

Are some people inherently good and some born evil?

It is a commonly debated topic, whether people are inherently good or evil. There are arguments on both sides, and it is difficult to come to a definitive conclusion. This essay will explore good and evil through a study of the novel *Lord of The Flies*. This essay will argue that how a person ends up is a mix of their environment and experiences with how they were born. People can change due to their childhood and adulthood and will adapt depending on the circumstances. The experiences someone gains will amplify the inherent good or evil that they are born with.

One argument is that people are born with certain dispositions and personalities, and these dispositions can lead them towards being good or evil. This is based on the idea that genetics play a role in shaping who we are as individuals. There is plenty of evidence to support this argument, as studies have shown that certain genetic factors can be linked to traits such as aggression and empathy.¹ Many young kids, as young as 7 months, are able to differentiate good from evil and are able to pick friends that either show good or evil intentions. Within *Lord of the Flies*, we can see this represented through the differences between Jack and Ralph. Ralph represents order and civilization. He is rational and level-headed, and he tries to establish a system of rules and governance on the island in order to maintain order. On the other hand, Jack represents chaos and savagery. He is impulsive and aggressive, and he becomes increasingly obsessed with hunting and domination as the novel progresses. We can see the good in Ralph through his interactions with the other boys "There is no beast I tell you" (pg. 28) where we can see that he wants the other boys to feel safe by reassuring them that there isn't a beast that will hurt them. To contrast this, there is Jack who is controlling and arrogant. "I ought to be chief" (pg. 13) and "'And you shut up! Who are you, anyway?'" (pg. 70) shows that he is selfish and doesn't care for the other boys, only for himself. Through the differences between Jack and Ralph, we can see that different people are inherently different and have different desires. However even though the kids all start off believing in Ralph, they eventually all join Jack and fight against the social structure that Ralph wants.

There are also many environmental and societal factors that can influence a person's behavior. A person who is raised in a loving and supportive environment is more likely to develop a sense of compassion and empathy, while a person who is raised in a neglectful or abusive environment may struggle with feelings of anger and aggression. Additionally, social and cultural influences can shape our values and beliefs, and these values and beliefs can guide our actions toward being good or evil. From the book we see that the other boys, even though they start with Ralph, eventually all go join Jack as savages. Furthermore, during the killing of Simon, both Ralph and Piggy didn't do anything to help save him. This demonstrates the power of mob mentality and charismatic leadership. "I ought to be chief" (pg. 13) the bravery and authority that Jack shows makes the rest of the boys believe in him and join him as savages. There has been research² showing that humans have the inclination to be a part of a group, neglecting their own feelings and beliefs in the process. It also explains why the boys want to join Jack, they all do what everyone else is doing. The inclination to join Jack also comes from the want to not be part of "them" but rather part of the group. However, even though this applies to most of the

boys, Ralph and Piggy stay believing in civilization and social structure, and that savagery won't get them anywhere.

Throughout the book *Lord of The Flies*, Ralph and Piggy have always been focused on good and social structure even when the rest of the boys joined Jack as savages. This could indicate that Ralph and Piggy are both inherently good and are able to resist being swept by the mob mentality of the group. They both understand the importance of structure and civilization and how nothing can be done through savagery. Piggy knows that the other boys don't understand the importance of social structure and being civilized "They're acting like kids" (pg. 29). The book demonstrates that some are inherently good and some are inherently bad but most people are in the middle, having the ability to do both and that social structure is what stops those people in the middle from becoming evil. The book shows the need for proper social structure and without it, things will tend towards tyranny, chaos, and anarchy.

To conclude, I believe that how a person ends up is a mix of their environment and experiences with how they were born. People will adapt depending on the circumstances and the experiences someone gains will amplify the inherent good or evil traits. There is proof that people are born with inherent good or evil traits, but also that people are susceptible to their surroundings and will learn to adapt to them. In the future, we need to acknowledge these susceptibilities for our environment to affect how we act and also that everyone is capable of evil acts and it is our decisions that are ultimately stopping us from becoming evil.

References

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