the novel. At the first level, *vraisemblance*, "is best defined as a discourse which requires no justification because it seems to derive directly from the structure of the world" (140). The text is taken, then, as a realist description of what happens in reality. In the novel, these children are left on the island because of an air crash. Just as the news we read in the newspaper or see on television, an air crash can happen in daily life. That is to say, at this level, what the novel tells us can be regarded as a "simple, coherent and true" description of reality. In addition, we know that the Second World War took place and that it involved massive amounts of aircraft crashes, even with people ending up on uninhabited islands of the Pacific Ocean. The second level

---

[2] For Aristotle, the plot "goes to the bodying forth of reality, the essential truth about human beings and their actions, not the invention of fantasies or private worlds" (Preminger, Warnke & Hardison 130).

is addressed as "cultural *vraisemblance,*" which includes "a range of cultural stereotypes or accepted knowledge" (141). Here Culler first admits that it is difficult to distinguish this level from the first one. Yet what is emphasized at this level is the role played by culture in constructing what is taken as generally likely and in that sense almost "natural." For example, when the novel introduces that it concerns a group of children, most readers will not start to ponder immediately what the term "children" means. The meaning of the term is self-evident. Still, the concept of who or what can be called a child changes over time, or may be culturally variable. In the European Middle Ages, "Ages of consent to marry varied according to time and place, but most agreed that girls were able to marry from the age of 12, while boys could marry once they reached the age of 14" (Bardsley 98). So, at that time, children at the age of 12 were regarded as old enough to get married. By contrast, in the novel, the older children are also around 12 years old, but contemporary readers will consider them to be children and not close to being able to enter an adult relationship such as marriage. Here we can see that although the concept of child has been constructed differently in different cultural and historical contexts, within the limits of each period and context it is considered to be self-evident as to what a child is.

At the third level, *vraisemblance* emphasizes the models of a genre, which "involves a specifically literary intelligibility: a set of literary norms to which texts may be related and by virtue of which they become meaningful and coherent" (1975, 145). At this level, for instance, the same sentence may be interpreted differently "if found in an ode and in a comedy," because of the different literary norms in play (147). *Lord of the Flies* is a novel, which is a genre that projects its own specific legibility and intelligibility. It depends on a narrative plot, for instance, and connotes both fiction and realism. There are also genres operative *within* the novel. In order to survive on the island, Piggy and Ralph think that it is wise to have meetings together. The meeting can be regarded as a well-known genre too, with specific rules, one of which is that every participant is assumed and expected to be serious. However, lacking any idea of the regulations of meetings, the smallest children, called "littluns" in the novel, giggle during the meeting, and in doing so break the rules—and are criticized for it. Thus they prove how the genre of the meeting, in following a set of intelligible norms, "naturally" expects a response of assimilation.

At the fourth level, to assist the interpretative process, Culler emphasizes how breaking a convention can be the very thing to make something "likely." To this order one is required to have "a repertoire of traditional functions of literature and attitudes towards it… and a sense of how to read particular elements or images as instances of the literary process" (151). This fourth level is closely related to the third, but whereas genres indeed function on the basis of norms, here the issue is whether people are aware of the functions of literature, know how to adopt an attitude towards it, and, most importantly, know how to twist expectations. We do not take *Lord of the Flies* as a news report or a historical study because we know it is literature; fiction. Yet in giving it meaning, we might be inclined to consider its function to be an allegorical one (as most critics did) which means that it has a function opposite to fiction (understood here as opposed to "reality"). Viewed as an

allegory it has to show us a truth, perhaps even a higher truth. Within the novel again, to have an organized meeting, Piggy suggests that whoever wants to speak has to hold the conch. After we, as readers, learn what the function of this conch is, we adopt an attitude towards it: we understand the gesture and believe it in all likelihood. At the same time, the conch has now become something that can be used meaningfully precisely because some characters fail to follow its convention: this failure to comply with the convention in the case of the smallest children makes us aware of the function of the convention itself.

At the last, fifth level of *vraisemblence*, to interpret the text one has to keep two elements in mind, which include "the order of the original and the point of view which undermines the original" (152). Here the idea might be not so much to break with a convention or follow an opposite logic, but rather to undermine the convention through parody and irony. The novel is engaged with many classical or even foundational works, such as the Bible. For instance, the symbolical appearance in the novel of the pig's head on the sharpened stick may connote sin, or evil, and thus can be read as a parody of Christ on the cross to save people's sins. Still, this parody at the same time confirms the importance of the symbol of the crucified Christ.

Culler's ideas of how texts can come to be accepted as likely are enlightening when we consider how critics have culturally and ideologically "assimilated" and interpreted the novel at the mentioned five different levels of the *vraisemblable*. First, the novel is read as a representation of what is "real," as when it is thought to "be telling us something simple, coherent, and true" (141). Since the novel was written after the Second World War, in 1954, many critics read the novel as a reflection of that war. The already mentioned Talon, for instance, considered that the novel reflects the brutality and cruelty of the war, which wounds and saddens "supposedly civilized Man" (296). In this context, the dead body of a parachutist in the novel was a clear hint that the story is not to be read as purely fictional. The dead parachutist represents one of the many casualties caused by the war and colors the entire story with "the reality" of the Second World War. L. L. Dickson argues: "The protagonist's ironic 'rescue' by a naval officer, who is himself engrossed in the savage business of international warfare, reveals that the chaotic island-world is but a small version of a war-torn adult world" (12). What has happened on this island is a mise-en-abyme of the world tortured by the Second World War. Thus Wayland Young argues: "you realize after a time that the book is nothing less than a history of mankind itself; of its politics, its economics, its religions, all its forms of existence except reproduction" (478-79).

The second level refers to cultural *vraisemblance*, depending on the common sense, or the general knowledge of a specific culture. Here, many critics read the novel as an exemplification of child psychology, and according to the rules of cultural *vraisemblance*, started to ponder about the reasons why children can behave so (stereotypically) savagely. Their works were not limited to the psychoanalytical theories proposed by Freud or Carl Jung, but involved discussions on the influence of social organization upon children's personality and different stages in child

development. For example, in order to analyze how different forms of social organization can influence a person's personality, Hamish Canham distinguished between the concept of the group from the concept of the gang by discussing their separate structure, and explored their respective influences upon the states of mind of the children. According to Canham, within a group, it is much easier for children to develop a positive personality, while within a gang, children tend to take on a negative personality and behave badly. In his reading, then, the children formed a gang rather than a group and thus they behave savagely in the end. As to different stages of child development, Minnie Singh found that the novel described how children develop from boyhood to adolescence. Breaking away from the literature of boyhood, which is full of "innocent homosocial pleasures," *Lord of the Flies* "invented the genre of adolescent writing," which is featured by "the potent but shameful solitude of adolescence" (211). Moreover, Singh also discussed the significance of female figures in boyhood as well as in adolescence. For example, in *The Coral Island*, as Singh argued, thanks to the female character, boys live with restraints and behave themselves, while in *Lord of the Flies*, where the female is absent, boys live on their own and therefore become savages. In fact this is why they are no longer "boys." Several critics think highly of boys and boyhood. Steven Marcus is one of these, in arguing that:

> In no other language does the word for boy have the kind of resonance that it does in English … In what other language is there such an epithet as "Oh, boy!"—an expression of the very essence of spontaneous delight … boy is one of the sacred words of the English language; boyhood is—or for one hundred and fifty years was—a priestly state or condition; and the literature of boys and boyhood has had, for a secularized era, something of the aura of doctrinal or holy writ. (152)

The cultural reading of the novel is almost paradigmatic, here. From such readings of the novel, we can gather that cultural *vraisemblance* is used as a tool to explain, that is to say, to make natural, why these children become savages. As Culler puts it: "Most elements of the second level function in this way: one is aware of them as generalizations or cultural categories which may oversimplify but which at least make the world initially intelligible and consequently serve as a target language in the process of naturalization" (1975, 142).

In correspondence with Culler's third level, many critics read the novel as an allegory of distinct social and political systems. For instance, in "From War to War: *Lord of the Flies* as the Sociology of Spite," Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen considered the novel to be "an allegory of a biopolitical or postpolitical society" and discussed the fragile balance between "democratic utopianism versus fascist violence, society versus the mob" (431). The novel was read as an allegory of the conflict between two political systems—the democratic system and the dictatorial system. Likewise, based on his research on social relations and power systems in the novel, Keith Selby distinguished "the rational society led by Ralph and the primitive,

tribal society led by Jack" (57). Such allegorical readings, that stick to the norms of the genre, would be equally generic in their translating the norms set by Ralph and Jack in the novel to the norms established by different social and political systems. Yet these readings also fall under the rubric of a fourth category introduced by Culler. Instead of reading the novel as mere fiction, they considered it to be a case of mimesis by means of which they adopt an attitude towards the novel in terms of the ethical stance expressed in the novel. Ralph's group versus Jack's group would be labeled as democratic system versus dictatorial/totalitarian system respectively. Ralph's group would be more civilized and more advanced and morally better than Jack's group, because of the generally accepted idea that democracy is superior to totalitarianism.

