

# The psychology behind lord of the flies

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Id, Ego, and Superego as Demonstrated in Lord of the Flies Throughout life, one experiences many different emotions and often cycles through personalities. Just one personality cannot be pinned to a specific person; each person has many different personalities.

These personalities may surface depending on the situation, such as when under pressure some people become aggressive. In a single person there are multiple personalities and not only do certain situations affect personality, so does experience and lineage. It is believed by many that every person is primitively savage and their experiences contribute to their development out of savagery. In the novel Lord of the Flies by William Golding and modern sources, the authors use id, ego, and superego to demonstrate the three types of human personality. The novel Lord of the Flies and the article “Freud’s Maps of the Mind” by Pamela Thurschwell both explore the first personality trait known as id. Throughout Lord of the Flies the character Jack Merridew displays the id mindset through his actions.

His often childish and impulsive actions demonstrate the concept of id. Id is a way of thinking developed by psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, who believed it to be commonly seen in the younger stages of life. The id is known to be made of impulsive actions and decisions, without thought for the future, as it exists in the unconscious mind. As Thurschwell states, “The id is inseparable from the unconscious –id wants and desires in the here and now, it doesn’t make plans for the future” (Thurschwell 82). The wants and desires of the id can often times be sexualized, arguing that the cravings of the mind are not always so innocent.

Jack Merridew is the perfect example of this personality type. He does not think about the consequences his actions may face in the future, demonstrated by his violent killing and torture of the other children. Many of his actions can also be interpreted as extremely sexual, such as the scene where he and the other boys kill the female pig. As the boys bombard the pig, “ She squealed and bucked and the air was full of sweat and noise and blood and terror.” (Golding 135). This scene seems as though the boys are raping this female pig, as instructed by Jack.

In doing this, it explores Jack’s childlike, hasty, and sexual actions as displayed by id. Both the source and the novel demonstrate the concept of id, where one’s actions and decisions are hasty and look at nothing but the present. In the text, the character Ralph constantly plays the balancing force between the id and the superego, this is commonly seen with ego, as demonstrated by the article “ The Ego According to Klein: Return to Freud and Beyond” by Rachel B. Blass. Ralph tends to think things through, basing his decisions off of how beneficial it will be for both himself and the group as a whole. This way of thinking is demonstrated by the ego, another concept developed by Sigmund Freud.

The ego is believed to be the constant balancing force between the two other personality types, the id and the superego. The ego is thought to be the most prevalent in an older stage, directly after id. Blass says, “ The ego develops out of the id, but Freud gave no consistent indication at which stage this happens; throughout life the ego reaches deep down into the id and is therefore under the constant influence of unconscious processes” (Blass 1). Ralph is known to be the responsible one in the group, and is even <https://assignbuster.com/the-psychology-behind-lord-of-the-flies/>

appointed chief. His main priorities are all based off the wellbeing of himself and everyone else.

He is determined not to cause anarchy, wanting to keep the signal fire going and making sure everyone is fed. Ralph uses his brain to think before he acts, resulting in wise and rational decisions. The narrator states, “ Ralph moved impatiently. The trouble was, if you were a chief you had to think, you had to be wise” (Golding 78). This quote shows Ralph’s intelligence and ability to think before his actions.

Despite his attempts to keep the peace, things slowly begin to slip into utter chaos. As things become more chaotic, Ralph eventually resumes the role of peacekeeper between the civil and the savage, also known as ego. Lord of the Flies and the article give insight on the ego, and how it tries to maintain peace and stability. In the novel Lord of the Flies and the source “ Angles on Criminal Psychology” By Diana Dwyer, both authors explore the damaging effects of superego. Often times superego is seen as a damaged version of ego, having issues with self confidence and esteem.

In order to feel less vulnerable, the superego tends to lash out at people or judge others to make themselves feel better. Long held aggression, anger, and resentment can sprout out of this vulnerability. Superego can be developed in many different ways, such as bad family or home life. The superego is thought to be most prevalent in teenagers and adults, being that they possess the ability to self-doubt. Dwyer’s research indicates, “ More commonly, crime arises from weak, underdeveloped superego.

In this case the individual is selfish and uncaring, full of uncontrolled aggression. The failure to develop a well functioning superego is believed by psychoanalysts to be the result of unloving or absent parenting” (Dwyer 27). Throughout the text, the character Piggy is seen being overly judgmental towards himself as well as others. In the book it is suggested that Piggy’s underdeveloped superego developed from his life at home. Over the course of the entire novel Piggy’s parents were never mentioned.

The only form of guardian brought up on Piggy’s behalf was his aunt, but he never had much to say about her. Throughout the novel, the other children view Piggy as the fat, asthmatic and annoying kid. As the plot progresses, Piggy builds up more aggression towards the other kids, as well as resentment for Ralph. A few times throughout the story, Piggy loses his temper and lashes out at everyone. In one scene on the mountain, no one is listening to Piggy, “ Piggy lost his temper. ‘ I got the conch! Just you listen! The first thing we ought to have made shelters down there by the beach!’” (Golding 45).

Piggy’s constant self doubt and uncontrolled aggression in the form of superego are what ultimately lead to his demise. The novel Lord of the Flies and the modern source take in-depth looks at superego and how it’s effects can be harmful as well as damaging to the human and its surroundings. Throughout the novel Lord of the Flies, the three boys Jack, Ralph, and Piggy are used to explore the three different types of personalities. Jack Merridew’s impulsive and sexual actions demonstrate the id, Ralph trying to keep the peace displays ego, and Piggy’s overly judgmental self is used to explore

superego. In their isolation, a new personality for each child arises as a devastating effect of their separation and loneliness.

The three children of the same age and gender demonstrate how personality cannot be pinned to specific aspects of a person. One's mindset depends on their situation and environment. Personality is not something that can be defined or fixed to a certain category. Personality is dependent on the person and their own experiences, not on specific aspects of themselves.