

Scapegoats essay

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Scapegoats Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," Ursula Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" and John Biguenet's "I Am Not a Jew" are three different stories which have a common theme. All the stories convey an indirect representation of social injustices brought about by stereotypical beliefs.

In "The Lottery," Tessie Hutchinson was stoned to death by her own family and neighbors who were convinced that she was the one chosen to be sacrificed in return for good harvest. She has fallen victim to a process which was utterly illogical and selfish. Even her own family accepted this fact and contributed to her death without a trace of remorse. Her final lines in the story show how she thought of the process as unfair: "It isn't fair, it isn't right" (Jackson 15). Similarly, in "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," the locked up child served as the scapegoat for the seemingly happy town of Omelas. His sole suffering paid for the luxuries and pleasures that the townsfolk of Omelas enjoyed. Like the neighbors in "The Lottery," most of those who have been exposed to the secret of the flourishing town disregarded their morality in return for happiness. However, those who cannot bear the fact that someone was suffering for the whole town walked away from it.

The third story, "I Am Not a Jew," emphasizes the injustice towards Jews rather than the offense done to Anderson, the protagonist. He was an American who was bullied by Neo-Nazi youths when he was found in a Jewish cemetery. He repeated the statement "I am not a Jew" several times in fear of being murdered by the group of boys (Biguenet). However, this story implicitly indicates how the Jews were once treated as scapegoats by Hitler

who believed that, by banishing their bloodline, the world would be a better place to live in. The portrayals of the characters in these three short stories somewhat represent what is happening in our society today.

Probably, it does not symbolize the world as a whole but rather, the people occupying it. Nowadays, many people believe in the efficiency of utilitarianism and consequentialism as bases for one's happiness. If one will thoroughly analyze the stories, their environment and society's concern is all about the benefits for the greater good. By means of sacrificing one, more people can get to attain more good things in life. They believe that no matter how evil the initial act is, the consequence is what's important. In our world today, the case of abortion portrays a clear image of the message conveyed by the stories. A teenage girl is impregnated by her boyfriend. They cannot afford to raise a family yet, so they decide to terminate the pregnancy.

If they keep the baby, it would ruin her reputation and her future. The couples' parents would also suffer because they would also support them. However, if they stop the baby from being born, they could go on with their lives without worrying about responsibilities.

The unborn child now becomes the scapegoat to spare the finances and reputation of the irresponsible parents. The way the stories of Jackson, Le Guin, and Biguenet are written largely influences my views concerning justice and morality. Initially, it seems that Jackson was writing a story of celebration until it reaches the last few paragraphs. It was quite disturbing to feel the naturalness of the event to her neighbors and worse, her family. On the other hand, Le Guin presented her story like a long description of a

repulsive town disguised with an evil mask. Biguenet showed the power of discrimination to remind the readers of a story too heartbreaking to remember.

Their writing styles reminded me of people who had closed their eyes to the horrible truth that to be human, each one of us must share others' sufferings too. Works Cited Biguenet, John. "I Am Not a Jew." *The Daily Short Story* RainTiger. com: A Commune for Creative Spirits. October 2008.

22 October 2008. <http://www.raintiger.com/storyhall/dailys/shortstory/?ID=231> Jackson, Shirley. "The Lottery."

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