

Lord of the flies and life of pi essay sample



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How do the authors explore the concept of ' conflict' in texts that deal with survival and savagery in William Golding's novel Lord of the Flies and Ang Lee's film Life of Pi?

The film Life of Pi directed by Ang Lee and novel Lord of the Flies by William Golding are both survival texts in which the protagonists must deal with a range of conflict. In Life of Pi the protagonist, Pi Patel, is a religious teenager who lives in Pondicherry, India with his small family. Forced to move, and start a new life with his family in Canada, Pi is truck with the challenge of facing great conflict and loss when he becomes the sole survivor of the capsizing ship, which leaves Pi stranded in the middle of the Pacific Ocean with nothing but a 300 pound Bengal tiger for company. Unlike, Life of Pi, Lord of the Flies' narrative of survival is presented on an isolated island. As a war broke out in the UK a group of young school boys are forced to evacuate the country, but the escape plane is shot down and crash lands on a boat-shaped island. Without any parental guidance the boys are first excited with the thought of independence.

However, they soon realise surviving on an isolated island leads them to face conflict which brings out their inner savagery. Both authors use foreshadowing to highlight the conflicts that the protagonist face when they are brought to the challenge of taking the life of a creature in order to survive. In addition to this, the technique of contrast is used to communicate to their audience the conflict that the changing environment has on both characters. Last of all, a climatic resolution in both stories allows the audience to understand the character's need to reflect on their initial conflict with other characters to recognise how important their relationship was to

their survival. Like all survival stories, the characters in Lee and Golding's text must overcome many conflicts in order to survive their journey. Both Ang Lee and William Golding use the technique of foreshadowing to highlight the personal conflict that Pi and Jack experience with their own beliefs. The authors use a range of techniques to emphasise the significance of taking another's life. At the beginning of *Life of Pi*, Ang Lee uses synchronous sound to show Pi's wonder and sorrow in killing a fish.

Within this scene, he uses this technique to heighten the sound and add emphasis Pi shock at taking another creature's life Drawing the viewer's attention to Pi's action of belting the fish with his axe, the background noise within the scene is also silenced by the author so as to focus the viewer's attention to Pi's guilt and sorrow. This technique is used to connect the audience to the significance of Pi going against his religious beliefs in order to survive. This is reflected through Golding's strong language and descriptive imagery of Jack's initial reluctance in taking the piglets life. "They knew very well why he hadn't: because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood." The stress that Golding implies on the 'unbearable blood' reflects how Jack felt when it came to taking another's life. However, unlike Pi, by the end of the novel, Jack has overcome his personal conflict, and is no longer afraid of taking away another's life, but rather is excited by it. Through the use of film techniques of synchronous sound and silenced background noise, Lee is able to foreshadow the personal conflict that Pi still experiences after later revealing that he killed the cook.

Golding's harsh description of Jack early in the novel, is also able foreshadow future events where the character is involved in killing Simon and the hunting of Ralph. Through the technique of foreshadowing, both Lee and Golding give are able to give us a greater understanding of the personal conflict the characters endured whilst trying to survive. Both authors employ contrast to highlight the conflict the characters have with their environment. Within the two texts Lee and Golding use the exaggeration and personification of the sea to reflect the moods of the characters, but most importantly on their ongoing mental and physical struggle with their beliefs. Through using wide angle shots, Pi is shown battling the Pacific Ocean near the third and final act within his long journey. The character's praise of, "Praise be to God...the Compassionate, the Merciful!" is then contrasted within the scene by both the dramatic change in setting the character's questioning of "Why are you scaring him! I've lost my family - I've lost everything! I surrender!" Lee employs this contrast between setting and Pi's response to his surrounding to present to the viewer that Pi is confronting his fears of the ocean and giving in.

The author uses a wide camera angle in the scene and Pi's plead to make us sympathise with him in his battle of the ocean and his ongoing mental and physical struggle that he is experiencing. Correspondingly in Lord of the Flies, Golding uses personification of the ocean to reflect Ralph's new disbelief in ever being rescued and loss of hope. "Now the sea would suck down, making cascades and waterfalls of retreating water, would sink past the rocks and plaster down the seaweed like shining hair: then, pausing, gather and rise with a roar, irresistibly swelling over point..." The noticeable

contrast between Ralph's previous view of " the bright sun, the whelming sea and sweet air" that was " so full of hope" to an ocean that " sucks", " then, pausing, gather and rise with a roar, irresistibly swelling over point" helps draw the reader's attention to the changing perspective and contrast between Ralph's thoughts and the physical barrier of the ocean.

Both narratives are comparable in the sense that the ocean is presented as not only a setting in order to physically challenge the character, but as another character that is used to reveal the character's true beliefs. The contrast of the ocean being a once calm environment to a battling current the next scene shows the audience the contrast of Pi's thoughts and beliefs and faith and hope slipping away while stranded in the boat. Similarly, the contrast of Ralph's thoughts of the once " good island" show how the environment is linked to the character's mental and physical hardships. As a result of both Lee and Golding's use of contrasting settings, allow us to understand how an environment may have an impact of the character's physical and emotional strength. Both Lee and Golding utilise a climactic scene to emphasise the conflict the character have with another character. The authors use various techniques within their chosen climatic resolutions within both narratives to link the importance of conflict the two characters experience to ensure survival.

In the climactic scene of Life of Pi the technique character direction is used to show Pi watching Richard Parker ' disappear' into forest '...forever from my [his] life. Shot using both present day and flashback, Lee uses the scene to reveal an adult Pi Patel completely overwhelmed with emotion as he realises that he needed the tiger and the conflict that he brought, in order to

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survive. As Pi is retelling his story, the reader is made to focus upon his tears and his voice which indicates to us that he is thankful for having Richard Parker on this life changing journey. The technique is used to show his realisation of needing Richard Parker on the boat in order to survive, because although he was fierce and scary, Pi's animal instincts are what kept him alert and gave him purpose while stranded, and for that he is thankful. This idea is continued in Golding's novel with the use of third person omniscient narration and characterisation in the final climactic resolution to indicate that Ralph needed conflict with Piggy in order to survive. The powerful words of, "Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy." prove this.

This narration presents to the audience Ralph's inner thoughts and how he reflects on his experience and acknowledges that he needed his relationship and conflict with Piggy in order to survive. Both narratives *Life of Pi* and *Lord of the Flies* use a climactic scene to emphasise the conflict the character has with another character. In *Life of Pi* Lee uses a climactic scene to demonstrate Pi's realisation of needing Richard Parker on the boat in order to survive; just as Ralph's inner thoughts reflections of his experience and acknowledgment of the need of conflict with Piggy to survive, in *Lord of the Flies*. By using characterisation, both authors utilise a climactic scene to emphasise the conflict the character has with another character. In summary, both texts present a clear message relating to the conflict that an individual must face and overcome in order to survive.

From Lee and Golding's use of foreshadowing, within the beginning of their narration and their protagonist's exaggerated reactions, the audience are

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presented with the question as to whether it is acceptable to take another's life. Drawing upon the personified setting, both authors use the contrast of their characters personal thoughts about their survival and their environment to communicate to the reader that both the physical and personal challenges that we constantly face must be overcome to survive. Both authors also employ a climactic resolution of a personal confession of their characters to allow the reader to recognise the idea that conflicts between characters can be not only a driving force, but the foreseeable key to a person's survival and development. These techniques are used to allow the reader to experience and appreciate the importance that the conflict has not only on a person's development, but also their survival.