

A whole is greater than the sum of it's parts

[Experience](#), [Meaning of Life](#)



A Whole Is Greater Than The Sum Of It's Parts The opinions and expressions within society are quick to change when given specific circumstances. Often, individuals are likely to go with social trends and ideas to fit in, rather than standing out on their own. Even if that trend forgoes their personal values and beliefs, most would rather follow through than risk becoming an outcast. The following pieces of work: " The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson, " The Metamorphosis" by Franz Kafka and " The Rise and Fall of Sharpie Cakes" by Haruki Murakami demonstrate abstract themes such as society's influence on the individual, enabling concrete images and sensory details via irony, symbolism and tone to enhance the reading experience. These stories heavily utilize sensory details and irony, creating an underlying tension, which further develops the reading experience by playing on emotions and providing a sense of anxiety. " The Lottery" by Jackson illustrates a world where a close-knit village of townspeople is gathered to participate in a lottery. Where one would believe the winner receives a treasured commodity, the reward is in fact, death. The town is described as " clear and sunny, with the fresh warmth of a full summer-day" (Jackson 1). By setting the story in pleasant conditions, one would infer that some good would come from the day's event. However, a sense of uneasiness lingers in the " friendly" dialogue between the villagers, nullifying the optimism of the weather. " The children assembled first...and the feeling of liberty sat uneasily...the men began to gather... and their jokes were quiet and they smiled rather than laughed" (Jackson 1). By describing the bright atmosphere presented by the weather and the townspeople, Jackson deepens the meaning of the gathering by giving the false impression of hope

and euphoria. Although, by displaying the subtlety in the peoples' actions, Jackson also implements tension within the crowd of villagers heightening the experience of the story. In it's final moments "The Lottery" delivers it's ending blow subjecting the reader to the stoning an individual. This event strengthens the experience, arousing anger watching family and friends maintain a tradition at the expense of a life. Symbolism is another technique that is used to build upon the sensory details creating more of connection between the reader and story via strong imagery. "The Metamorphosis" by Franz Kafka is no exception, where the strength of the bond between Gregor and his family post-metamorphosis is rigorously tested. Kafka begins by illustrating Gregor's disdain for his everyday life. By putting the reader in his shoes pre-metamorphosis, there is reason to believe that this new change in lifestyle may come as a relief at first. This idea however, is short lived, as his family scoffs at the very idea of hosting a bug in their home. Their hostility symbolizes the fear and ignorance of society towards the unknown, as they no longer look upon him as a brother or son but more as a grotesque being. "...the apple remained imbedded in his flesh as a visible souvenir since no one dared to remove it. " (Kafka 29). Over time the apple had come to symbolize the bond between father and son, rotting away as the relationship between Gregor and his father deteriorated. As the apple becomes part of the flesh, it no longer stands out, reflecting the lifestyle of the Samsa family once Gregor dies, their memory of him merely fades into the background and they are quick to move on. One could say the family is also representative of society, once a fad quickly becomes insignificant; everyone is quick to turn the other way. Kafka introducing Gregor post-metamorphosis

is symbolic in an ironic fashion; typically, insects are hard workers within their colonies. However, as an insect Gregor's position and role in the family as the sole worker, diminish. What once was a man who worked to support his family without question now becomes utterly useless in his current condition. By utilizing a shift in tone the reading experience is heightened by increasing the overall effect of the story. Both "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson and "The Rise and Fall of Sharpie Cakes" by Haruki Murakami use a shift in tone to deepen the meaning of each story. In "The Lottery" there is a significant shift from the bright and cheery opening to a bitter, distressful ending. "The lottery was conducted—as were the square dances, the teen club, the Halloween program" (Jackson 1). One would imagine the possibility that the lottery is in fact a positive event since it is held with regards such events as the teen club and square dances. However, the end undermines this as the stoning of Mrs. Hutchinson occurs. Mrs. Hutchinson herself could also be viewed as a character that switches tone over time. In the beginning she converses in a friendly manner, going along with the lottery while fully knowing its true meaning. When she realizes she is to be stoned she screams in defiance opening herself up to show a more selfish, deviant side. This coincides with the idea that as a society we would gladly forgo personal morals and values at the cost of others, until we ourselves are targeted. In "The Rise and Fall of Sharpie Cakes" this very same pattern of shift from one tone to another occurs.