

Since the beginning of time, people have pondered the existence of evil. What makes people laugh at other peoples' mistakes? What makes a little kid relentlessly pick on the outcast? What fuels the hate that people have for each other? Everyone has their individual views and answers to these questions, and their own definition of evil. Evil is an entity inside every living being in the world characterized by selfishness, torturing, and ultimately, the unjustifiable taking of others' lives.

For many, selfishness is the beginning of evil. Macbeth is the perfect example of this. Macbeth, one of king Duncan's most popular warriors, killed Duncan because the witches told him that he will be king, but they did not say how he will become king. For all he knew, Duncan would have choked on his breakfast and died, but he didn't take that chance. Macbeth's selfishness was optimized when he dealt with Banquo and his son, whom the witches said will be king after Macbeth. He had Banquo murdered, and his son's "absence is no less material" (Shakespeare III.1) to Macbeth. Of course Macbeth wasn't the only one who began his reign of evil with selfishness. Jack, in *Lord of the Flies* also begins tearing the island apart when he becomes extremely selfish. "I'm not going to play any longer...not with you" (Golding 127) is what he said to the group, right before he broke away and formed his own clan, where he was the unchecked ruler, and could perform any task he pleased. One of Jack's other intolerable acts was the tying up and torturing of Wilfred, another boy on the island.

Torturing others is the next step in the quest to become evil. "He didn't say what for" was the other boys' answers for why Jack tied up Wilfred. "He's going to beat Wilfred" was all they knew, next to the fact that "He's been tied for hours" (159). At the beginning, Jack couldn't bring himself to kill a pig, but as the story progressed, Jack became increasingly vicious, and seemed to have an obsession with torturing animals and people. Just as Macbeth wasn't the only selfish character, Jack wasn't the only one capable of torturing another person. The director on the boat in the book *Heart of Darkness* also tortures other people on the boat. He "didn't want to stop the steamer for some more or less recondite reason" (Conrad 37) of letting the slaves on the boat get food. Marlow couldn't fathom the suffering the slaves were going through, and thought that starvation would be a supreme form of punishment to any person. However, there is one form of torture that is the most absolute of any other form. Even in today's society, it is very hard to make even the hardest criminal pay the ultimate price for what he has done, even if he is deserving of it.

The unnecessary taking of others' lives is incomprehensible to most of humanity; Most people would have a very hard time killing another person under any circumstances, even if their life was at stake. To the most evil person, killing can become a ritual, a hobby, or even a pastime. Whether someone is under the influence of an intoxicating drink or not, there is no excuse for murdering another individual for fun. When Marlow finds "the body of a middle aged Negro, with a bullet hole in the forehead" (17) laying in his path, he is dumbfounded at how somebody can do that. Not only did Marlow deal with murder, but all the boys on the island had to deal with Jack's bloodthirsty new games and rules. His hunt for food turned into a ritual of dances and his chant of "Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood" (Golding 152). Next, he also turns killing a pig into a ritual. He "jammed the soft throat down on the pointed end of the stick" (136) and gave it as a sacrifice to the beast. Finally, his hate for Ralph, and his want for blood became so great, that he decided to have Ralph killed. Not only was Ralph to be killed, but, as the twins put it, "Roger sharpened a stick at both ends" (190) for Ralph, meaning that Jack planned to sacrifice Ralph's head on a stick after they were done slaying him. Clearly, Jack exemplifies evil, and all it can do to someone when they are within evil's grasp.

Evil is inside everybody, and everybody is capable of it. Evil is shown through selfishness, torturing of others, and unjustified murder. Everyone is capable of evil, yet few show even the slightest bit of what evil is capable of

accomplishing. Even if only a few people actually show their evil side, there is no doubt that evil exists. If there were no evil, the world would be a paradise, without war and hate, where everyone would be accepted for who they are, with no exceptions.