Reflecting the fourth level, the novel was read in the Western context as both confirming and breaking away from well-known conventions. Enlightenment would offer powerful examples of literary texts in which children would be the very embodiment of purity. Here, the novel could be considered as "likely" precisely because it did away with the naïve idea that children would be the vessel of purity. Second, in the Christian tradition, the son of God is the embodiment of innocence that would save mankind from the Fall. In Christianity, people are thought to be born as fallen human beings, corrupted by the original sin. Perhaps the children's falling from the sky could be taken figuratively here as a Fall. Golding's own reflection on the novel can be read as an interpretation at this level. Instead of following colonialist or mythological discursive traditions, in which children or colonized people are often depicted as "lacking coherent speech, and thus unable to represent themselves and take charge of their countries," Golding represented the children in the novel to be fully grown men (Acheraïou 70). And fallen men at that: "Man is a fallen being. He is gripped by original sin. I ... try to show how the shape of the society they evolved would be conditioned by their diseased, their fallen nature" (Golding 1965, 88). Then, biologically or anthropologically speaking, the third aspect is that, in the Western tradition since the nineteenth century, people are believed to have instincts. Although *Lord of the Flies* on the face of it could be seen to be a children's adventure book, it broke away with that convention in the eyes of critics. They thus approached the novel in order to illustrate certain scientific conventions. On the scientific side, Afaf Ahmed and Hasan Al-Saidi propose the idea of "savage instincts"; they argue that "savage instincts lurk within all human beings" and state that "Golding's central point in the novel is that a conflict between an impulse toward civilization and the impulse toward savagery rages within each human individual, regardless a child or an adult" (133). Similar to Ahmed and Al-Saidi's reading, Fatima Anjum, Sana Nawaz, and Muhammad Ramzan discuss the "feral instinct" and the "civilizing instinct." The latter coexists with the "feral instinct" but further ensures that people behave in a decent way. In this light, they argue that "*Lord of the Flies* dramatizes the fundamental conflict between civilization and savagery, endorsing the essential evil nature of human beings meant to bend towards the destructive side in the absence of any civilization" (124). For children in the novel, the "civilizing instinct" is overcome by the "feral instinct" as a result of

which civilization gradually waned. Finally, and again along similar lines, when discussing evil in the novel, Theodore Dalrymple argues that "evil does not have to be introduced into the heart of man from without, it is always lurking within, awaiting its opportunity to take over, and we are never safe from its predations" (26). Phillip Redpath, who in his article "Doorways through Walls: *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*" presents a structuralist reading of Golding's fiction and also discussed *Lord of the Flies,* argues that although it seems that in the novel there is an "antithetical structure" between reason and unreason, the civilized and the savage, it is impossible to apply "exclusive moral values" to them, because these two seemingly opposite sides emerge as one (93). It is impossible to argue for the goodness of the civilized and the evil of the savages, since "it is a condition of *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors* being written in the first place that man occupies the dividing bar where both the sides merge and become one and the other" (98).

In correspondence with Culler's final level, critics also read the novel intertextually, as either confirming, parodying or ironizing in relation to other texts. "A work can only be read in connection with or against other texts, which provide a grid through which it is read and structured by establishing expectations which enable one to pick out salient features and give them a structure" (Culler 1975, 139). At this level, the novel is often read as a rewriting of classical works. Critics often engage in its close relationship with classics, such as the Bible, the Homeric epics and Euripidean tragedy. For example, in "Butterfly and Beast in *Lord of the Flies*," Robert J. White reveals how Golding uses classical themes and images in *Lord of the Flies,* and Robert C. Gordon discusses "Golding's use of Homeric and Euripidean elements" (424). In "The Savages in the Forest: Decolonising William Golding," Stefan Hawlin argues that "*Lord of the Flies* is a faint rewriting of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," because both of them involved the tension between the colonizers and the colonized (73). In "Good Grief: *Lord of the Flies* as a Post-war Rewriting of Salvation History," Marijke van Vuuren discusses biblical symbols in the novel and considered the novel as "Golding's bleak but certainly not hopeless rewriting of the salvation story for a post-faith readership" (1). Van Vuuren argued that the novel is not only a parody of the Bible, but also a reflection of the disillusionment of people after the Second World War.

As the above analysis shows, the majority of the novel's criticism can be regarded as fitting into the five different levels of *vraisemblablisation*. They all bring elements or aspects of the novel into correspondence with something else outside the novel. Culler's structuralist insights relate in this respect to Lévi-Strauss's. In *Structural Poetics*, Culler starts with Saussure's theory of linguistic structuralism. Following a structuralist approach he explains that, just as language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols, in cultural objects there is also a system of underlying patterns that help to organize different worldviews. To work on these cultural objects means to discover a system of different underlying patterns. In that context critic Ino Rossi contends that "All too often structuralism has been dismissed as a logical exercise which reduces cultural data to abstract entities and produces explanations which cannot be verified through empirical observations" (188).

Lévi-Strauss argues and tries to avoid such a misunderstanding by contending that structural anthropology was not inductive, but a system of different principles or structures. The task of anthropologists was "to identify and to classify types, to analyze their constituent parts, and to establish correlations between them" (Lévi-Strauss 1976, 12). As if to argue against abstraction, Lévi-Strauss adds: "An arrangement is structured which meets but two conditions: that is a system ruled by an internal cohesiveness and that this cohesiveness, inaccessible to observation in an isolated system, is revealed in the study of transformations through which similar properties are recognized in apparently different systems" (18). He emphasizes that the cohesiveness of a structure is not accessible within one system, but reveals itself through its relations with other systems.

Lévi-Strauss's approach to structural anthropology becomes manifest in *The Savage Mind*, in which he proposed the idea that savage thinking was another way of thinking; in order to elucidate the structural operations of "savage" and "modern" science, he compares these models to see how they relate to each other. There, as Arie de Ruijter notes, "Lévi-Strauss is of the opinion that the brain functions by means of a mechanism of opposition and correlation, also designated as the principle of reciprocity and bipolarity, or as the unconscious" (275-76). As such, for Lévi-Strauss savage thinking and modern scientific thinking are parallel to each other and they can be thought as different systems with similar structures.

Culler follows this principle, but with an included pivotal element. Culler shows how such a correspondence always has to take place on the basis of an already established cultural and structuring system. Consequently, through *vraisemblablisation*, the opposition between savagery and civilization at play in the novel is naturalized, which is to say: brought into correspondence with the already existing cultural system *as an opposition*. This is also one reason why it is difficult to dismantle this opposition if we remain within a structuralist framework.

However, perhaps a structuralist reading of the novel that focuses on how the term savage is produced through several oppositions that, taken together, form a differential dynamic may offer an alternative. This is what I will now put to the test.

1.3 The Term Savage as an Elusive Sign: A Differential Dynamic

In "Nature of the Linguistic Sign," Ferdinand de Saussure illustrates the concepts of sign, signified and signifier and proposes "to retain the word *sign [signe]* to designate the whole and to replace *concept* and *sound-image* respectively by *signified [signifre]* and *signifier [signifiant]*" (67). For him, the sign is composed of two parts, signified and signifier, which refers to concept and sound-image respectively. He emphasizes the arbitrary nature of the sign: the relationship between signified and signifier is not consistent, motivated or unchanging. Based on Saussure's ideas, the sign savage is also made up of two parts, the concept of the savage and the sound-image of the savage. The arbitrary nature of that link might offer a basis for dismantling the negative connotations of the term, since the implication is that there is no essential "savage." Yet it is not just the arbitrary nature between signifier and signified that

determines the concept. Saussure also introduces a differential logic in arguing that it is the differences between signifiers (and consequently signifieds) that determine meaning. In the following section we will look at multiple usages of word *savage* in the novel and I will discuss how, following this differential logic, the sign savage may come to function as a site of conflicting and evolving meanings.

The structuralist approach is different here from an etymological, semantic or genealogical one. The word *savage*, coming from the Latin word for forest, grove or wood (*silva*), "was first used to represent men who lived in the German forests without any organized society" (Salter 20).[3] Semantically speaking, it can be used as a noun, verb and adjective to describe animals, plants, people as well as places although such a description usually carries an evaluative attitude. According to Brown, in Enlightenment thought "The word *savage* itself signals the lack of separation. As a predicate it can be attached to a person, to a scene, or to a product of nature. In each use the category remains "savage"; differentiation takes place only within the limits of that category (a savage human or a savage scene of nature)" (66). The term can be further broadened, for example, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the adjective *savage* refers to being "in a state of nature, wild" but "in extended use" can be used "with reference to behavior, disposition, or character."[4] The same expanding force would hold for the noun, with savage referring first to "A person living in a wild state" but also to "a member of a people regarded as primitive and uncivilized," "A cruel or brutal person; (also) a person who is coarse, rough, or uncouth," "A wild or untamed animal," "a person dressed in greenery, representing a wild man of the woods" and others.[5] As a verb, savage can mean to "act in a savage manner; to be cruel or barbarous," "To make savage, barbarous, or fierce," "To attack verbally; spec. to subject to severe or brutal criticism," "Of an animal or (occas.) person: to attack ferociously, esp. by biting and tearing; to maul" and "to damage or harm (a person or thing); to treat harshly or savagely."[6] All these different meanings in play are documented and can be looked up, and some of them are well-known. However, a structuralist approach starts from a *systematic* and contrasting analysis of how the term appears meaningfully in a certain context. So let me do that for the novel.

In *Lord of the Flies*, the term "savage" appears 59 times. Its other two closely related words *savagely* and *savagery* appear once and twice respectively. As a frequently used word, *savage* also appears in multiple grammatical forms: as an adjective, a verb and a noun. As an adjective, it is used to describe fierce heat, the forest on fire, or uncontrolled emotions. For instance, during the first time that the children raise fire on the island, "the fire thrust out a savage arm of heat that crinkled hair on the instant" (Golding 1954, 41). Tellingly, this is the first time the word *savage* appears in the novel, and it is used not to describe a type of human beings, but the fierce and destructive force of a natural element: the heat of fire. Later, when the fire becomes so strong that a large area of forest is full of smoke and

---

[3] On the etymology of *savage*, see <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=savage>.

[4] See <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/171433?rskey=2EjBg6&result=2&isAdvanced=false#ei>.

[5] See <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/171433?rskey=2EjBg6&result=2&isAdvanced=false#ei>.

[6] See <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/171434?rskey=2EjBg6&result=3&isAdvanced=false#ei>.

flames, the term "savage" is used as a predicative: "Beneath the capering boys a quarter of a mile square of forest was savage with smoke and flame" (44). It is only then that the so-called savage force of nature is transferred to a human being. When Ralph realizes the danger of this uncontrollable fire, we read that "The knowledge and the awe made him savage" (44). Later, after learning that a ship has passed by, Ralph tells the hunters that the ship that could have rescued them has gone. Of his voice the author writes: "His voice was loud and savage, and struck them into silence" (70). In its adverbial form *savagely* is used to describe an action. When the children hear the news that there may be beasts on the island, they become very frightened and "The assembly cried out savagely" (89). In all these cases he term is used to indicate something overpowering, forceful and threatening, often verging on the sublime, as is indicated by the term "awe."

