

Good example of dominance in the lottery by shirley jackson research paper

[Family](#), [Children](#)



The old wooden black box not only represents the lottery traditions of the people in the small town, it also represents the longstanding dominance of men over women in the society. Changing the customs and traditions surrounding the lottery is deemed unacceptable by the residents as these traditions are deeply rooted with the history of the town. The Lottery serves as a satirical representation of conformity to traditions and customs that are both inhumane and excessive.

The lottery, which may have served as a kind of ritual for an abundance of harvest for the village before, has dwindled to a tradition that has lost parts of the relevance and meaning of its execution. The black box, which serves as the very symbol for the tradition, remains unchanged despite its deteriorating condition. Mr. Summers, who is at the top of the social ladder, has called for the making of a new box, which was always ignored by the resident. He has however, succeeded in changing the contents of the black box into slips of paper, with the reasoning that it is easier to fit into the black box. Mr. Summers, being the wealthiest and most powerful in the town, is the only one that has accomplished the changing of one part of the tradition.

One of the reasons as to why the residents do not question the tradition is that it has been ingrained into them by their environment since childhood. In the story, we see children who prepare for the lottery by gathering pebbles and guarding it from the other boys. It is important to note that at an early age, children imitate what the people around them do without questioning the meaning behind it. The young boys play and 'work' while the young girls stand around the corner. These children grow up to become adults that are

habituated into blindly following what they have come to learn since their childhood. “ Therefore, these kinds of prejudices are progressed even through the lower age and in childhood and it will be continued” (Hosseini-Maasoum, Davtalab, and Vahdati 349).

The attitudes of the residents regarding the lottery show something casual in that they want the activity to hurry up so that they can make it in time to eat their lunch. “ In today’s society, we often have an all-too casual attitude toward misfortune”. This attitude suggests the inhumanity that they are aware of their situation of killing someone or be killed themselves. The Adams, who hinted to Old Man Warner that they want to stop the lottery, is ridiculed and reprimanded. Old Man Warner’s comments suggest that changing the tradition, which has been going on for a long time before he was even born, will cause social disorder within the community. His proud statement of having participated in the lottery for the seventy-seventh time is hinting to a superstitious notion regarding who gets picked. “ But Warner does not explain how the lottery functions to motivate work. In order to do so, it would have to inspire the villagers with a magical fear that their lack of productivity would make them vulnerable to selection in the next lottery” (Kosenko 30).

Although there is no definite proof that productivity is related to the lottery, the residents are lulled into a belief that the harder they work, the higher their chance for survival. The people who question the relevance of the tradition, is supposedly punished and sanctioned. Jackson shows this in Tessie Hutchinson. Her unconscious acts of rebelling against the dominance of the tradition and of men in the community, leads to her demise despite

the equal chances that any one of them can be picked. Tessie came late to the lottery, forgetting that it is being held during that day; she ordered her husband to “ get up there” to draw for their family; she questions the outcome and shouts at Mr. Summers, the very symbol of power in the town. Jackson shows the readers that people who rebel against the dominance of the tradition become victims. The story is “ symbolic of any number of social ills that mankind blindly perpetrates” (Friedman 108).

The tolerance of the people regarding the activity shows that the residents fear the lottery while at the same time, enjoy the act of violence surrounding the tradition. Tessie Hutchinson, who cries out the unfairness of the activity, only does so because she was picked. She tries to increase her chances of survival by saying that their daughters should also take their chances into the lottery. Tessie’s desperate acts for survival display hypocrisy and human weakness in that the residents tolerate the activity unless they get picked. There is a sigh of relief when the residents are shown that the children are not picked to be the “ winner” of the lottery. It is questionable and puzzling as to why the residents are able to kill someone who they were conversing and laughing with a few minutes ago. The children and the head of the Hutchinson family, Bill do not show remorse but rather relief that it is not them who is going to be killed. Tessie has been accepted as a victim by the residents, due to her being a woman. Women are subordinated to doing household work while belonging to their husbands.

The lottery functions as a way to quell the resident’s desire to rebel and question the tradition. During the stoning, the inherent evil nature of the residents can be seen. The Adams, who hinted at their desire to stop the

lottery, have nonetheless participated and seemed to lead the rest of the residents. Mrs. Delacroix, who Tessie Hutchinson has conversed with, picked a stone that can only be lifted with both hands. Even Clyde Dunbar, who had a broken leg, disregarded his injury to join with the ' festivity'. The changes in the attitudes of the residents from fear, to relief, and then pleasure in stoning the " winner" shows the reader the inherent evil that is present in human beings.

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