

Macbeth vs. lord of the flies essay sample

[Government](#), [Corruption](#)



In the play "Macbeth" and the novel Lord of the Flies, the prospect of power and the corruptive nature that it has on man affects his relationship to power. Power is defined as, "the ability or capacity to exercise control; authority." This authority ultimately leads to the unveiling of the characters' true temperament. In Shakespeare's "Macbeth" and William Golding's, Lord of the Flies, Macbeth and Jack are used to portray the distressing truth that power corrupts all those who seek it. In "Macbeth", Macbeth's tragic flaw of ambition, as well as moral weakness and selective perception, are gradually revealed through his steady ascension to power and subsequent descent into madness and paranoia. In Lord of the Flies, Jack's subordinate position creates unrest on the island and leads to a disruption in the balance of power. Power and the lack of it, causes the two men to initiate unjust and autocratic administrations that displace the natural order.

Primarily, the essential correlation between the play "Macbeth" and the novel Lord of the Flies is that the aspiration for power corrupts the individuals who decide to pursue it. Early in "Macbeth," the protagonist is greeted by the three witches in the company of Banquo, a fellow thane. At this point in the play, Macbeth is seen as a valiant leader with Herculean strength and will. The witches salute the arrival of Macbeth with "All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis! Thane of Cawdor! And king hereafter." Macbeth, confused with the barrage of titles later asks, "With such prophetic greeting. Speak, I charge you." (1. 3 50-81) Unfortunately, at this point, the witch's disappear. At this point in the play, it is difficult to see the intent of the witch's, but it is clear that their greeting stirs up Macbeth's tragic flaw of ambition and provoke his desire for power.

They succeed in their motives, as Macbeth kills his king and assumes the throne, thus fulfilling the witch's prophecies. Therefore, Macbeth's own ambition for power causes him to be manipulated by the witch's into killing his just king, and blinds him from his inevitable and untimely death. This series of events is compatible with the axiom that power corrupts those who seek it. Macbeth is not the only one who becomes corrupted in the quest for power. In *Lord of the Flies*, the subordinate position to Ralph that Jack is elected to is not enough for him. "Every hand outside the choir except Piggy's was raised [for Ralph] immediately. Then Piggy, too, raised his hand grudgingly into the air" (Golding 22-23). This election was a major blow to Jack's high self esteem. He felt that the "natural order" had betrayed in favor of Ralph. Jack felt it was his duty to lead as he had led the choir boys prior to the island.

This is where Jack starts to become corrupted by the lack of power and mad in his quest for it. As the days passed, and Jack became more determined and maniacal in his search for power, Jack slowly lost sight of the goal, to get off the island. He sub-consciously influenced the other children to divert their attention from being rescued, and their other prescribed duties to hunting. When the idea of the beastie began to be introduced by the children, Jack furthered that feat and kept it vivacious by invoking false images to scare the children. As the beastie thrived within the children's imagination, the children's shift towards savagery also grew. Jack's overzealous yearning for power made him corrupt. He began to see himself as preeminent to everyone on the island. As a foil, Simon was fearless and pristine because he

did not desire power. His intrepidity kept him pure and away from the deleterious power that corrupted many of the boys on the island.

Furthermore, the fact that the people in the play "Macbeth" realized they had a corrupt leader is explicitly evident throughout. By the downfall of Macbeth's regime as a corrupt despot, all of his thanes have deserted him, save one. Macduff, Ross, and others have deserted the king in his time of need in order to support Malcolm, the rightful king. "As I did stand my watch upon the hill, I looked toward Birnam, and anon methought the wood began to move" (Shakespeare 5. 5 37-39). The quote clearly states that Macbeth was corrupted by the possibility of power. Macbeth, sanctioned by the witches to pursue the throne, killed those who were a threat to power, but also made enemies with those close to him. With the loss of his allies, Macbeth is defenseless to the coming of Birnam Wood to Dunsinane.

The goodness and morality of Macbeth that is evident at the beginning of the play soon diminishes as his power and ambition augment themselves. For example, when Lady Macbeth, his wife who was instrumental in his rise to power commits suicide due to her guilt, Macbeth merely comments that he is busy at the moment, and that it would be better if she had died later before dismissing the messenger. As Malcolm gathers an army as the rightful heir to the throne, the people under Macbeth's rule realize that Macbeth is a corrupt leader tarnished by the prospect of power. Shakespeare demonstrates that when one cannot exercise control and understanding of their own ambition, disaster and suffering ensue.

While the people around Macbeth were able to perceive his madness and corruption, the ignorance and savagery of the children in Lord of the Flies acted as a handicap to their apprehension of their surroundings. They were unable to acknowledge that their leader was corrupt. The children did not notice the fact that Jack was becoming corrupt because they were too preoccupied with his promise of hunting. Hunting was more fun and therefore more important to them. They followed Jack and soon lost sight of the goal, to get off the island. "Who's going to join my tribe?" (Golding 150). Jack asked the boys and made a new tribe out of many willing volunteers because his conscious, distorted by the corruption of power, told him that it was his responsibility to lead the children. The new tribe consisted of constantly hunting for pigs for use in large feasts, supplying endless excitement. The children being ignorant did not see through the haze of hunting, and forgot that their true goal was to be rescued. The act of abandoning reason for barbarism is an example of savagery. This displayed how a bunch of children could degenerate if given the right situation.

Both "Macbeth" and Lord of the Flies are used to represent the belief that power corrupts all those who seek it. In "Macbeth" the general population of the world comes to the realization that their leader is corrupt, while in Lord of the Flies the children are too shrouded by ignorance and savagery to realize that Jack is corrupt. Macbeth's flaw of ambition and selective perception led him to his predestined death. Jack is corrupted by the promise for power and he also felt betrayed because he felt like it was his god given duty to lead. Therefore, "Macbeth" and Lord of the Flies follow the narrow

guidelines that the individuals who decide to pursue power will become corrupt.