However, the word *savage* is most often used as a noun, whose referent or signified, is not static but rather changes frequently. At first, the children's use of this noun follows the generally acknowledged Western anthropological consent that was defined by James Clifford. It follows: "It has become clear that every version of an 'other,' wherever found, is also the construction of a 'self'" (23). Indeed, at first the children define their "others" as savages and construct themselves as opposite to savages. As Ralph notes: "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 1954, 42). In the beginning there appears to be a clear boundary between undefined (and invisible) savages and "the" English. However, after missing the chance to get rescued, the children begin to doubt their identity, not only as English, but also as human beings. Instead of asking "who are we," Piggy asks: "What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages? What's grownups going to think?" (91). Piggy's questions on the one hand imply hierarchical structures: between adults and children, and between humans, animals and savages. On the other hand, the questions imply the possibility that these children may become savages themselves. By asking these questions, Piggy wants to urge the children to stick to existing hierarchical structures. They have to think about themselves in terms of how adults would think about them, and, accordingly, they have to stick to the sharp distinctions between humans, animals and savages. However, all the efforts to keep the savage as the "other" turn out to be in vain. After Jack breaks off from Ralph's group and creates his own group, Jack's followers are directly addressed as "savages" by the narrator. For instance, while hunting, "Jack and the two anonymous savages with him swayed, looking up, and then recovered" (140). Although these "two anonymous savages" have their own names, namely Maurice and Robert, they have now lost that distinction in the narrator's language and are addressed as undefined savages. If their names indicated some traces of the civilized world, the narrator's addressing them as savages rather than by their names implies the eradication of the traces of their former civilized world, the loss of their identity as civilized, and their integration with an undifferentiated notion of the savage "other." Moreover, not only Jack's group becomes a group of savages. Ralph himself begins to admit that he finds joy being a savage and that he is fascinated by the prospect of being savage. He says: "I'd like to

put on war-paint and be a savage. But we must keep the fire burning" (142). The savage is regarded as a warrior here by Ralph. His image of the savage's appearance here most probably alludes to popular representations of Native Americans as "savage" warriors, as is indicated by the war paint.

Being savage is not a state in the above case, but rather is something that involves performing and acting. One is not born a savage, but can become one by performing the savage. The strict hierarchical order of the civilized self versus the savage "other" and the essentialist character of this opposition is overturned here and the savage "other" even turns into a positive signifier for self-definition: as Ralph's words suggest, he desires leaving behind his civilized "nature" to embrace savagery. Yet, there is more to this than simply playing the Indian in a Peter Pan-like mode, and this is proven with the killing of Simon and Piggy. In the hunting game in which Simon is murdered, all the participants paint themselves first, and then enjoy the game so much that none of them feels guilt afterwards or wants to take responsibility for the murder. It is evident that painting their faces frees them from any restraint so that they can do anything. The narrator makes this explicit when he states that the children "understood only too well the liberation into savagery that the concealing paint brought" (172). Savagery now comes to dominate the island in both positive and negative senses, depending on the point of view. For example, when Ralph meets his former friend Bill, he reflects: "But really, thought Ralph, this was not Bill. This was a savage whose image refused to blend with that ancient picture of a boy in shorts and shirt" (183). Playing the Indian, or performing the savage, has become a matter of cruel reality. In the same way that his former friends have started to kill pigs, so Ralph now has to admit, they have started to kill people. His conclusion is: "They were savages it was true" (185). Instead of being a matter of putting on war-paint and playing or performing, savagery has become a term that in speech act theory would be called a constative, or one that purports to truthfully describe another's *subjectivity*.[7] Naming themselves "savages" creates them as savages.

In Ralph's "nightly game of supposing," his mind "skated to a consideration of a tamed town where savagery could not set foot" (164). Here the former hierarchy of a civilized self that defines itself on the basis of an imaginary other is reversed. The supposition or consideration of a civilized existence is envisioned as an imaginary alternative elsewhere in space and time. This elsewhere is here rather than the savage's "elsewhere" in time or space. Savagery is now the point of departure in the here and now, and civilization has become the elsewhere in space and time. Whereas painting their faces provided the children with a mask so that they could engage in violent or brutal activities they did not dare do before, the mask gradually becomes a new face, one that, by consequence, turns the face of civilization into a mask.

As a verb, *savage* only appears once. After learning that there is a ship passing by and not being sure whether there is enough smoke coming from the fire the boys kept going, Ralph "blundered on, savaging himself, as the wisp of smoke moved on"

---

[7] On the link between performative speech acts and constatives, see Judith Butler's *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (1997).

(67). Here, as opposed to the common meaning and usage of the verb *to savage* (to attack others furiously and harshly), this self-reflexive use of the verb refers to a form of punishment of Ralph himself. To savage and to blunder on come to imply one another and Ralph's self-harm can be seen as a mise-en-abyme here for what happens to the children as a collective. Ralph cannot help torturing himself, while the smoke that is an index of civilization vanishes beyond the horizon.

On the basis of the analysis above, in which the meaning of "savage" proved to be flexible depending on several different oppositions in play, we might be inclined to follow Saussure in his saying that "language is a system of arbitrary signs and lacks the necessary basis, the solid ground for discussion" (73). Yet the arbitrariness of the sign itself becomes something else in a differential dynamic, when the sign is not so much arbitrary but shifting due to the interplay of different oppositions. The term "savage" does not simply have the capacity to take on any meaning; rather its multiple signifieds are constantly motivated by a contextual process in time or situation in space. As a result the term becomes elusive rather than arbitrary, or, more importantly, it acquires a quasi-natural status because it *carries a historicity*. This is an element of *vraisamblablisation* that Culler does not mention—and a process that is distinct from what under post-structuralism would be called a "floating signifier." Structuralism operates synchronically, which means that it does not account for variable relations between signifiers and signifieds that have to do with the ways they evolve historically or diachronically.

This evolvement can be traced when in the beginning of the novel, "savage" refers to "the other" who lives far away from the English children and is inferior to them. Later, the children, by playing the role of savages, promote the development of savagery. As a consequence, savagery is no longer safely located in history, but is a matter of the present; it is no longer safely located elsewhere, but rather defines the here. On the one hand, this transition of the savage from denoting the other to denoting the self reveals the uncontrollability of its meaning. Or, the uncontrollability of the signified may be an icon for the fact that savages are so violent and brutal that it is difficult to put them under control. On the other hand, the uncontrollability of the signified may disclose the vulnerable boundary between savagery and civilization, which is constantly questioned and challenged by issues such as the violence of the civilized or the nobility of savages. This may point to a distinct limit of structuralist thinking, namely that it is not able to deal with difference *within* (which will be the theme of the next chapter).

For now, more importantly, the structuralist approach taken to its own logic can trace but not fix the movement of the signifier through the differential field. Consequently, the notion of savage can be followed and analyzed but not eradicated within the framework of structuralism. On the contrary, the structuralist approach, as an a-historical synchronic approach, is not able to trace *evolving* meanings in time, and gives these meanings a quasi-natural aura. There is a form of *vraisemblablisation* at stake here that Culler skipped but that has its own force. In the next section, I will direct my attention to the historicity of the savage by looking at the ways the novel re-enacts several features of the savage that are derived from popular figures of the

savage in European history. In its differential logic, so I will argue in the next section, the novel can be seen to re-enact an entire discussion on the nature of the savage in European thinking and it is through this re-enactment that the evolvement of the meaning of the savage may appear to be "realistic."

1.4 Noble and Ignoble Savages in *Lord of the Flies*

Whereas so far I have been talking about the children in the novel as if they were a collective group, it is now time to take seriously what a structural analysis of this group will bring forward. When I systematically traced the oppositions that are operative within the group, I came to notice that, in contrast to the older boys who are engaged in raising fire, building up shelters and hunting, many of the younger children, the so-called "littluns" follow another way of life. It is one that connotes, so I will argue in this section, the figure of the noble savage. The older boys, on the other hand, seem to connote an opposite but adjacent figure to the noble savage: that of the ignoble savage. At the same time, the older boys also pose as the superior agent in their treatment of the littluns, emulating the "civilized" colonizers' treatment of the colonized. In this section, by scrutinizing the representation of the littluns and the older boys, I will examine the ways in which their representation evokes the figures of the noble savage, the ignoble savage and the civilized/colonizer and to what effect, in order to probe the structures that underlie their representation and their interaction in the novel.

Although the noble savage does not become a dominant trope until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, traces of this trope can already be found in ancient Greece, "where Homer, Pliny, and Xenophon idealized the Arcadians and other primitive groups, both real and imagined."[8] After the Conquest of the New World, the term "savage" was frequently associated with Native Americans. In European discourse, one of the earliest representations of Native Americans can be found in Columbus's diary, in which he describes Native Americans either as good or bad, depending on the context in order to serve different purposes. In *The Conquest of America*, Tzetan Todorov offers an illuminating and critical analysis of first recordings of this encounter between Europeans and Native Americans, including Columbus's diaries. In their first encounter, Columbus was struck by the nudity of Native Americans. "'They all go naked, men and women, as the day they were born' (6/11/1492). 'This king and all his people went naked as their mothers bore them, and their women the same, without any shame' (16/12/1492)" (Todorov 35). The nudity of Native Americans was read by Columbus in two different ways. On the one hand, Columbus saw it as a symbol of lacking civility and, on the other hand, he took it as a sign of their intellect, cultural "nudity" and innocence. As Todorov notes: "Physically naked, the Indians are also, to Columbus's eyes, deprived of all cultural property: they are characterized, in a sense, by the absence of customs, rites, religion" (35). In fact, in Columbus' writings, we can see that Native Americans form a "double

---

[8] See <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/416988/noble-savage>.

faced" trope: the "good Indian" one on the one hand, and the "bad Indian" on the other. Columbus presupposes that Native Americans are good at the start, and he declares that "'They are the best people in the world and the most peaceable' (16/12/1492). … 'l do not believe that in all the world there are better men, any more than there are better lands' (25/12/1492)" (36). He sees Native Americans as pure, innocent, able to receive civilization. The trope of the "good Indian," which Columbus here seems to initiate, was used to serve the European colonizers' civilizing mission to convert Native Americans into Christians. Columbus too, as a Catholic, aims to spread the Gospel and assumes the purity, nobility and cultural/intellectual "nakedness" of Native Americans in order to support the possibility of them being converted and redeemed. "Columbus will declare the Indians the most generous people in the world, thereby making an important contribution to the myth of the noble savage" (39). The depiction of the Native Americans as pure and generous in Columbus's writings can be seen as a first articulation of the idea of Noble Savage, even though the phrase "noble savage" was not in use yet.

