

The lottery, marxist criticism

Business



“ I delight in what I fear” (Jackson).

The author Shirley Jackson was born on December 14, 1916 in San Francisco, California. Her family moved to Rochester, New York when she was in school but then attended Brighton High School. Jackson graduated from Syracuse University and wrote “ The Lottery” for the New York Times in 1948. She accomplished what she meant to do when writing it and that was to shock people. She said she was proud when the story was banned in the Union of South Africa because that means they understood what it meant.

In the short story The Lottery, Jackson shows how positions of power are important to the characters that possess them and have consequences for other characters. The first Marxist Criticism is the positions of power and what they mean to the people in them. Namely, that would be Mr. Summers position of power. “ Mr.

Summers, who had time and energy to devote to civic activities. He was a round-faced, jovial man and he ran the coal business,” (Jackson) This quick description of Mr. Summers shows that he is obviously enjoying himself. Mr. Summers is a big business owner which usually means he is rich and powerful.

It seems as though he thoroughly enjoys his position and is not riddled with stress or any other problems that are associated with an important position. Mr. Summers even does civic activities which usually means he is a social person and pleasant to be around. He also shows that he takes his position serious because during one of the gatherings “ Mr. Summers spoke

frequently to the villagers about making a new box, but no one liked to upset even as much tradition as was represented by the black box”(Jackson). Mr.

Summers considered his position rather important and felt that it was his responsibility to get things done. He tried to get people to agree with improving the box so the lottery could be done more smoothly. Second most, positions of power are not only important to the people in them; they affect everybody around them too. Even Mr. Summers position affects everyone else “ Mr. Summers said some of you fellows want to give me a hand? There was a hesitation” (Jackson).

Mr. Summer’s position seemed to scare the people and make them timid. They hesitated think of what could happen if they helped him and probably though what would happen if they didn’t. They weren’t sure if it was right or safe to approach him and thus hesitated. Mr. Summers being in a position of power also seemed to irritate the older members of the society.

“ There’s always been a lottery, he added petulantly. Bad enough to see young Joe Summers up there joking with everybody” (Jackson). Old Man Warner said this because he didn’t like the attitude Mr. Summers had while in the position of power. Even though Mr. Summers thought he was doing everything right, just his attitude caused an effect on the people in the crowd.

His position can have consequences on people without Mr. Summers even directly doing anything. Old Man Warner is a serious old style guy and he though Mr. Summers wasn’t being serious enough. In the short story The Lottery, Jackson shows how positions of power are important to the

characters that possess them and have consequences for other characters. Through this story the reader can learn that things aren't always what they seem.

From reading the first half of the story it leaves the impression that the lottery is a happy thing everyone participates in. However, it is only near the end do you realize what it is when Mrs. Hutchinson didn't want to be picked. The reader realizes the truth and remembers hidden meanings thought the story. The reader can also see the weirdness of Mr. Summers how he was in charge of the whole thing and was happy the entire time.