

Importance of individualism in ender's game



In the novel *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card, one of the main character's greatest fears is that he would become like his brother, Peter. While on earth, Ender was physically afraid of Peter due to threats that he would kill him. But, when Ender was taken to battle school, he no longer had to be afraid of Peter in that way.

While at Battle School, Ender had a small, but recurring fear, reinforced by the Battle School computer, of becoming like Peter. Peter is the boy that traps squirrels and skins them until they die. As Major Imbu of Battle school said His brother (Peter) was rejected from this program because he's one of the most ruthless and unreliable human beings we've ever laid hands on. (Card 186 par. 4). Ender has the ability to win in every situation and hates himself for it because he doesn't want to be the ruthless killing machine that he feared for over half his life. Ender is reminded of this when a fantasy game he plays at battle school shows him in a mirror with a reflection of Peter's face, as his own. Ender's inner struggle is inside him throughout battle school and beyond and he is reminded of it constantly.

Ender's fear started out as physical danger. While he knew Peter would do nothing that would make himself get into trouble (due to the monitor), Peter would disguise it as a game so that Ender would get hurt, but never too much. While Ender's sister, Valentine, knows how brutal and cruel Peter can be, she is helpless to stop it because their parents have no idea who Peter really is away from them. When Ender finally got the monitor off, Peter suggested they play, and they do, but this time Peter threatens to kill Ender and Valentine. He would want to but will have to find a better way to do it. Ender's comfort during the day is based on the fact that Peter will never

disrupt his image in front of anyone except Ender and Valentine. Peter would often verbally abuse Ender, and say things that Ender hated the most. The fact that he was a third and the fact that even though Ender is younger than him he is better, the only reason he's alive is because Peter was so good. Peter had the ability to find his opponents worst fear, then exploit it in the worst way possible. Ender had a similar skill, where he could totally and completely understand his opponents and beat them. In his mind this made him like Peter, a mindless killing machine with no love or compassion.

When Ender moves to battle school the reader gets the impression that they'll neither have to see nor worry about Peter ever again. Then the fantasy game comes into play. In the game the player must pass an impossible challenge, in this case it is a giant who offers you a choice that will always be wrong. Ender finds a way to kill the giant by attacking him instead of choosing. It was not the intended result by ends up killing him anyway. This makes Ender think of all the times where he has been helpless to Peter. Later in the fantasy game Ender encounters a mirror where shows Ender's character, and in the mirror it shows Peter as Ender. This embodies Ender's internal struggles and fears. By the computer showing him as Peter, it embodies his belief that he isn't any better than Peter, that his birth was a failure and how he hates himself for not just defeating his enemies but destroying them. Ender is brought to command his own army in the game at battle school. While playing this game Ender is never given an advantage only detriments. Less training time, uneven stages, back to back battles, two in one day, even two armies against his. He wins every single one, not just barley as most armies would do, but would win with little to no losses of

team members. For Ender this personifies the awareness of his suspicion that he could be an even better killer than Peter could, and that its what Graff and all required to defeat the buggers.

Ender has also experienced some traumatic ordeals that made him feel extremely close to Peter. One of these experiences occurred when Ender was only 6 years old and still on Earth. A boy called Stilson, for unknown reasons, hates Ender for being too smart for his age and for being a third child. He is a bully who traps him in the hallway the day Ender gets his monitor off. Since Stilson knows that the government is no longer watching Ender he proceeds to fight him. Ender fights hard, too hard. He beats stilson and while he is still on the floor ender proceeds to kick him again and again so neither stilson or any of his friends would ever bother him again. After the fight Ender sits by a wall and cries while saying I am just like Peter. Take my monitor away, and I am just like Peter.(Card 143 par. 3) Another boy also fought Ender, but took it more seriously and was intent on killing Ender. The boy's name was Bonzo Madrid, and while Ender was in his army at battle school, Ender disrespected him and Bonzo took it as a serious insult that Ender was even placed in his army and never let go of his animosity. In the fight Ender hits him so hard that Bonzo dosen't come back up. After the fight Ender was helped by his friend, who was glad he was safe and was saying bad things about Bonzo when Ender breaks out crying and when asked if he is okay answers, I didn't want to hurt him! Why didn't he just leave me alone!(Card 304 par. 2) In both of these fights it would be the boy's last act to fight Ender. What ender dosen't realize is that having a multidimensional personality makes him individualized from Peter. When Peter is fighting with someone he just

focuses on exposing their weaknesses, while Ender is understanding his opponents and feeling compassion for them while simultaneously demolishing them. In the end of the book Ender is tricked into destroying an alien race known as buggers. After he realizes what he has done, Ender goes into a coma-like state and doesn't wake up. This was the price he paid to learn his lesson of being individual and not being afraid of becoming Peter.

Ender's internal struggle was based off the fear that he was no better than or just like Peter. However after destroying the buggers and being deceived, he understands and loved the buggers. Through the journey of his many experiences Ender comes to realize that the source of his self doubt, that he was like Peter and destroyed without compassion, was false and deceptive. While in reality his compassion and understanding of his foes differentiated him from Peter which gives him his unique personality and mentality. While his physical fear of Peter evolved into something else his fear of becoming Peter never went away. Even at the place where no one was ever better than he was, Peter followed and haunted him throughout battle school. After he killed all the buggers, Ender went into a coma where he had horrible dreams while he continued to think, I never wanted to kill anybody. Nobody ever asked me if I ever wanted to kill anybody. In these dreams, he sees all the things that he has done that made him feel like Peter, in real life and in the fantasy game. When Ender finally wakes up all his friends are there to help and congratulate him, and he almost kills one of his friends when he goes to wake him up. It is then that he finally realizes that he is a killer and can't change that, so he decides that he won't be like Peter and will have compassion and the mere fact that he has empathy makes him completely

different from Peter. In conclusion, Ender shows us an important lesson of individualism and being who you are and not being someone else.