However, this did not mean that Columbus thought all Native Americans were good. "Further, when he (Columbus) knows the Indians better, he will leap to the other extreme," which is that Native Americans are violent, treacherous and brutal savages (36-38). The assumed violence and savagery of Native Americans was used to justify their violent extermination and their enslavement by European settlers. This trope of the "bad Indian" therefore provided legitimation in the sixteenth century for "the greatest genocide in human history" (5). As is well-known, shortly after those first encounters with European explorers, the number of Native Americans decreased rapidly due to their intended extermination and maltreatment by Europeans, and also by the unintended diseases spread by Europeans (133). As Todorov rightly argues, the adoption of the trope of "the *good/wicked* type" of Native Americans in Columbus's writings tells nothing about the natives themselves, "not only because these qualities depend on the point of view adopted, but also because they correspond to specific states and not to stable characteristics, because they derive from the pragmatic estimate of a situation and not from the desire to know" (38). That is to say, the trope of good/bad Indian does not amount to a reliable account of these populations that stems from Columbus's actual desire to know the other: Columbus simply sees in those natives what *he* wants to see, as his perception is determined by his culturally determined preconceptions and expectations, and changes in different contexts for different purposes.

The trope of good/bad Indian gradually crystallizes into the trope of noble savage/ignoble savage in the writings of European intellectuals. The trope of noble savage first appears in French. In French, the origin of the noble savage as a trope can be traced back to Montaigne's essay "On Cannibals" (c. 1580), in which "Montaigne represents 'the cannibals' as noble savages, who are free from the corruption of decadent society," even though he does not use the term "noble savage" (Salter 21). The notion of noble savage is further developed by a French lawyer-ethnographer, Marc Lescarbot, in his ethnography of the Native Americans of

eastern Canada, *de la Nouvelle France* (1609) "as a concept in comparative law" (Ellingson xv). Lescarbot describes Native Americans as people "of a 'noble heart'" who "lived by the law of 'Nature'" (Sheehan 30). According to ethnomusicologist Ter Ellingson, the translation of Lescarbot's study into English marked the entrance of the noble savage into English literature (21).

The trope of noble savage appears quite late in English and it is mainly used to criticize the European civilization. The term "noble savage" is first used in English literature in John Dryden's *Conquest of Granada* (1672). Dryden writes:

> I am as free as Nature first made man,
> Ere the base Laws of Servitude began,
> When wild in woods the noble Savage ran. (34)

Depicted as free and independent, noble savages here form a sharp contrast to civilized men, who have subjected themselves to the laws established by European society.

In connecting goodness and innocence to uncorrupted Native Americans, French Enlightenment philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau is often mistaken as the inventor of the figure of the noble savage, yet he never used the phrase of noble savage directly (Ellingson 81). In *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1755), he does compare "the savage" and "the civilized man" and points out that they:

> … differ so greatly in the depths of their hearts and in their inclinations, that what constitutes the supreme happiness of one would reduce the other to despair. Savage man breathes only tranquility and liberty; he wants simply to live and rest easy … On the other hand, the citizen is always active and in a sweat, always agitated, and unceasingly tormenting himself in order to seek still more laborious occupations. (1992, 69-70)

Compared with the civilized, the savage enjoys more freedom and does not have to suffer from heavy labor because he is content with what he already has. In *Émile: or On Education* (1762), Rousseau further described the life of the noble savage as follows:

> Attached to no place, without prescribed task, obeying no one, with no other law than his will, [the savage] is forced to reason in each action of his life. He does not make a movement, not a step, without having beforehand envisaged the consequences. Thus, the more his body is exercised, the more his mind is enlightened; his strength and his reason grow together and one is extended by the other. (1979, 118)

Here, the noble savage is presented as free, strong, independent, and unrestrained by social norms and prescriptions. Remarkably, Rousseau here also ascribes to noble

savages a form of reason that stems from an organic interaction between mind and body, and this makes them "enlightened"—a move that may appear as a rudimentary attempt to claim an autonomous form or reason or thinking for these people, which Lévi-Strauss would take up more systematically two centuries later. Savages for Rousseau do not have to obey any person or law, and become intelligent on their own. Rousseau's casting of the noble savage contributed greatly to the popularization of this figure in the thought of Enlightenment but also in Romanticism. This figure mainly served critiques of European society. As Sheehan writes, "Cultural critics from Montaigne to Lahontan to Rousseau invoked the example of indigenous American peoples to condemn tyranny, religious persecution, social inequality, and artificial, alienating culture in Europe itself ... the noble savage came to represent egalitarianism and a sort of romantic anarchy" (69).[9] For these Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers, such as Montaigne, Lahontan and Rousseau, stressing the virtues and independence of Native Americans functioned as a means of criticizing the corrupt European civilization by counter-projecting it to an idealized state of man.

Although the trope of noble savage was popularized through Rousseau's writings, not everybody shared his admiration for Native Americans as noble savages. In fact, the notion of noble savage was criticized by many leading thinkers of the Enlightenment, "including Voltaire, who linked the life of Rousseau's savage to that of the orangutan" (M. Clifford 2). Like the "good Indian" in contrast to the "bad Indian," the figure of noble savage thus often went hand-in-hand with its negative counterpart, the ignoble savage. Like the "bad Indian," the ignoble savage is violent, brutal and dishonorable. The ignoble savage can be a drunkard, a murderer, a beggar, a thief, or an untamed demon. Natural historian George Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788), also criticized the idea of the noble savage and declared that Native Americans were "'less strong in body... less sensitive, and yet more timid and cowardly'... 'cold and languid' and... 'have no love for their fellow man'" (2). Also, Dutch philosopher Cornelius de Pauw (1739-1799) related numerous curious and bizarre figures—"cannibals, albinos, giants, and hermaphrodites"—to Native Americans in his famous book *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américains* (1768-1769), which "is best known for its sustained stress on the ignobility of the Americans" (Meek 145). Based on works by Buffon and de Pauw, Scottish historian William Robertson (1721-1793) described Native Americans "much more as ignoble than as noble savage" (qtd. in Meek 145). As these sources also suggest, the figure of the ignoble savage was also widely used in depicting Native Americans.

The figures of the noble and ignoble savage are opposites in many obvious ways, but they could also function next to each other in European colonial discourse, as they both served different aspects of colonial ideology. As the writings of Montaigne

---

[9] On Lahontan's contribution to the study of Native Americans, see (Harvey 2012). According to David Harvey, "... the baron Louis-Armand de Lahontan, popularized the noble savage trope with a series of lively texts, notably a philosophical dialogue with a fictionalized Huron chief, Adario, who stressed the superiority of the natural simplicity and rational religion of the Native Americans to the artificial, alienating culture of Christian Europe" (71). "If Lahontan is remembered today, however, it is primarily as a forerunner of Jean-Jacques Rousseau,..." (73).

40

and Rousseau suggest, the trope of the noble savage is mainly used to criticize European colonialism and the corruption of European societies. However, the "good Indian" trope, as we saw, could further support the colonial project's "civilizing mission." Following the trope of the "good Indian," Native Americans are pure, innocent, and uncorrupted—a "tabula rasa," able to receive the benefits of civilization. Thus, the civilized need to educate Native Americans in order to save them through Christianity and European civilization. By contrast, the trope of the ignoble savage contributes to constructing Native Americans as corrupted, irredeemable, brutal cannibals, which justifies their extermination or enslavement by European settlers. That is why, as Christer Lindberg argues, "the concept of the ignoble savage dominates in periods of intense European expansion, that is, the discovery and initial conquest and later the conquest of the American West" (23).

In the novel, the trope of the noble savage underpins the representation of the *littluns*. They enjoy peace and freedom while living in harmony with nature, free from the corruption and burdens of civilization, and they stand for goodness, innocence and purity. The littluns are around six years old and lead "a quite distinct, and at the same time intense, life of their own" (Golding 1954, 59). Their behavior appears to be without restraint and from the way they wander around the island it is almost impossible for a reader to calculate their number or to make a list of their names. Instead of resembling English boys, their representation draws from vague stereotypical images of Native Americans. As savages, they are mainly engaged in three activities: eating, sleeping and playing. They are innocent, naïve, emotional, and easily bullied by older boys. They cannot immediately understand rules made by the older boys. They do everything based on their intuitions and cannot preconceive the danger or the consequences of their behavior. For instance, after missing the chance to be rescued, they attend the meeting without any resentment towards the hunters who are responsible for the missed chance and they only feel "impressed by the general air of solemnity" (78). As such, the littluns appear rather ignorant—so ignorant that they are not aware of the consequences of losing the chance to be rescued. Nor can they understand why Jack's group should be blamed. Likewise, they cannot see a reason to build a lavatory.

After Jack breaks off from Ralph's group, Ralph's group has to raise the fire again. Seeing the fire, the narrator states: "The littluns who had seen few fires since the first catastrophe became wildly excited. They danced and sang and there was a partyish air about the gathering" (130). The littluns appear not to realize the difficulty involved in maintaining the fire, nor are they aware of the serious crisis that has taken place now that Jack has begun to set up his own group. They cannot see through the event and just feel pleased to have fire again. They appear gullible and tend to believe in what they are told without any hesitation. For example, "if he had been told that the other boy had gone home in an aircraft, he would have accepted the statement without fuss or disbelief" (60). Because they cannot make sense of the mysterious and the unknown in a scientific way, as Piggy does, they start to make up stories about ghosts, spreading "fear talk" (82). In this fear talk, they cannot distinguish what they see in reality from what they dream about, which

suggests that in their mind reality and magic or dreamlike images become indistinguishable.

