

Explore the link
between ambition
and evil in lord of the
flies and macbeth



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In Golding's wartime novel, human nature is put under the microscope by a Misanthropist, dead set on exposing Humanity for what it holds; Innate evil. Evil in what way you ask? In ambition. For in our world, Shakespeare's, and Golding's, Ambition truly is the source of all evil. In Macbeth, Shakespeare does well to disguise ambition as the true source of villainy, behind the facade that is Lady Macbeth and the witches. Without ambition, there would never be any action, no good, no evil, would Eve have picked the apple from the garden of Eden, without the ambition to gain further knowledge?

The two traits of evil and ambition are well aligned in both pieces of literature, and too in real life, and this essay aims to explore the link they share. At the beginning of both stories, the main characters are presented in a noble fashion. In Macbeth for instance, the Sergeant recounts the story from the battlefield, with " For brave Macbeth, - well he deserves that name..... with his brandish'd steel..... like valour's minion carv'd out his passage till he fac'd the slave.....and fix'd his head upon our battlements. " .

Macbeth takes on a stereotypical view of a hero, ruthlessly carving out the battlefield single handedly, resulting in the victory of Scotland. Similarly in Lord of the Flies, Jack is presented with a " holy aura", with his choir being described with " Their bodies, from throat to ankle, hidden by black cloaks which bore a long silver cross on the left breast". Religion is conveyed through the imagery of Christ resulting from the ' long silver cross', perhaps representing the past innocence present in the boys before the crash, which notably, left a " scar" on the island.

From the beginning, both Characters hold a substantial amount of power, with Macbeth being the Thane of Glamis, and Jack being the head choirboy. A notable trait shared amongst men with power, is that they always want more power, in a fashion similar to Sharks receiving their first taste of Blood. Macbeth's sole desire or ambition at the beginning was to raise himself in the king's court, an innocent ambition, an achievable target. However, upon meeting the witches upon the unruly, barren wasteland of the Heath, he becomes "rapt withal" in the words of Banquo.

With the possibility of Kingship seeded in his mind, his ambitions begin to change direction, shifting to a more evil one, how else to obtain the position of King when not in the bloodline? In terms of structure, Macbeth's increased use of Asides in scene 3 is indicative of this change of mind, for if his thoughts were innocent, would they not be shared with his best friend Banquo? Macbeth questions if he has to do anything to become king here "(Aside) If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me, without my stir".

I believe that he subconsciously justifies the act of murdering the king here, as in the previous aside, the thought of murdering the king "Unfixes his air... makes my seated heart knock at the ribs.... whose murder is yet fantastical". This quote shows how the thoughts of committing this usurpation of power both startles him yet feels unavoidably natural too. Already, this early in the play, evil and ambition are intertwined, with Macbeth's innocent ambitions of higher power, now existing through plots of an evil nature, manifesting themselves in his mind.

Contextually, Banquo was King James' cousin, and so Shakespeare was Obsequious and bestowed the character within the play with good ambition and godly values. Macbeth and Banquo are after all, equals up to the Heath scene, both fighting courageously, both thanes, the difference being that Macbeth falls victim to the equivocations of the Witches, his ultimate downfall. This is an important fact, as Banquo provides us with a stick as to measure Macbeth to. Banquos continued rejection of evil and prophecies of power stops the effect the witches had on Macbeth, showcasing Banquos' lack of ambition, and therefore, lack of evil.

In many ways, Piggy from lord of the flies is a parallel of Banquo, with both of them representing the best of human nature in the face of all evils. In the same way that Banquo respects the Monarchal system, Piggy respect free speech, continually highlighting the importance and value of the Conch. Piggy, just before his death, believes in the face of all savagery, free speech will stand " I've got the conch! Let me speak! ", and Banquo tells Macbeth to not believe in such " instruments of darkness", both maintaining civilization.

In Macbeth and lord of the flies, once an act of savagery has been committed, a drive is unleashed to fulfill the dark side of Human nature. Macbeth begins by murdering Duncan, a single act, but afterwards, he is engulfed into a chain of meaningless killings. Did Macduff's family have to die, or was it the result of an angered, more savage Macbeth consumed in a downward spiral of unleashed naturality. In Lord of the flies, Jack and the boys start by killing pigs, but later move on to more significant targets, hence the deaths or ' murders' of many boys.

These acts introduce many ideas of nature versus nurture, are all humans born with an innate sense of evil within them, or is it contributed through various memories and experiences. In Golding's LOTF, the island is separated from the rest of the society, meaning that there is no external influence to the actions of the boys. The island is a microcosm for the world around them, with the war the adults face being as immature and pointless as the disruption and conflicts between the boys. If there was no external influence, then any evil that has manifested itself, must have already been present in the boys.