

"the lottery" by shirley jackson reviewed as a feminist critic

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“ All history has been a history of class struggles between dominated classes at various stages of social development.” Friedrich Engles says it best when he says this because at some point one social class is always at the top or the bottom of the hierarchy. However each groups fights, either to hold their place or move up. In the short story “ The Lottery,” Jackson shows how the events can be connected to socialism because the characters are supposed to sacrifice themselves for the greater good of the community. Politics and economics are contributing factors to the sacrificing for the community because powerful positions and social classes feed from the towns’ peoples’ feelings and emotions. Firstly, the amount of politics involved with the story leads a Marxist critic to conclude that tradition and formality are very important to this society.

Tradition is a priority to this town. The black box represents this tradition. “ Mr. Summers spoke frequently to the villagers about making a new black box but no one like to upset even as much tradition as was represented by the black box” (Jackson2). This quote represents the significance of tradition, which is what the box represents. Mr.

Summers was in charge of the lottery, he held the power in town for as long as he holds the black box. People in the story feared the box which means they feared him and the consequences within the box. “ Bill Hutchinson went over to his wife and forced the slip of paper out of her hand. It had a black spot on it, the black spot Mr. Summers had made the night before with the heavy pencil in the coal company office...” (7).

This quote shows the amount of authority that Mr. Summers shows because people fear the black dot, which he creates. Second, the social classes of this society help display the Marxism with in the short story, " The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson. Jackson sets up a series of social classes. There is the town elder that holds the highest respect and seniority.

Then there is Mr. Summers, the man in charge of the lottery. Then there is everyone else; the possible victims of the lottery. The lottery system is somewhat rigged. Those who rebel, pay for it later; whether it is a coincidence, or not. " Old man Warner snorted, ' Pack of crazy fools,' he said, ' listening to the young folks, nothings good enough for them'" (4).

This quote shows exactly how the town elder feels. He feels that the younger people of the town are trying to get rid of and go against the tradition of the town that has been in place for some many years. Another example of social class in this story is, "' some places have already quit lotteries,' Mrs. Adams said" (5). Other towns in the area are abolishing the tradition of the lottery.

People in town are beginning to talk about do the same. Lastly, Shirley Jackson's story " The Lottery" is very similar to when Hitler took over Germany and sent thousands and thousands of Jewish people to concentration camps based on religion and social status. When Hitler took over Germany, he saw the Jewish people as a nuisance and he did not like their practiced religion. He labeled them as the lowest social class. In Jackson's story, the young people are the lowest social class because they want to uproot the tradition of the lottery.

Also, Hundreds of Jewish people were killed by the hands of Hitler; just as hundreds of people were killed under the carrier of the black box. Hitler was taken out of power and soon Mr. Summers and his black box will too. Therefore, when reading " The Lottery," by Shirley Jackson as a Marxist critic the events can be connected to socialism because the characters are supposed to sacrifice themselves for the greater good of the community. Along with the political and economic factors, the story " The Lottery" develops social classes and power holding positions within the community.