As the narrator states, the littluns live a "passionately emotional and corporate life" (59). They do not know how to restrain their feelings or emotions, and they express themselves freely. When they see the lightning and hear the thunder, they become scared and begin to whine or run about screaming. They are also easily frightened by imagined mysterious animals. They scream at the idea of the beast or the snake and are terrified by darkness. Moreover, their emotions are far from stable and their moods fluctuate easily from gloominess to happiness. For instance, they are sad and frightened by the fact that there might be a ghost or beast on the island, but after they see Jack's funny behavior, they immediately stop crying and begin to laugh. When the older children discuss the question of the existence of ghosts or beasts, they do not reach an agreement or come to a conclusion. However, this does not seem to bother the littluns: after the assembly, these "littluns that had had enough were staggering away, howling" (92). No longer bothered by the unsolved question, they seem to forget their sorrows at once. They feel satisfied just by having enough food and wander around like animals. In addition, it is easier for them to share their feelings and sense the emotions of their peers. It is often the case that they will "cry in sympathy" after hearing about the sorrows of their peers (87). It seems that this kind of sorrow suffered by their peers "was universal" (87). Instead of reflecting rationally on others' sorrows or giving others reasonable advice, the littluns have an increased capacity for empathy and share their sorrows instinctively, without the involvement of rationality. It is also remarkable that they seem not to understand the hostility, aggression or hatred against them; even when they are bullied, they take it as a kind of game, as innocent teasing. When Roger throws stones at Henry, for instance, Henry's first reaction is that he is attracted by the "plopping sounds in the water" (62). He then tries to find where the stones come from.. When he finds out that it is Roger who is throwing the stones, he laughs and does not regard Roger as an enemy, but as "the friend who was teasing him" (62). The littluns do everything for fun and do not show evil intentions or harbor hostile feelings even when treated badly.

What has been said about the littluns shows that their representation generally follows the conventions that accompany the trope of noble savage. According to Rousseau, noble savages were characterized by "the calm of the passions, and ignorance of vice" which hindered them "from doing evil" (1992, 36). Being too innocent and naïve to do something evil is indeed characteristic of the *littluns*. Because of their innocence and naivety, noble savages are usually the prey of evildoers—something that also fully applies to the littluns. In the novel, the littluns are attacked by the older boys and their words are not taken seriously. In a sense the harsh treatment of the littluns by the older boys emulates what Montaigne, Rousseau and other thinkers saw as civilization's unjust attack on noble savages; assuming that the reader is more inclined to side with the littluns and spot the injustice in their treatment by the older boys, we could argue that the novel here iterates Rousseau's critique on "civilization," since it is clear that the older boys will not succeed either.

Even though they scorn the littluns and do not take them seriously, the older boys in the novel do not emerge as (intellectually) superior to the littluns from their interaction with them.

In chapter five called "Beast from Water," Ralph calls for an assembly and restates some rules, such as how to raise a fire, build shelters, get water and use rocks for the lavatory. In that meeting, he also wants to discuss the talk of fear by the littluns, who see a beast in their dreams. Ralph argues: "But that's littluns' talk. We'll get that straight. So the last part, the bit we can all talk about, is kind of deciding on the fear" (Golding 1954, 82). The talk of fear by the littluns is considered irrational and nonsense, and thus it becomes the task of the older boys to enlighten the littluns and set things straight. However, Ralph and the older boys fail to solve the problem of the littluns despite many attemps. For example Percival (a littlun), continues to describe the frightening squids and claims that the beast comes out of the sea, even after Jack declares that there is no beast on the island since he has already explored it completely. Simon (an older boy) tries to tell them that they themselves or something inherent in their nature may be the beast or the ghost they fear, but nobody listens to him. At the same time, Piggy claims that there is no ghost at all and that he does not believe in ghosts. Many of the older boys show contempt for the littluns' imagination and wild fantasies, but they simply fail to come up with a satisfactory explanation for the littluns' imagination of the ghost. They reject the littluns' understanding of the world, which allows for a blurring of magic or imagination and reality. However, their rational mode of thinking dismisses the littluns' fear without really managing to help them process it. The children's discussion of fear in the novel implies two different modes of thinking by two different groups in the novel. Simon and Piggy, from the group of older boys, will resort to rationality and argue that there is no ghost; even if there is ghost, they argue, it resides in the inner self of human beings. Their so-called rationality has its own limitations and fails to solve all problems presented in the novel. By contrast, the fear of the littluns evokes another form of reason, one that typifies the noble savage, as Rousseau indicated. To make sense of their lives, these littluns think differently from the older boys and assert the existence of mysterious forces that cannot be explained based on a scientific rationality.

Next to the stereotype of the noble savage, the novel also seems to draw from this figure's "evil twin"—the ignoble savage—in its representation of the older boys in the novel. Although there is no ignoble savage as an external other in the novel, most of the "civilized" English boys become ignoble savages themselves in the process, as can be seen both from their behavior and visual appearance. Their process of de-civilization seems to be the dialectical counterpart of the civilizing mission of the West, in the sense that they show what becomes of "civilized" people when they find themselves away from the restraints and rules of civilization. After living on the island for a while, the children gradually forget their "European manners." When still in England, Jack's group was a choir and they wore "strangely eccentric clothing" (19). Their dress code included cloaks, shorts, shirts, as well as caps. "Their bodies, from throat to ankle, were hidden by black cloaks which bore a

long silver cross on the left breast and each neck was finished off with a hambone frill" (19). Their bodies used to be almost completely covered by clothes, which forms a sharp contrast with their subsequent nakedness on the island. At first, they are very disciplined on the island and stick to the rules of their former world. During their first meeting in the morning, despite the hot weather and "the complexions of newly washed plums," they don't dare to take off their clothes (19). After the meeting, "As if released from class, the choir boys stood up, chattered, piled their black cloaks on the grass" (23). The former choir boys feel relieved when they find out that there is no adult on the island, and take off their cloaks instantly. During their second meeting in the afternoon, they have forgotten all about their cloaks: "The choir, noticeably less of a group, had discarded their cloaks" (32). In the end, the choir-boys discard nearly all clothing and the norms that accompany it: "Some of the boys wore black caps but otherwise they were almost naked" (68). Even their leader Jack was naked "except for a pair of tattered shorts held up by his knife-belt" (48). If the cloak or their clothes are a symbol of European manners in their former world, their discarding of the clothing implies a deviation from their former world, leading them towards savagery. Following the trope of the (noble or ignoble) savage, the boys' nakedness also suggests their proximity to a more natural state.

Apart from their nakedness, their long and messy hair is another typical feature of their gradual adoption of a "savage" exterior. For instance, one group member, Roger's longer and thicker hair not only fits his gloominess, but also makes him more repulsive. His longer and messier hair functions to distance him from the civilized state. Similarly, Ralph also finds their hair, including his own, "much too long, tangled here and there, knotted round a dead leaf or a twig" (110). Their hair is so long and messy that it even forms a screen over their eyes and blocks their vision. During a debate between Jack and Ralph, they "glared at each other through screens of hair" (126). Annoyed by his long hair, Ralph wants to cut it off: "He would like to have a pair of scissors and cut this hair—he flung the mass back—cut this filthy hair right back to half an inch" (109). Yet without scissors, he fails to do so. Initially, Ralph refuses to tie his hair back, because he wants to stick to the norms of civilized English society and believes that tying hair back is feminine. However, after seeing Jack's group tie their hair back, he decides to also follow their hairstyle (175). In many Native American tribes it is a custom to tie the hair back, and thus we could also argue that long hair is no longer annoying or repulsive and is accepted as a common part of the boys' new appearance as savages.

The painted face also contributes to the visual staging of their savagery. In the novel, painting is a double-edged blade, because on the one hand it helps them hunt pigs so that they have meat to eat, but on the other hand it becomes a mask that frees them from responsibility for the murders and thus promotes the production of savagery. After their first failed attempt at hunting, Jack decides to paint himself so that pigs cannot see him clearly. Ralph is more skeptical towards painting, however after seeing how paint has a practical purpose to hunting, even he says: "I'd like to put on war-paint and be a savage" (142). However, later when his group members propose that they painted themselves, Ralph rejects their suggestion stringently,

even though "They understood only too well the liberation into savagery that the concealing paint brought" (172). Ralph's ambivalent attitude towards the painting of the face is indicative of his inner conflict: on the one hand, he acknowledges the practical benefits of this act (it makes it easier to hunt pigs), but on the other hand, he cannot let go of the conventions of civilization that dictate a certain appearance. For Jack's group, however, being painted becomes the new norm. During one meeting, "Jack, painted and garlanded, sat there like an idol" (149). Painting provides them with a mask that allows them to retain a "civilized" inner self by claiming that they have not committed murder, but rather the murder was done by the personas that the masks of paint construct. Painting helps Jack's group free themselves from their sense of guilt. Gradually, however, these masks turn into a new reality, showing how the performative becomes constative again: they help them part with their civilized identity and recognize themselves as savages. During the last time that Ralph calls a meeting, the narrator informs us that "Savages appeared, painted out of recognition" (175). Painting ends up establishing their identity as savages. When Ralph fights with Jack in the end, he "gazed at the green and black mask before him, trying to remember what Jack looked like" (177-78). Jack's newly painted face helps produce his new savage identity. Echoing a strongly Eurocentric perspective, the children's assumption of a savage identity goes hand in hand with an erasure of individuality, as savages are commonly understood as a homogeneous group without internal differentiation: the narrator thus talks about "the painted anonymity of the group" (178), "The painted group" (178) and "the group of painted boys" (201) to refer to Jack's group.

