

Marxist criticism narrative essay

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“ Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original box, they still remembered to use stones” (Jackson). Shirley Jackson wrote these words in one of her well known short stories, “ The Lottery.” Shirley grew up in California and attended Syracuse University where she studied to become a literary critic (biographybase. com). After her education, she began writing novels and short stories, “ The Lottery” being one of her most famous pieces.

This well-known literature is about a population controlled society with the idea of the negative effects of Marxism. In the short story The Lottery, Jackson shows how the positions of power are important to the characters that possess them and have consequences for other characters. First, the positions of power are important to the characters by keeping tradition. There are only two male individuals in power of this society; Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves.

Since there can't be a democracy in this society with only one primary ruler, Mr. Summers, tradition remains the same throughout the years. Not only does the number of rulers keep tradition, but also through the way the ruler keeps the tradition. In Mr. Summers' case, it is through intimidation. It is obvious that the characters are intimidated by the rulers through this quote, “ The villagers kept their distance, leaving a space between themselves and the stool, and when Mr.

Summer said, ‘ Some of you fellows want to give me a hand?’ There was hesitation before two men” (Jackson). This shows that the members of this society do not feel that their leader is approachable because they hesitated

when Mr. Summers asked for a simple favor. By not having a democracy as their overall political power, the society is forced to keep traditions; the rituals and activities presented now is all that the society knows because they only have one person's opinion and that person is Mr. Summers.

A quote illustrates that the society is ignorant to other opinions, “ Listening to the young folks, nothing's good enough for them. Next thing you know, they'll be wanting to go back to living in caves, nobody work any more, live that way for a while. Used to be a saying about ' Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon'” (Jackson). This character in the short story turns down the idea of not having the Lottery because this is the only way of living that these people know of. Ignorance is contagious under Mr. Summers' rule because the society does not hear or get to critique any other opinions but Mr.

Summers'. As one can now see, the positions of power influence the character's lives through tyranny and tradition. The political power of the society in “ The Lottery” has many consequences to the characters. One of the consequences is harsh punishments. Mr.

Summers uses population control by stoning a person to death every time the lottery comes around. Instead of using humane ways of population control, Mr. Summers uses cruel and unusual ways by putting the characters through pain. This quote demonstrates how significant the stones are to the characters, “ They stood together, away from the pile of stones in the corner, and their jokes were quiet and they smiled rather than laughed” (Jackson). This reflects the feelings the characters have about the population control through the political power.

Jackson says, “ smiled rather than laughed” which shows the reader that the society is not happy with the stoning and they do not fully agree with it, but they have no say since the political power is held in the hands of one man. The political power also has negative consequences for the characters because they have virtually no say in anything that operates in the town. We see this in this quote, “ The lottery was conducted—as were the square dances, the teen club, the Halloween program—by Mr. Summers, who had time and energy to devote to civic activities” (Jackson). This shows the reader that Mr. Summers controls everything in the society because civic activities can be an umbrella topic because a myriad of activities can fall under it.

The political power in “ The Lottery” has many consequences for the characters because they have unusual punishments for population control and they have no say in the activities or what goes on in the neighborhood. In the short story The Lottery, Jackson shows how positions of power are layered in the society and how the characters face consequences from these powers. This short story is significant because it shows the consequences of having one or few people in political rule and it opens the eyes of the readers to the way of living for other societies who do use population control. Works Cited Jackson, Shirley. The Lottery.

Print. “ Shirley Jackson Biography.” Biographybase. com. Web.

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