

English research paper social change

Society



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The idea of social change is something that I would say, deep down, scares us all. When looking at two stories in particular you can see an evolution over the years. Saying this I wonder when you do look very closely at “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson and “ Shooting an Elephant” by George Orwell how much you will find alike, but also how much you will find different based on the time period in which they were written. Social Change is not something that’s easy for some people.

However, it normally takes place over a time frame of years, therefore making it harder to notice when it is actually taking place. In today’s world, researchers and scientist have even been able to come up with ways in which they believe social change is taking place and can be predicted to an extent. “ The Lottery” took place back in 1948, which is when it was written. Needless to say a lot of the social trends and social norms they had back then are not easily compared with the values of today’s society.

What we call socially acceptable today is vastly different than what was acceptable in the 40’s. The values of society then were much more conservative. Today if I were to walk in on a social event like the lottery, wearing shorts and a t-shirt, I bet I would be the one selected to get stoned on the spot. Those days’s it was only acceptable for men to wear long pants and maybe a t-shirt. As the back ground of “ The Lottery” is reveled, you are given more information on the social traditions of their fictional society.

It makes you wonder if this is actually something that ever took place in history, or if it was something inspired by the culture of the 1940’s. Today we think of a lottery as being something were you have the chance to win money, but this story shows how different lotteries were then. In this

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story the author portrays "The Lottery" as an event where the entire village is gathered in the courtyard to draw a piece of paper out of a hat. If you were lucky enough to choose the piece of paper out of the hat with a large black dot on it, then you were not the winning a prize.

The person who draws the black dot gets stoned to death. During the 1940's World War Two was taking place. It makes me wonder why the author, Shirley Jackson, wrote a story about people coming together to decide who gets stoned to death ("America's"). The activities of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi's in Germany and the persecution of the Jewish community could have influenced the story line. Considering the story is about a community assembling and deciding at random who gets to die, World War II would be a fitting influence for the author. "Shooting an Elephant" has a lot of similar social problems that "The Lottery" had, but in a very different context. The elements of peer pressure and social acceptance come out in the story. Both issues are still important in today's society.

This is based on my interpretation of the story, realizing how social change is an important part of evolution. The end of the story speaks volumes about why the young man shoots the elephant. The animal was no longer being destructive or harmful. He shot the elephant because people wanted him to. I often wonder whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool" is the last line from the story "Shooting an Elephant". This is further evidence that the elephant's death was a result of social pressures. Since there were two thousand people standing behind him, waiting on him to make a move, he thought he would look like a coward if he didn't shoot it. The villagers wanted the elephant shot for its meat, not just

because it was running through their village. It is safe to say that social pressures were major in this time period.

The story actually takes place in 1936, when it was published. You can see that “ the Lottery” and “ Shooting an Elephant” take place around the same time period. The setting of the story is different, however, because it takes place in Europe, just outside of a small town called Burma. The social values are similar in each story, despite them taking place so far apart. In “ Shooting an Elephant”, the elephant actually gets lose from its owner and goes on what is called a “ must” (also known as a rampage).

It is my understandings from the story that after elephants have been confined or locked up, they have built up energy that they must get rid of. This is why when the elephant gets lose, or brakes free from its chain, it goes through the village stomping people and tearing through the huts, knocking them down. However, the villagers never give a clear answer as to where the animal was eventually tracked down. Once the man asks for a rifle to kill the elephant, the people are following him to see what happens. They do this out of greed, more than curiosity. They each want dibs on the best parts of elephant meat.

This is an example of one form of social change, because in today’s world we can go to the market and get whatever it may be that we need. During the twenty first century, I cannot think of a time that humans in the developed world had to fight other humans in order for survival. Due to the fact, that back in the 1940’s you had to find your ownfoodas it became available. Social change is something that is required for us to evolve as a human race.

I believe that point is made clear based on the examples given in these two stories that took place back in the 1940's.

A great way to describe social change is by its definition: " structural transformation of political, social and economic systems and institutions to create a more equitable and just society (" What"). " If you pay attention to the part of this definition that says " equitable and just society" then you have more insight to " The Lottery" (" What"). All of the towns people may have believed that their form of " equal and just society", of drawing from a hat to decide as to whom gets to die, is only way to make it fair. By doing this there could potentially be less acts of random violence.

Social control can go hand in hand with social change. Various countries and religions have their own forms of social control. For instance, all Muslim women have to keep their faces covered when in public, and most European countries require you to have your government issued identification cards on you at all times. " Shooting an Elephant" provides some opposite examples to the definition given above. The village where the elephant was running rampant has political implications behind it. In social change you have the " transformation of politics" (" What").

This is the number one force behind social change a lot of time. To be an elephant owner back in that time period you had to be some form of higher social class. The man working for him is the one that tracks down and ends up killing the animal. He states in the story how he does not want to kill the animal, but felt as if he had to in order to survive himself from the pressure of the villagers. With two thousand people behind you, with their knives

ready to start prying the meat from the carcass of the elephant, you are more likely to choose what will pay off for you in the long run.

Instead of waiting on the owner of the elephant to decide what to do when he was confined in the field, he decides to shoot him. Coming down to the fact of did he do what was best for the people? Or did he do it to raise his own political standing with them? Leadership is the number one role when it comes to the social model. Looking at the story "Shooting an Elephant", and comparing it to the social change model, you can see the motive behind the man's role as he takes a leadership position ("What"). Leadership is socially responsible, it impacts change on behalf of others" almost describes the actions taken during the time when the villagers are seeking the animal ("What"). The main epicenter of social change is just that, change. Directly in the center of the social change model you will see the word change with different leadership roles surrounding it. Secondly, you can see the same similar behavior from the mayor of the town where "The Lottery" took place. Enforcing the rules of such an event that takes place once a year, but is sought after to be an endless tradition, is not an easy task.

Being the official, the mayor takes on the leadership role, also, not to mention the leadership role he is already in by the position he holds as mayor of the town. To keep the integrity of the lottery there are multiple rules in place to insure that it is fair for everyone involved. However, the major part of the social change model that does not fit is the change (Ryder). Any time in the story a villager brought up the fact that they thought the lottery should not continue, the mayor was outraged and spoke up to inform them that it must continue because it was a tradition.

Social trends take place as a natural evolution over time, but it requires change in order for it to happen. Without the prospect of change nothing will ever evolve, leaving the villagers to repeat the same destiny year after year. Both Stories have their pros and cons, but there are two different form of social change taking place. The first story “ The Lottery” is dealing with the aspect of leadership and how that leadership affects people of that community.

Second, “ Shooting an Elephant” deals more with the issue of pressure and influences from your surroundings. Both however come down to one main topic, and that is change. In Conclusion, social change and evolution is not something that is easy to process sometimes. You can clearly see by these two stories that evolution is self evident during the time of the 1940’s, by comparing the said evolution to recent items such as the social change model you can relate to the methods behind actions that were taken by characters in the stories.

Social trend are not something that is easy to break away from. However, you can tell during “ The Lottery” that there are people who are will to accept change and speak out for it! Without change we, as a society, do not have an option of social evolution for the better. With the understanding that change is not always for the better, bad change is what also helps us develop and learn from what we may call bad change at the time.