Particularly through the behavior of the older boys, we can clearly trace the features of the "ignoble savage." The brutality and violence used in the murders of Simon and Piggy, as well as their attempt to kill Ralph are examples. "The ignoble savage is always unpredictable," Lindberg argues (22). As ignoble savages, the older boys in the novel enjoy punishing others and even killing their peers. In the beginning, perhaps still under the influence of their former world, they do not have the strength or courage to kill a pig. It is not until they learn to paint themselves that pigs cannot see them easily and they succeed. After successful hunting, they not only enjoy the meat, but are also fascinated by the idea of hunting. Eventually, they enjoy hunting so much that they want to perfect their hunting skills through hunting games. The hunting game requires pigs, but without any live pigs available they begin to use human beings as a substitute. Simon becomes the victim of such a hunting game and is killed like a pig. Nobody claims responsibility for his death. In order to justify their behavior, the children downplay its seriousness by presenting it as a game: they argue that it is just a hunting game and nobody had the intention to kill Simon. While Simon's murder forces them to reflect upon their behavior and justify it, Piggy is killed brutally without any form of reflection or remorse. When Piggy tries to make them rethink their way of life as cruel hunters, he is intentionally killed like an animal. Worse still, when they plan to kill Ralph, they use exactly the same tools as they use to kill pigs with. The savagery of the older boys develops to the point they begin to treat human beings as animals.

As we saw in the novel, external features, such as nakedness, long hair and painted faces make the older boys resemble "ignoble savages." This "looking like savages" starts out as a performance that will result in them becoming savage through their engagement in violent and brutal activities. This gradual development of their savage appearance to savage behavior might seem to enhance their representation on the basis of the figures of the "ignoble savage," thereby showing what happens when the civilized regress to a savage state. However, in fact, if we look closer, we will see that their violent behavior is largely the result of their adoption of a colonizers' superior attitude to others and to the natural world. For example, the harsh treatment of the littluns by the older boys stems from the older boys' animalization of the young members of the group. The dehumanization and animalization of others does not so much typify the trope of the ignoble savage, but rather the colonizer's attitude towards the colonized in the Americas, who were often reduced to animals. Animalization of the other is one of the key tropes in the discourse of European colonialism. The colonized are often represented in the colonizers' eyes "as wild beasts in their unrestrained libidinousness, their lack of proper dress, their mud huts resembling nests and lairs" (Shohat and Stam 1994a, 137). Colonized people, such as Black people from Africa and Native Americans, were often taken back to Europe and exhibited in cages, and "the very fact of exhibition in cages" implies "that the cages' occupants were less than human" (108). Black people and Native Americans were often yoked together with animals. Columbus also objectifies the natives he meets: he "does not grant the Indians the right to have their own will," and "judges them, in short, as living objects" (Todorov 48). Out of "his naturalist's enthusiasm, he always wants to take specimens of all kinds back to Spain: trees, birds, animals, and Indians," which implies that for him, Indians are on the same level as trees, birds, and animals (48). The brutal massacre of Native Americans by the Spaniards further illustrates the fact that Native Americans were identified and treated as animals (144). Their mode of enslavement suggests that they were "identified with animals for the slaughterhouse" (175). In *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization* (1953), literary critic Roy Harvey Pearce argues that in Western discourses, the Native American is often depicted as fierce and animal-like. He has little time or reason to think; his intellectual powers and attainments are few and limited" (86-87). Native Americans are often represented as those who cannot think rationally and tend to behave fiercely. This assumed animal-like behavior justified their treatment like animals by the colonizers.

Similarly, the animalization of the littluns justifies their harsh treatment by the older boys. When the older boys want "a real pig," Jack answers: "Use a littlun" (Golding 1954, 115). One might be inclined to interpret Jack's answer as a joke, but the very joke implies the older boys' hatred towards the littluns, as well as reveals the littluns as being assumed inferior and in an ambiguous state between man and animal in the eyes of the older boys. The littluns' dehumanization and animalization by the older boys serves to fend off the anxieties of the older boys. When Ralph fears that the beast may come to eat him, he "prayed that the beast would prefer littluns"

(167). Thus, the littluns are supposed to act as scapegoats and stand-ins of prey for the beast. The animalization of the littluns is also implied in the metaphors the older boys use to refer to them: complaining about the difficulty of making a list of names of the littluns, Piggy says: "How could I with them little 'uns running round like insects?" (46). Their comparison with insects on the one hand underscores their uncontrollable nature, and on the other hand, suggests that the littluns can be easily and justifiably killed. As these examples indicate, the older boys' behavior and attitude towards the littluns emulate that of the colonizer towards the colonized, who are assumed to be inferior—to the extent that they acquire an animal-status—and in need of discipline, control or (when these fail) extermination.

However, parallel to the English children's assumption of the role of the "civilized" colonizer in their treatment of the littluns, the novel shows how they themselves function as animal-like savages *at the same time.* After living on the island for a while, the boundary between animal and human is not only crossed in the older boys' perception of the little ones, but also in the way the narrator presents the older boys. Far away from English manners and customs, almost all boys on the island exhibit animal-like features and behavior, as is illustrated through the narrator's use of animal-based similes and metaphors in descriptions of the boys. For example, after they carry woods to raise fire for the first time, "The boys lay, painting like dogs" (41). They are exhausted like tired dogs. During the hunting, Jack "lowered his chin and stared at the traces as though he would force them to speak to him. Then dog-like, uncomfortably on all fours yet unheeding his discomfort, he stole forward five yards and stopped" (48). Like a dog, Jack lies with his arms and legs on the earth and hunts in a way similar to that of dogs. Since dogs are good at hunting, Jack's comparison to a dog highlights his competence in hunting. When Ralph eats meat, he "gnawed it like a wolf," a simile that suggests Ralph's greed and unwillingness to share meat with his peers (73). The narrator's representation of the boys as animal-like can also be detected from descriptions of their gestures. For example, when they explore the island, they "used hands as well as feet" to make their way through the cliff (116).

The narrator's own "animalization" of the older boys in these descriptions makes him complicit with processes of animalization of others and the potential consequences of animalization. Consequences such as we have see in the older boys' animalization of the littluns. While the older boys construct the young ones as their inferior "others," they, too, are constructed as savage, animal-like others through the narrator's vocabulary. The narrative may thus problematize a strict binary distinction between savage and civilized, but its vocabulary shows that it still draws from a colonially-inflected discourse that mobilizes the same tropes and modes of representation on which these oppositions are premised. The "savage" is thus not a univocal figure in the novel, but has a differential structure within itself. The transformation of the civilized English boys to savages makes it difficult to identify the savage as the opposite of the civilized in the novel. Further and building on that, then their differentiation into different savage figures, noble and ignoble, makes the

novel's treatment of the "savage" more complicated and introduces a certain instability in the opposition between civilized and savage.

The instability within the category of the savage, but also in the savage/civilized opposition, is enhanced as the older boys concurrently assume the position of the ignoble savage (in the way they behave) and of the ("civilized") colonizer (in their harsh treatment of the littluns). The older boys seem to combine features of the ignoble savage—who is considered as cruel, brutal, irrational and exercising unpredictable violence—with the ugly side of civilization itself, as it became manifest during the process of European colonization. In the representation of these boys, the ignoble savage figure thus merges with the figure of the colonizer: they are visually cast as savages and engage in acts that, from a Eurocentric perspective, would typify the (ignoble) savage. Yet at the same time they behave as colonizers in the way they animalize and dehumanize the littluns and try to maintain control over them. Their concurrent embodiment of both tropes suggests the simultaneity of two figures that are traditionally thought to represent two temporally distinct phases in an evolutionary development: the savage and the civilized. In other words, contrary to how the novel has traditionally been read, I argue that in the novel we are less faced with a *regression* from a civilized to a savage state, but rather with a staging of the simultaneity of the positions of (ignoble) savage and (civilized) colonizer, as they appear to coincide in the same subjects (the older boys). The assumption of a savage identity by the older boys thus does not really result in their dissociation from their civilized identity: their savage status turns out to be perfectly compatible and concurrent with their assumption of a colonizer's stance towards the littluns. Here the ignoble savage does not pose as the opposite in a binary with civilization, but is presented as overlapping and contiguous with the role of the "civilized" colonizers (who did not hesitate to eliminate their supposedly ignoble savage others).

The coexistence of civilization and savagery is also staged in the last scene of the novel. The Naval Army rescues the boys and thus violence and savagery are suggested as an integral part of the civilized adult world too. In this scene, the boys' rescue does not bring them joy or relief. On the contrary, we read: "great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his [Ralph's] whole body"; "and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too" (202). The children appear quite depressed when rescued. "Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart"(202). This sadness may not only have to do with a reflection of their deeds on the island, but might also be due to their realization that the adult world to which they are going back is not ideal either. They realize that in the adult world is quite similar to the island, contrary to what they initially assumed. The encounter between the naval officers and these boys reminds the characters and the readers of the violence of the "civilized" adult world. Contrary to Piggy's idealized image of the civilized adult world as reasonable, lawful, peaceful, this world turns out to be full of conflicts, fights and wars. Apart from the boys' painted faces and savage appearance, there are few differences between these savage boys and their civilized adult saviors, as both groups are engaged in cruel wars and power games. This correspondence is of course commonly noticed in many readings of the

48

novel by aforementioned critics, such as Talon, Dickson, and Young, who argue that civilization is not free of savagery, and read the novel as an analogy between the life of the boys on the island and of the adult Europeans.

Yet I contend that the novel's dealing with the opposition between savage and civilized is not merely a repetition of the (by now) commonplace idea that civilization hides a savagery within it, which threatens to resurface in times of crisis. This idea has led to the formation of another trope, that of the "wild man within," which owes a lot to Freud's views on the human psyche and the way he extrapolated these views to civilized societies in *Civilization and Its Discontents*. In this text, he advanced the claim that the civilized psyche (and civilization in general) is based on a repression of savage, violent instincts that belong to man's primitive past, which nevertheless never fully disappear, always threaten to resurface, and pose a constant danger to civilization. This idea, even though it asserts a certain concomitance of civilization and savagery, is still premised on the temporal separation between the two as distinct phases in man's development.

