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Ms. Smith

The Abuse of Power in *Macbeth* and *Lord of the Flies*

Each and every human has some form of evil on the inside of them and even if they do not choose to do anything with it, each one has it. The evil is there and it is up to that human to make the choice of whether or not they are going to make the right decision with it. In *Macbeth* and *Lord of the Flies*, Jack and Macbeth use the evil inside of them to a point where violence becomes the only option. They also both used the evil to fulfill the power they received. Hence, when an individual suddenly gains power, it can cause that evil inside them to be revealed through corruption, fear, and violence.

In *Macbeth* and *Lord of the Flies*, Macbeth and Jack show that as they receive power, corruption occurs on the inside and outside of them. Lord Acton writes, "Absolute power corrupts, and power corrupts absolutely." This power of Macbeth and Jack not only corrupts them from who they are, but also corrupts the people around them. As power increases, their morals of right and wrong decrease. In Macbeth's soliloquy in Act ¹One following the witches' prophecies, Macbeth's true thoughts are revealed as murderous and this shows how corrupt his mind has become. Lady Macbeth pushes him to commit these crimes at the beginning of the play, but as the play goes on, these crimes become his own. He now has to fight for his throne and himself. Throughout *Lord of the Flies*, this corruption of the beast takes over Jack entirely as a civilized person. Jack's priorities are mixed up, as he wants to hunt and have fun instead of make shelters and be rescued like Ralph. He wants to be the "better" leader, so he implies that on his side of the island, they will have fun and hunt all the time (140). The choir boys, who were once innocent, soon become savages as their morals of right and wrong take over to corrupt the island.

The want and need for power leads to corruption in both novels, but fear is what takes over both characters completely. ✓

Jack and Macbeth are extremely afraid of losing the power that they have, and this fear is what causes hallucinations, terror, and multiple acts of violence. ✓ Fear runs through Macbeth's mind throughout the whole play. The fear begins when Lady Macbeth tells him that he is too nice, and that if he wants to stay King, he is going to have to work for it. She tells him, "Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it." (1.5.72-73). ✓ → Be sure to explain quote However, after the killing of Duncan and sending murderers to kill Macduff's family, Macbeth can no longer feel pain. When the prophecies told to Macbeth do not to come true, he becomes terrified. ✓ Macbeth begins to be worried as the Great Birnam Wood moves up Dunsinane Hill and that Macduff has told him that he has not been born from a woman and will fight. ✓ In *Lord of the Flies*, Jack uses his fear to control the boys on the island. By terrorizing and scaring the boys, Jack feels as if he is in charge and that the boys should respect him. He uses this fear to scare the others simply because he is scared himself. When first coming in contact with the pig, Jack dreaded the thought of a knife going into another living creature's flesh. ✓ He hides this lack of fear behind the mask that he has put upon his face. Without this mask, Jack feels that he would not be able to kill another living creature, but with it on, he is able to do so (64-66). ✓ Jack eventually leads the other members of his group to smear the pig's blood on their faces to show that they are hunters that are not afraid of anything. This constant fear of losing what they have become, leads both Macbeth and Jack to take actions into their own hands in unimaginable ways. ✓

Acts of violence are used as a way to show that Macbeth and Jack are thought to be powerful, but this power has caused them to lose sight of being civilized. ✓ As *Lord of the Flies* continues, Jack becomes less and less civilized and is only killing to be satisfied. ✓ Jack gets his first taste of blood when

killing the pig. This accomplishment leads Jack to be satisfied with himself. For him, hunting became more than just a survival tactic; it became a passion to fulfill him. However, Jack's satisfaction soon deteriorates as now he wants to kill more. By the end of the novel, he is no longer satisfied with killing animals, so he turns to killing humans ("What is the Connection between Macbeth and Lord of the Flies?"). Jack is the one who starts the chant and circle of savages that kills Simon (169) and he is behind the boulder that kills Piggy (201). An author online writes, "It could possibly be seen that once an act of savagery is committed, it can unleash a drive to fulfill the dark side of human behavior," ("What is the Connection between Macbeth and Lord of the Flies?"). Once Jack received that first taste of the pig, a dark side of him was brought forward and he was no longer a human, but a savage. With Macbeth, his killing spree began with pressure from Lady Macbeth, but as he received more power, the acts of killing come from his own will. After killing King Duncan, Macbeth was willing to take down anything that stood in his way, no matter how insignificant. For example, Macduff's family ("What is the Connection between Macbeth and Lord of the Flies?"). He became a different person who was willing to kill to keep his position of power. It was fear that led Macbeth and Jack to act out in such violent ways. They were willing to kill and hunt to gain leadership.

In conclusion, the corruption of one's mind can lead to fear and acts of violence. Macbeth and Jack used their fear of losing power to kill anything that stood in their way. They both felt like they deserved respect and loyalty from their people. Jack felt the need to prove that he was just as powerful as Ralph, even though he was not chosen for chief and to Macbeth; he needed to prove that the prophecies were true. Both characters let the evil inside of them be revealed through corruption, fear, and violence. Their morals of right and wrong were destroyed as the need for power became more

prominent. In society, individuals that gain sudden power are dangerous because they can cause this vicious circle to occur and consequences to a rise.

Solid essay, Kate!
Ideas were well
developed and
explained!

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