

# Conformity to the french class system assignment

Psychology



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Consciousness of social hierarchy makes the life of poor concierge Renee Michel detached as possible from the residence of 7, Rue De Greenville, while also being disgusted by the ones who don't live up to their raised social status. Renee appears to be nothing but a concierge to the residents of the hotel, yet they are unaware of her well hidden intelligence. In the beginning of the novel, she expresses the absurdity in a young bourgeoisie's ability while contrasting it to hers, all while being mindful of the difference in class.

She gives reason to her lack of comment, "A concierge who reads Marx must be contemplating subversion That she might be reading Marx to elevate her mind is so incongruous a conceit that no member of the bourgeoisie could ever entertain it" (Barberry 18). Her lack of expressed opinion when the young resident expresses his change in worldview due to reading Marx proves that though her knowledge exceeds his, it is not her place to provide opinion, only agreement. Next, Renee deceives her simple-minded concierge appearance when a new resident, Mr. Oz, understands the brief Tolstoy reference she makes, this event panics her.

She reflects post conversation, "All happy barnacles are alike, all unhappy families are unhappy In its own way Is the iris line of Anna Karen and, like any self respecting concierge, I am not supposed to have read it for although common people may be sensitive to great works though they do not read them, literature, in the presence, cannot aspire to the lofty peaks where the educated elite place it" (136). Essentially she considers great works of literature to be reserved for the rich and elite, otherwise they will lose their importance if simply any working class individual can understand them. She is afraid of Mr. Oz.

Oz being disgusted by her attempt at fine literature, or worse, him dismissing Tolstoy as a fine writer. Lastly, when invited to Mr. Ouzo's flat for dinner, she is determined to make herself look as stupid as possible, allowing her to fit back into the mold she feels comfortable pretending to be in. Her knowledge is shown to exceed what she lets on, "And this picture, without a moment's hesitation either, is unquestionably a Pitter caretaker by uttering something like I also very nearly delivered the fatal blow, from which Messier Ouzo's suspicions would never recover and which would establish the proof of my unworthiness forever" (199).

Renee is so uncomfortable at the thought of Monsieur Oz thinking highly of her, she plans multiple lines to say as to dumb herself down to what she considers to be her role in society, an uncultured concierge. Renee is comfortable and accustomed to the expectations of intelligence that comes with her employment in French society, so much so, that the idea of being found out is terrifying, for she considers her state of intelligence unnatural. Renee not only accepts the French class system, but is disgusted when the rich do not conform.

Language is sacred in Renee's eyes, and there is "no excuse" (110) for an aristocrat's lack of respect for it, even in casual notes. Renee claims, "Society's elect, those whom fate has spared from the servitude that is the lot of the poor, must, consequently, shoulder the double burden of worshipping and respecting the splendor of language" (110). She does not consider the privileged who do not live up to society's expectation of them worthy of living, "if they cannot assume it [the burden of Beauty] then they deserve to die" (110).

Renee considers it the courtesy of everyone to stay within their class, for otherwise society would collapse. When having dinner with Monsieur Oz, Renee's French upbringing contrasts with his modern Japanese view of class intermingling. Monsieur Oz recognizes that Renee has good taste, despite her efforts in concealing it, " You are not the only one who goes against the social norm. What's the harm in that? This is the twenty-first century for goodness sake! ' What did your parents do? I ask, somewhat ruffled by his lack of discernment" (227).

Renee is old fashioned; Monsieur Oz is progressive, Renee hoses to politely disagree, though hiding her true self from everyone else in the building is still a priority, she believes " no one wants a concierge who gives herself airs" (226). Last, Renee thinks not only intellect but also aesthetics should be reflective of a person's stance in society. She condemns the appearance of the co- protagonist's sister, Colombo, " a sort of tall blonde leek who dresses like a penniless bohemian Not only is it ugly, it is also insulting: nothing is more despicable than a rich man's scorn for a poor man's longing" (242).

Renee does not understand why money would purposefully bring themselves down the hierarchy in anyway; she accepts that every human wishes to climb the social ladder, and condemns actions otherwise. Renee is very comfortable with the idea of everyone belonging to a class, and does not respect opinions that say otherwise. Belonging to a social class plays an important role in the life of Renee, as it explains the purposeful lack of substance she brings to conversation with the residence of 7, Rue De Greenville, as well as lack of respect for aristocrats who do not live up to the expectations that are expected of them.

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Renee was limiting her social interactions by only associating with people she felt were in the same class, which is essentially self- oppression. Humans fall into labels they make of themselves, and like Renee, and humiliation and worse yet, out of respect for social dictums. To find enlightenment from within, what is chosen to be learned must lead to life like the hedgehog, in the Archangel way, where math fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing"". Along the way, eclecticism is inevitable and the absurdity of self oppression will be evident.