In the novel, the coexistence of the ignoble savage and the civilized colonizer in the boys' representation works somewhat differently. The co-existence of the figures of the ignoble savage and civilized colonizer in the representation of the older boys is not suggestive of the return of a "repressed" savage instinct that resurfaces and enters into conflict with the boys' civilized identity. Rather, their actions and behavior often suggest that they combine the two tropes, next to each other, without presenting them as mutually exclusive. This simultaneity of the two tropes contradicts the temporal separation of savage and civilized, and seems to be in tune with structuralism's focus on (ahistorical) synchronic structures that co-exist within the same system of meaning. Thus, the way the novel combines the figures of the ignoble savage and the colonizer as simultaneously present in the same subject can be seen as analogous to the way Lévi-Strauss moves away from a diachronic to a synchronic treatment of savage thinking and modern science, even though, contrary to Lévi-Strauss's distinction, the novel stresses the *compatibility* of these tropes rather than their autonomy and difference. The one position (civilized) does not give its way to the other (savage) as a result of the boys' *regression* to an earlier stage; behavioral patterns and relations that are ascribed both to savagery and civilization are present in them at the same time.

1.5 Persistence of Binaries in Lévi-Strauss and *Lord of the Flies*

By proposing the notion of savage thinking, Lévi-Strauss assumes an ahistorical, synchronic perspective: he does not discuss the operation of a particular mind at a particular time, but studies how the human mind works in general. One of his claims is that the human mind understands the world by way of binary oppositions. For him, "Not only the thought process but also perceptual experience displays binary organization" (qtd. in Pettit 75). He thereby seems to suggest that savage thinking also cannot do away with binary oppositions. In "Structuralism and Ecology," he writes: "From the very start, the process of visual perception makes use of binary

oppositions" (1972, 22). Human beings thus perceive things through binary oppositions, although their understanding of things may turn out quite different. This assumption of a binary mode of thinking as rooted in universal mental operations is, in fact, one of the main premises of, structuralism for which Lévi-Strauss has often been criticized. As Philip Pettit notes, "His [Lévi-Strauss's] binarism is presented as a general theory about the way the human mind works" (75). In *Structuralism and since: from Lévi-Strauss to Derrida* (1979), John Sturrock also criticizes Lévi-Strauss as a universalist, since he "claims to have located, behind a diversity of empirical facts, a universal mental structure" (4). Lévi-Strauss's insistence on binaries is also manifest in his use of the binary distinction between savage and civilized to theorize two basic contrasting modes of knowledge acquisition, which he relates to mental processes common to all human minds. If these modes correspond to universal, ahistorical mental operations, it would make it virtually impossible to do away with the opposition between savage (or mythical) and civilized knowledge.

Nevertheless, Lévi-Strauss's notion of savage thinking has also been useful in the articulation of critiques of deep-rooted hierarchical oppositions. Take for example Edward Saïd's *Orientalism* (1979), a well-known exposition of how the binary opposition between "the West" and "the Orient" is developed and has functioned in Western discourses. In the text Saïd brought in Lévi-Strauss's notion of the "science of the concrete," with which Lévi-Strauss referred to mythical or savage science. Saïd followed here the contention of Lévi-Strauss that the savage mind is the substratum of the modern mind. Saïd's reflections on this issue did not come out of the blue. One of the first reviews of Lévi-Strauss's *The Savage Mind* to appear in the US context was written by Saïd in 1967. In that review he had already emphasized Lévi-Strauss's idea that the mind needs order, and order is established through rudimentary classification, which is "the primary activity of the mind... an activity that always takes place on an unconscious level" (1967, 259). Like the relationship between signifier and signified, this kind of classification by the mind is not neutral, but is arbitrary. "It used to be thought that primitives name things that are naturally useful to them. The converse is true: things are useful *because* they are named" (259). Eleven years later Saïd comes back to this and I would like to give one passage in full, here, from Saïd's chapter one: "The Scope of Orientalism" in part II "Imaginative Geography and Its Representations: *Orientalizing the Oriental:*"

> Despite the distraction of a great many vague desires, impulses, and images, the mind seems persistently to formulate what Claude Lévi-Strauss has called a science of the concrete. A primitive tribe, for example, assigns a definite place, function, and significance to every leafy species in its immediate environment. Many of these grasses and flowers have no practical use; but the point Lévi-Strauss makes is that mind requires order, and order is achieved by discriminating and taking note of everything, placing everything of which the mind is aware in a secure, refindable place, therefore giving things some role to

play in the economy of objects and identities that make up an environment. This kind of rudimentary classification has a logic to it, but the rules of the logic by which a green fern in one society is a symbol of grace and in another is considered maleficent are neither predictably rational nor universal. There is always a measure of the purely arbitrary in the way the distinctions between things are seen. And with these distinctions go values whose history, if one could unearth it completely, would probably show the same measure of arbitrariness. This is evident enough in the case of fashion. … But if we agree that all things in history, like history itself, are made by men, then we will appreciate how possible it is for many objects or places or times to be assigned roles and given meanings that acquire objective validity only after the assignments are made. This is especially true of relatively uncommon things, like foreigners, mutants, or "abnormal" behavior.

It is perfectly possible to argue that some distinctive objects are made by the mind, and that these objects, while appearing to exist objectively, have only a fictional reality. (1978, 53-54)

Much of what I have dealt with in the previous sections is being called upon here. There are many distinctions and oppositions possible, all of them in a sense arbitrary, but they are all caught within a certain order of knowledge that appears as non-arbitrary. Saïd is on his way, here, to argue that only after a kind of arbitrary classification or assignment do objects get meanings that acquire "objective validity," in a process akin to what Culler described as *vraisemblablisation* (54). This also applies to the distinction between "Oriental" and "Western" or savage and civilized. Obviously, the "objective validity" of objects that are defined as such does not mean that these "distinctive objects" *are* objective. As the last sentence of the quote suggests, they are only "fictional" (54). Regarding Westerners and Orientals, then, Saïd appears to argue that the distinction between them is arbitrary, produced in the mind of Westerners. While for Westerners the very entity of the Oriental turns concrete and "objective," it is in the end nothing more than fictional. Yet this notion of the fictional is not elaborated to the full in Saïd's text. One could in fact argue that fictional realities are as concrete as any other, in the sense that they can have material effects in people's lives.

Following Saïd's reading of Lévi-Strauss's "science of the concrete," we could argue that the distinction between "the civilized" and "the savage" functions in a similar way.[10] The very distinction is, in a sense, arbitrary but it is by means of this distinction that the savage is defined and constructed in the mind of the civilized. In

---

[10] The construction of savage and the arbitrary opposition between the civilized and the savage are also noticed by Ter Ellingson, who argues: "The 'Savage' and the 'Oriental' were the two great ethnographic paradigms developed by European writers during the age of exploration and colonialism; and the symbolic opposition between 'wild' and 'domesticated' peoples, between 'savages' and 'civilization,' was constructed as part of the discourse of European hegemony, projecting cultural inferiority as an ideological ground for political subordination" (xiii).

order to establish an orderly system, the civilized categorize anything unfamiliar, exotic or unusual as savage: their perception and understanding of others is thereby shaped by this pre-existing category. They only differentiate among savages, for example, if this differentiation corresponds to other tropological binary distinctions within this category: the *noble* and *ignoble* savage. *Lord of the Flies* also makes use of binary tropes in its depiction of characters (noble versus ignoble savage, savage versus civilized), thereby showing how dependent we are on such structures of thinking. Dependent, even if the novel also complicates those structures by revealing the intertwinement of the figures or by revealing that the savage and the civilized exist on multiple levels. But how does this process of constructing binary distinctions in order to make sense of reality work in the novel?

As the older boys gradually come to simultaneously embody features of the ignoble savage and colonizer, in the process they experience identity-conflicts: being preconditioned to draw strict binary lines between "savagery" and "civilization," as I will show in the following, they regularly experience these two positions as mutually exclusive and oppositional. Thus, they feel that they need to choose between them, something that often results in an identity crisis.

Although the children are far away from civilization, they have internalized the habit of making these distinctions. The novel stages the persistence of binary thinking through the children's inability to get rid of the habit of defining themselves and others in terms of hierarchical oppositional categories. Such a habit is, for example, the European's understanding of the savage as less-than-human or even non-human. Ralph's reflection on the savagery of Jack's group is telling in this respect. When Ralph is the only one left in his group, he begins to consider Jack's group as savages: "They were savages it was true; but they were human" (Golding 1954, 185-86). Even though Ralph here in fact acknowledges the humanity of Jack's group, he still posits this humanity as the opposite of savagery by using the word "but," and thus affirms the basis of the opposition of savage and human, which in colonialism served as a legitimizing mechanism for extermination or enslavement of "savages." In other words, if savages are also humans, as Ralph's words suggest in the case of Jack's group, this appears as an exception to the rule rather than the rule itself. When it comes to self-identification, the children's understanding of themselves through the category of the civilized offers them a sense of safety and control. This can be traced, for example, in Ralphs' words when he tries to assure the other children that they will be rescued, *because* they are English boys. Ralph says: "My father's in the Navy. He said there are not any unknown islands left. He says the Queen has a big room full of maps and all the islands in the world are drawn there. So the Queen's got a picture of this island" (37). The idea that the English Navy knows every island and consequently can take control of every island, makes the children feel that they are still under the protection of the English and part of this civilized community. After hearing what Ralph says, there "Again came the sounds of cheerfulness and better heart" (37). The children believe that as long as they are English, they will be protected and rescued. At this time, their identity as civilized and English is clear to them and they are very proud of it. Even Jack despises savages

and thinks the English are much superior to them. He says: "I agree with Ralph. 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" (42). Thus at the beginning, the boys draw a clear boundary between savagery and civilization, and their identity as English guarantees not only their good behavior but also their safety.

