
The Concept Of Fear In Lord Of The Flies

“The thing is – fear can’t hurt you any more than a dream.” (90) A human's fears should not be taken lightly. Fear could do anything to a person’s mind, even without fear a man can become as savage as an animal. Fear can haunt a person to a point of self-destruction and can be inside of everyone. Even if a person can overcome fear, it can still be very dangerous, it affects the person along with everyone and everything around them. In the novel Lord of the Flies by William Golding, the boys are all so overcome by fear that the island begins to confuse and isolate them. We learn that they are afraid of a beast, but that fear turns out to be less dangerous than the fears they have within themselves. Jack’s fear of not being leader starts to have an effect on him, being isolated begins to take a toll on Ralph, and the rest of the boys, Jack also fears being powerless. The boys’ fear of the beast causes them to feel so unsafe that they are willing to do anything. Because of the boys being overwhelmed by their fears, it becomes the most destructive force on the island.

When it comes to Jack’s fear of not being chief, it brings out the worst in him and it influences the others. When the boys are deciding on who should be the chief, Ralph wins by a landslide. “Even the choir applauded; and the freckles on Jack’s face disappeared under a blush of mortification” (19). That is the first sign of Jack being humbled by Ralph and considering Jack’s personality, he is not used to failure. This fuels him to start a rivalry with Ralph, and to use fear and threats to control the other boys. For example, Piggy is afraid of Jack, who bullies and makes fun of him. Piggy who is perceptive and intelligent tells Ralph that he fears Jack, he tells Ralph “If you're scared of someone you hate him, but you can't stop thinking about him. You kid yourself that he's all right really, an' then when you see him again; it's like asthma an' you can't breathe. I tell you what. He hates you too, Ralph-”(93) Jack is violent and is uses his power only to satisfy himself. Jack beats the boys for no reason so that they are all scared to do anything against him. He is obsessed with power and is willing to do anything to keep it. The rest of the boys are living with fear of Jack, slowly he starts to destroy their hopes of happiness. He creates a fear of him within the others. The boys are punished for no apparent reason. Jack shows them what can happen by beating a boy named Wilfred and he tells the boys to stay away from Ralph and his small group saying that they are a danger to the tribe. For the boys to join Jack’s tribe, he promises hunting as a fun activity, and no rules which is very savage-like. Jack knows that the boys like to hunt so he entices them into joining his tribe by promising to hunt. What he does not know is that hunting will make them lose reality and turn them into savages with no morals. Jack has learned use the boys’ fear of the beast to increase his own power. Under his leadership the boys lose all sense of civilization and destroy the island, destroying themselves in the process.

Even though Jack’s fear of not being chief ends badly, Ralph’s fear of not surviving has another whole level of bad endings. Ralph’s main concern when the boys crash into the island is being rescued, but because of this, he neglects other problems such as looking out for littluns. “That litte’un – ‘gasped Piggy – ‘him with the mark of his face, I don’t see him. Where is he now?” (46). Ralph is so blinded by the idea of being rescued that he forgets his priorities. He should be watching the littluns, but instead, he is being selfish and cares only about the fire. Consequently, to his poor action, an innocent life is taken away. Also, when a ship comes by and Ralph realizes that the hunters let the fire out, he loses it and he yells at

Jack, but “his voice was loud and savage, and struck them into silence. ‘There was a ship’” (74). This is the first time that Ralph shows any sign of savagery, which tells the readers that evil and brutality are starting to take effect on Ralph. When Ralph is being chased by the fire that Jack started to hunt him down, he will do anything to stay alive. While hiding in a bush, “the pointed end of a stick appeared. In panic, Ralph thrust his own stick through the crack and struck with all his might” (215). He is so desperate to stay alive that he does not care that he is acting savage-like. Ralph is a symbol of civilization and even he is overpowered by evil. Ralph’s fear of not surviving eventually leads to the death of the littlun and harms many people around him.

Ultimately, the fear that causes the most controversy in the book is the boys’ fear of the beast. The littluns first experience the fear of the beast by having nightmares. Ralph tells Jack they need shelters. Ralph thinks that by building shelters, the littluns will feel more at home. The weakest link is always the easiest to break and the littluns do not know how to deal with the fear. The different priorities between Jack and Ralph split them apart and two different tribes are made. Jack wants to hunt while Ralph wants to be rescued. The beast causes such a commotion between the two and they cannot decide on what is right. The most significant tragedy in the book is the death of Simon. When the boys see Simon come out of the forest, their fear of the beast blinds them from seeing the truth and ends up killing Simon. “At once the crowd surged after it, poured down the rock, leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore. There were no words, and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws” (169). The fear of the beast is twisting the boys’ minds so much that anything that they see in the dark, they imagine it as the beast. Therefore, the fear of the beast is the most dangerous and destructive force on the island.

The most destructive force on the island is not a physical being, but rather a fear that lives within the boys. The three fears that were stated above, Jack’s fear of not being chief, Ralph’s fear of not surviving and the boys’ fear of the beast, has made the most impact in the book *Lord of the Flies*. Throughout the book, the boys have the power and the strength to overcome their fears and work together as a group but in the end, they choose not to by letting themselves accept their inner savageness. Fear is a very strong motivator, but it is up to the humans to use that for the benefit of others and themselves. Conclusively, it is either the fear controls the person, or the person controls the fear. “Maybe there is a beast... maybe it's only us.” (80)