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Comparing Blindness and Sight in *Lord of the Flies* and *Macbeth*

Many individuals do not realize what perspective they perceive the world as. Blindness of the world can lead to personal harm, but by having sight of the world, such harm can be prevented from occurring. In William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the comparison of blindness and sight are shown. Golding's novel stars a group of boys stranded on an island with nothing but the company of fellow children, they must learn how to differentiate between responsibility and the urge to let adolescent actions take over. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the author takes his audience through a story which stands as an example of what can happen when the guard of an individual is let down, and actions are manipulated into evil events. Plenty of examples are provided to support the idea of blindness versus sight, but three of which are primarily seen through the use of power, the corruption of evil, and the act of leadership.

Using power to the best of one's abilities can be challenging due to the lack of control over it. Macbeth uses his power exceptionally well in the beginning of the play. When he was a general in the King's army, and numerous people spoke highly of him, praising his actions, "For brave Macbeth – well he deserves that name." (1.2.18). Macbeth was well-known for his bravery and power as a general in the army. Macbeth had sight of his ability of power and put it to use for the good of the kingdom. However, in Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph obtained great power, but was blind in a way that prevented him from using it to its full potential, "Again the pressure of the assembly took his voice away. He sought for help and sympathy and turned to Piggy." (Golding 141). Ralph was the chief and yet he still did not use

his power as a person in power normally would. Miss use of power can often lead to the corruption of evil over people, and they may not realize it until it is too late.

Evil corrupts individuals and it is their responsibility to see it happening and change that occurrence before the tragedy of their fate is determined. Piggy uses his aspect of sight in his character to see the evil in Jack that others might not have realized in *Lord of the Flies*, "If Jack was chief he'd have all hunting and no fire. We'd be here till we died." (Golding 100). Piggy said towards Ralph after he questions his own ability to be chief. Others around Ralph ensured him that Jack's evil ways were not ideal for leading the tribe, "Piggy's right, Ralph. There's you and Jack. Go on being chief." (Golding 101). As Simon mentioned, he also wanted Ralph to remain the chief even though Ralph had second thoughts. He saw Ralph was not drawn to evil actions, therefore Simon and Piggy decided to remain under the leadership of Ralph. In *Macbeth*, Macbeth is the opposite in this case, he was blind of the evil going through him by his wife, Lady Macbeth, "Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it." (1.5.72). Lady Macbeth convinced Macbeth to act unlike himself which led to many evil actions to follow. Another statement that supports the evil in Lady Macbeth that continues to manipulate Macbeth throughout the play, is found in an article that discusses the idea of evil in Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*, "It is Lady Macbeth who exerts the decisive influence on the action of the tragedy." (Muslin 358). Before the murder of King Duncan, Lady Macbeth had been the reason Macbeth went forward with murder and many of his violent actions. Although evil can be difficult to realize at times, the ability to be a leader and understand whether a person is worthy or not is just as big of a challenge.

Leadership only has two sides, there is either a good leader or a bad leader, and on many occasions an individual does not comprehend what type of leader they are. Jack's blindness to his leadership kept him from knowing the harsh reality of his ways, he asserted horrible punishments upon his followers for the sake of his own useless anger, such as holding a boy hostage and beating him (Golding 176). Being a leader does not imply that violence can be placed unnecessarily upon followers

out of anger. In Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*, Malcom had impeccable sight of his own leadership. He and numerous people associated with him knew he would be an acceptable king compared to Macbeth. Malcom was asked to come forth as a ruler instead of Macbeth, but he mentioned several abnormal qualities knowing that how he is as a person may not be the standard needs for a king (4.3.100-116). In doing so, he put people to a test, a test to determine that even with such qualities, he would still be fit to govern better than the current leader, and he was. In both texts it is shown that leadership can be interpreted in two diverse ways, but only one will end in success.

To conclude this topic, blindness and sight are seen in both *Lord of the Flies* and *Macbeth* in numerous ways like the use of power, the corruption of evil, and the act of leadership. *Macbeth's* cast was seen on both sides of this idea in good and bad ways, along with many other characters in Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. Blindness and sight of the things that go on in people's daily lives can be hard to detect, and it is a skill to inherit. If the characters in the texts were to use the skill of sight, the outcome they had could have varied. In society, the skill of sight can be useful to look at things from another perspective and give new or unique opinions on topics to assist in improving a situation, association or issue. Being blind, perspective wise, can lead to tragic scenarios due to the lack of control people can have over what is truly happening. By having sight, society can evolve and avoid upsetting events or situations from occurring. Harm to the community and individuals would become positively insufficient, creating a trustworthy and safe environment to live in.

Works Cited

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