Once conditions on the island start to change radically, the boys still try to make sense of their new reality by hanging on to these distinctions. Eventually, the boys desert Ralph as their leader, and under the guidance of Jack they begin to play the role of savage Indians by engaging in violent activities, as we saw. In order to prevent his peers from becoming savages and safeguard the line between civilization and savagery, Piggy asks them three questions: "Which is better—to be a pack of painted Indians like you are, or to be sensible like Ralph is?"; "Which is better—to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill?"; "Which is better, law and rescue, or hunting and breaking things up?" (180). Through these three questions, Piggy intends to remind the children of the superiority of their former civilized life and encourage them to maintain this standard. In his first question, he juxtaposes "painted Indians" and the rational Ralph, thereby confirming the stereotype of the irrational, emotional, and savage Native Americans versus rational and enlightened Europeans. In the second question, he compares two different ways of living—"to have rules and agree" and "to hunt and kill"—which also evoke stereotypical and oppositional understandings of a Western and a Native American mode of living respectively (180). In his last question, in which he confronts "law and rescue" to "hunting and breaking things up," he hints at the supposedly anarchical and lawless character of Native American societies, though which the image of the rational, sensible, and lawful European is established and affirmed. However, this seemingly clear boundary between Native American savagery versus European civilization is shaken in multiple ways in the novel. Let me just mention here the contrast between the aforementioned dead parachutist and the several maps in the Queen's office, which implicitly links the exploration and "mapping" of the earth with the casualties of wars and European conquests of other places. Piggy's brutal death of course also implies the children's failure to maintain the binary line between civilization and savagery.

As it becomes increasingly difficult for them to uphold this distinction, they experience an identity crisis. This crisis is strongly suggested towards the end, when the children appear unable to claim a stable identity for themselves when asked by their rescuers to identify themselves. When they see the navy officer, "One of them came close to the officer and looked up.// 'I'm, I'm—'// But there was no more to come" (201). Asserting their civilized English identity does not offer them the safety and security it did in the beginning. However, nor can they fully identify themselves as savages, despite the fact that some of them enjoy their "savage" identity for a while. As we saw, in the novel the civilized identity is not successfully replaced by a savage identity: the children simultaneously reflect features that belong to both tropes. Their identity crisis indicates that they have internalized the idea that savage

and the civilized are mutually exclusive and belong to different evolutionary phases, and thus cannot coexist in the same subject.

Conclusion

How does the novel's treatment of the savage and the civilized, then, relate to the two modes of thinking that Lévi-Strauss delineates in *The Savage Mind*? In order to elucidate the operational mode of the "science of the concrete," Lévi-Strauss uses the notion of the "bricoleur" and contrasts it to the "engineer" (1966, 16). The engineer's mode of action is taken as exemplary for modern scientific thought, while mythical thought is compared to "an intellectual bricolage." It is worth looking at how Lévi-Strauss lays out the difference between these two figures, and, by extension, between modern and mythical (or savage) science:

> The 'bricoleur' is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand', that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions. The set of the 'bricoleur's' means cannot therefore be defined in terms of a project (which would presuppose besides, that, as in the case of the engineer, there were, at least in theory, as many sets of tools and materials or 'instrumental sets', as there are different kinds of projects). It is to be defined only by its potential use or, putting this another way and in the language of the 'bricoleur' himself, because the elements are collected or retained on the principle that "they may always come in handy". ... They each represent a set of actual and possible relations; they are "operators" but they can be used for any operations of the same type. (17-18)

The bricoleur, as a figure that exemplifies savage thought, uses materials and tools from a wide repertoire that is available to him without subordinating those to a larger project, like the engineer does. His materials "represent a set of actual and possible relations" but their combinations do not create radically new relations that exceed the available possibilities. The bricoleur thus turns "back to an already existent set made up of tools and materials, to consider or reconsider what it contains and ... to engage in a sort of dialogue with it" (18). Although he can critically interrogate the objects of his "treasury" in the course of this dialogue, the set of relations he produces can only differ from his set of instruments "in the internal

disposition of its parts" (18). In this mode of knowing, "the possibilities always remain limited by the particular history of each piece [that the bricoleur uses] and by those of its features which are already determined by the use for which it was originally intended" (19).

This delineation of the bricoleur, I argue, applies to the way the novel deals with the notion of the savage. The novel uses "materials" that are already available in European discourses and carry a certain historicity: the self-image of the "civilized" English or Europeans and the stereotypes surrounding the figures of the noble and the ignoble savage. It manages to re-arrange these materials in combinations that result in a critical interrogation of those figures and their implications. Nevertheless, it does not radically question the modes of knowing that these "materials" carry with them by counter-proposing an alternative mode of understanding the self and the other that could allow us to do away with the category of the savage. The novel needs this category as part of its instrumentarium, in order to showcase the coextensiveness of savagery and civilization and reveal the savage sides of civilization itself. As it interrogates the binary however, it is also complicit with the discourses that produce it, and sometimes even reinforces them, as we saw in the narrator's "animalization" of the children in his descriptions.

The novel questions the temporal evolutionary structure that runs through the figure of the savage by combining this figure with that of the (civilized) colonizer, and positions that (some of) those children can simultaneously occupy both figures, without having to necessarily choose one over the over. In doing so, as we saw, it comes close to Lévi-Strauss's rejection of this temporal structure and his postulation that savage and modern thought are two concurrent modes of inquiry. However, whereas Lévi-Strauss asserts the autonomy of these two modes (even though he also traces convergences between them), the novel, as I have showed, shows these categories of identity as constitutive of the same subjects—the children: that is because, ultimately, *both these categories do not represent different modes of knowing in the novel, different sciences, but are materials that belong to the same Eurocentric binary mode of thinking*. The novel does not manage to introduce a *radically different* mode of inquiry—a mode of thought other than the one dictated by the long tradition of binary thinking in which the category of the savage is immersed. Let us not forget that there are no actual "savages" making an appearance in the novel: there are only different faces of the European self, some of which may be estranging and uncanny, but are nonetheless constructed by the same materials that the author/bricoleur has at its disposal.

Thus in that sense, there is no actual encounter with the other in the novel. Both the narrator and the children themselves use the materials they know all too well—stereotypical representations of Native Americans as savages, the features of the noble and ignoble savage—reshuffling them towards a critical interrogation of the self, which, however, remains solipsistic in that it makes no actual attempt to open up to new perspectives and modes of knowing. Native Americans thus remain absent in the narrative: ghosts that are only conjured through their highly mediated and stereotypical representation through these children. The absence of the other

from the critical dialogue that the novel stages between known materials may be taken as indicative of the limitations of the Eurocentric discourses that produce the "savage." It is also indicative of the limitations of the novel itself, which uses the very same materials in its language. The materials of the bricoleur are "pre-constrained" and their possible combinations "are restricted by the fact that they are drawn from the language where they already possess a sense which sets a limit on their freedom of manoeuvre" (19). Similarly, the novel is restricted by the Eurocentric language that produces savagery and civilization. Paradoxically, perhaps, the bricoleur's operation—which for Lévi-Strauss typifies mythical, savage science—is shown to be much closer to the operations of modern European discourses of the savage of which the novel also partakes.

Further, this is ultimately indicative of the limitations of Lévi-Strauss's structuralist thinking. Despite Lévi-Strauss's revising of several aspects of the Western production of the "savage" as the "pre" and the "non" of civilization, his distinction follows the same binary modes of thinking, to which it even ascribes universal validity. In that sense, Lévi-Strauss's "savage mind" may have been a well-intended attempt to assert the autonomy of the other's thought, but the attempt remains somewhat constrained by the Eurocentric bias of Lévi-Strauss's language—a language that contains materials that cannot be easily shaken off, including the term "savage" itself. If savage thought "is imprisoned in the events and experiences which it never tires of ordering and reordering in its search to find them a meaning" then this preposition may also be applicable to Lévi-Strauss's structuralist language and its dependence on binaries (22). His "savage science" is thus still part of the "self" that describes it and does not manage to radically exceed the limits of a Eurocentric discourse that produces specific oppositional versions of the self and its others.

Whereas the bricoleur's operation is "retrospective" (18), drawing from existing materials which carry an inescapable historicity and always remaining within socially imposed limits, the engineer, Lévi-Strauss writes, "questions the universe" and is "always trying to make his way out and go beyond the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization" (19). If this is the case, then, both the novel and Lévi-Strauss himself operate more as bricoleurs than engineers, even though they express a *desire* for crossing the limits that constrain their language, towards another mode of understanding the universe.

Remarkably, Lévi-Strauss places art as situated in-between modern scientific knowledge and mythical or savage thought—the artist is both a scientist and a bricoleur (22). "Art," Lévi-Strauss writes, "proceeds from a set (object + event) to the discovery of its structure" unlike myths that use a pre-existing structure to construct "a set of events (26). As a work of art *Lord of the Flies* indeed manages to explore the structures of thinking that produce the savage and the civilized in European thought, and the novel even questions the validity of these structures by re-arranging their constituent parts. Even though the novel arranges its materials more in the mode of a bricolage, its re-arrangement of long-standing tropes initiates an identity crises and yields combinations that deprive these categories of their comforting familiarity: this is indicative of a desire to exceed the limits of these categories—the engineer's desire.

The question remains, however, whether and how literary works or other forms of art can take the step from exposing an underlying structure to proposing a radically different structure that could challenge the one the author or artist is familiar with. The children's identity crisis, as well as their concurrent inhabitation of two identity positions that are considered opposed, may hint at the limits of "the science of the concrete," according to which reality is shaped and partitioned based on "fictional" binary categories of the mind. The crisis of (self-)representation that the novel can be said to initiate evidences a certain resistance to the categories through which "the mind" purportedly creates fictional objects as objective realities. The "fictional" binary categories we need in order to naturalize and understand reality (according to Lévi-Strauss) sometimes get so intertwined and confusing that we as readers, just as the boys in the novel, are forced to acknowledge their *fictionality*. Fiction makes that possible here. However, as long as the structures of thinking that produce violent oppositional categories are linked to universal mental operations, as Lévi-Strauss sees them, the possibilities for radically contesting and replacing these categories, even if their fictionality is acknowledged, appear restricted. If, however, they are decoupled from universal operations and instead studied as historically specific constructs, then their "fictionality" (as Saïd saw it) is seen as derived from this very historicity: they appear as products not of a universal mind but of (contingent) historical and cultural conditions. This historicity may be what makes them persistent, but acknowledging this historicity also makes these categories potentially more contestable. This, however, would be the task not of a structuralist, but a poststructuralist, deconstructive approach. The next chapter will put such a deconstructive approach to work in Huxley's *Brave New World*.