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Jaws and the Human Psyche

The 1975 film *Jaws* by Steven Spielberg is a story about three men, unalike in mind, coming together for the survival of themselves and their town. Brody, Hooper, and Quint each represent a part of the psyche. Quint's id, Hooper's ego, and Brody's superego determine their choices and actions to keep themselves and the town alive during the threat of the shark attacks, showing that the psyche is successful in ensuring our survival.

Brody's superego is defined by his time and training as the chief of police, making him prioritize the survival and safety of others over his own. Brody is guided by law and his moral responsibility. Brody fears the water, but his superego makes him do it for the town's survival. Brody does not want to see more innocent people get eaten while he sits idly by; he knows he must do something. As chief of police Brody owes it to his town to keep them safe. Brody knows he has to shut down the beaches because more people could get hurt, but the mayor prioritizes profits over safety. Brody is insistent on closing the beach, showing his superego prioritizing the lives of the people; however, the mayor knows that they will make loads of money and they cannot close the beaches. When Alex Kinter gets eaten by the shark, Brody blames himself for the death. This guilt shows how much Brody's superego cares for the survival of the town, even though the one to blame is the mayor. Brody drowns himself in alcohol to cope with the death of Alex, but Hooper convinces him to check the shark to see if it really was the one. After inspecting the shark they find out the real shark is still out there. Brody makes the choice to hire Quint to help hunt the shark because he knows Quint is capable of the job. On the boat Brody's superego shines through with his quick reactions and fast thinking. Brody lacks the knowledge that Hooper and Quint have, but he constantly prioritizes the safety of others. While dumping

chum into the ocean, he gets attacked by the shark. He quickly goes to alert his crewmates and prepares himself to fight. His superego also is reflected in his want for a bigger boat. It is played for jokes in the movie, but it is an accurate response after he assesses the danger. He wants to make sure that they are all safe and protected from the threat. While the boat is being destroyed and flooded by water, Brody tells Quint to slow down the boat to prevent the engine from exploding. In the final confrontation with the shark, Brody uses his quick thinking and intelligence to come up with a solution to defeat the shark. Brody gets the oxygen canister to fall into the shark's mouth and shoots it, killing the shark and saving the town. Brody's superego proves successful in keeping him and the town alive through the threat of the man-eating shark.

Hooper's ego is defined by his commitment to the survival of the town, giving up his wants for the town's needs. Hooper bridges the gap between the emotionally charged Quint and Brody's morals. Hooper was not planning on going out to look for the shark because of his trip to the Aurora; however, his ego knew that the town's survival was more important. So he compromised by bringing his shark cage and tracking equipment to gather information on the shark while still helping the town. Hooper's education as a marine biologist proves useful as he is able to notify Brody that the real man-eating shark is still out there. He is able to use the first victim's wounds to measure the jaw radius to prove that the first shark is not the true killer. Using his knowledge and science he restarts the hunt for the shark. The technology he brings allows him to collect data and assist in the hunt at the same time. On the boat with Quint and Brody, they start comparing their scars. Hooper's scars are gained from research and accidents. He does not glorify these scars like Quint who's behavior reflects the id. When Quint starts telling his USS Indianapolis story Hooper just listens. Hooper does not try to challenge Quint; he listens and understands the pain and trauma that Quint has gone through. Hooper willingly chooses to put himself in danger with the shark tank; for him it was the most logical move to make. He knew it was their best shot at taking out the shark, while also letting him gain info on the target. The plan ends up failing but that does not mean that it was all for naught. Hooper

knew he had to get out of there, so he decides to hide while Quint and Brody deal with the threat. Hooper was in the water with no protection from the shark. If Hooper was to swim back to the boat there is a good chance he would've been eaten in the water. Hooper's ego decided that the best course of action was to prioritize his survival over trying to help kill the shark with Quint and Brody. Hooper responds to the reality of the situation rather than emotion or pride. Hooper's ego understands the importance of survival as shown through his choices to keep him and the town alive. His rational thinking provides a backbone for the group that helps steer them through tough situations.

Although Quint does not survive the events of the film, he is still successful in securing the town's survival. Quint's id is defined by his own self-preservation and selfish desires shown by his desire to only hunt the shark once he has been paid \$10,000. He acts on impulse and is emotionally charged, due to his trauma from the USS Indianapolis. Having survived the shark attack he and his platoon faced, he carries deep psychological scars that fuel his obsession with sharks. This event has had a major impact on his psyche and how he deals with his trauma. Quint knows that the other fisherman would not be able to do it, and he is the most qualified of them all. Without Quint, Hooper and Brody do not have a boat to hunt for the shark. Quint's experience as a fisherman proves vital to hunting the shark, giving invaluable information to the team. Hooper knows the biological and the science behind sharks, but he does not have much first hand experience hunting them. Even though Quint puts his own needs over the town's survival, his actions still contribute to the community's safety. When asked he does step up to kill the shark that is terrorising the town. Quint's id does not just want him to throw his life away for something that has no personal benefit to himself; it ultimately wants to keep him alive. His skills as a hunter are essential to the team as they would not be able to navigate the waters efficiently without Quint. Quint is hunting the shark for more than just to save the town, he is hunting the shark for sport. He wants to assert his dominance over the shark and kill it. His impulsive desires to kill the shark may be reckless, but they also serve as a catalyst. He wants

to kill the shark even more after he is shown how the shark can still dive after being shot with multiple barrels filled with air. His refusal to stop hunting the shark shows that his id is helping the town survive. The constant pressure that he applies on the shark stops it from getting away and attacking the town. Quint shows that even the id, the most impulsive part of the psyche, still plays a very important role in survival.

Brody, Hooper, and Quint must cooperate by bringing their unique strengths and mindsets to ensure survival for themselves and the town. Every crewmember was important to taking down the shark, and without Hooper and Quint, Brody would have got himself killed. Brody is afraid of the water and has never captained a boat, making him reliant on Quint and Hooper's experience. Quint knows how to deal with sharks due to his years of experience hunting them that Hooper and especially Brody do not have. Without Quint they wouldn't have a boat to hunt the shark with. Without Hooper the team would lack the scientific understanding of the sharks and the equipment necessary to take down the shark. Without Hooper, Brody would not have been informed of the fact that they did not catch the real shark, which could lead to more casualties. If Brody was not there the mission would also fail. Brody helps keep the team together doing the dirty work that no one else wants to do. Brody was the glue that kept the team together. Brody stopped the team from devolving into a reckless mess. Brody was the one who got the charter and set up the party. Brody is the one to deliver the final blow to the shark with his quick thinking to use an oxygen tank as a makeshift explosive. The absence of any one of them would make the mission impossible.

Ultimately, *Jaws* demonstrates that the psyche is successful in ensuring survival. Even though they have differing mindsets, Quint, Hooper, and Brody are able to come together and triumph over the shark and save their town. Spielberg shows that when individuals put their personal differences aside they can overcome their greatest threats. If society were to put its differences aside we would have the ability to overcome any challenge no matter how impossible it may seem.