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Language and Literature

1/11/19

### Symbols of Fear in Lord of the Flies

Thesis: Jack uses symbols of fear to help him rule

Intro:

1. Thesis
2. Explanation of thesis
3. List of symbols that brought fear

Body Paragraph#1: (Knife)

1. Explain the purpose of the knife
2. Explain how the knife brings fear

Body Paragraph#2: (Double-sided stick)

1. Explain the purpose of the stick
2. Explain how the stick brings fear

Body Paragraph#3: (The savages/fire)

1. Explain why the savages bring fear
2. Explain why the fire brings/is feared

Conclusion

In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, you experience a major change in one of the main characters. Jack Merridew, who starts out as a half worried/half confident boy who finds power leading the remains of the choir boys, later becoming a ruthless, bloodthirsty dictator. The symbols of his rise to power foreshadow the fact that while peace can be facilitated for some time, eventually that peace will crumble. In the *Lord of the Flies*, this can be seen in the form of boys ages six to thirteen left alone on an unknown island with no adults or survival gear. Jack rules using fear to brainwash the littluns into believing that if they join Team Jack they will be protected from the "Beastie" that supposedly lives in the jungle part of the island. The symbols introduced every few chapters support the "Protection" half of Team Jack. The power symbols that Jack employs include a knife, a two sided stick, and his savages/fire. Each symbol represents a turning point in the book. Once that moment passes, the symbol slowly fades from the story.

Jack employs his knife as the first symbol of fear. When we first meet Jack, we learn that he has a knife that he plans to use as a hunting tool. While many wonder why a teenage boy was allowed to bring a knife with him on a plane, we must remember that the *Lord of the Flies* takes place at the end of World War Two, and that security was not that important back then. At the end of chapter one, we see that the last childlike gasps of humanity in Jack not killing a pig "...Because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood."(Page 31)

Towards the end of chapter eight we learn of Jack's newest symbol of fear. After members of clan Jack kill a pig, Jack has one of them sharpen a stick on both ends, before cutting off the head of the pig and slamming it on top of the sharpened stick.(Page 136) This sacrifice to the "Beast" later becomes the *Lord of the Flies* to a hallucinating Simon.

The final symbol(s) of fear are Jack's savages/the fire. Golding shows this change from children to savages by literally substituting the word savages in for kids or specific names. "The cries, suddenly nearer, jerked him up. He could see a striped savage moving hastily out of a green tangle, and coming toward the mat where he hid, a savage who carried a spear..." (Page 198) The fire and its destructive power, is shown at two different times in the Lord of the Flies. The first time fire shows its destructive power is in chapter two, "...Beneath the capering boys a quarter of a mile square of forest was savage with smoke and fire..."(Page 44) In chapter twelve, the fire ravages the island for a second time. This happens when Jack has his savages try to smoke out Ralph, who hides in the jungle for fear of death. When the savages light the fire though, they accidentally catch a tree on fire, and once again the jungle goes up in flames. "...All at once the lights flickering ahead of him merged together, the roar of the forest rose to thunder and a tall bush directly in his path burst into a great fan-shaped flame..." (Page 199),..."...He could hear them crashing in the undergrowth and on the left was the hot, bright thunder of the fire." (Page 199-200),..."He stumbled over a root and a cry that pursued him rose even higher. He saw a shelter burst into flames and the fire flapped at his right shoulder and there was the glitter of water." (Page 200)

All in all, Jack rules using different objects that are associated with the term fear to take over as leader and rule the island. Out of the three items fear symbols, the worst has to be the savages/fire. The fact that the fire burned down most of the island is just stunning. The naval officer in chapter twelve proves this in the quote "I should have thought that a pack of British boys-you're all British, aren't you?-would have been able to put up a better show than that-I mean-"(Page 202), and compares the experience of the boys on the island to the book Coral

Island. Some questions that come to mind as you read the Lord of the Flies are: what if Jack and Ralph's minds were switched?, what if there had been females on the island?, what if an adult had survived the crash?, what if the downed fighter pilot had survived his crash?, what if the pilot had a gun that Jack, Ralph, Piggy or one of the littluns had found? There are also the unanswered question of how the plane crashed/why the plane crashed. These are answers that will most likely stay unanswered, unless a second book is written. Had some of these questions/scenarios occurred, so much could have been done to stop the tragedies that took place on the island. The alternative would be that a worse ending than the current ending would have been written.