

RESEARCH ARTICLE



## TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN SHIRLEY JACKSON'S LOTTERY

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### ABSTRACT

Objection to insist on blind tradition in Lottery by Shirley Jackson with an emphasis on the author's style is the most significant concern in this paper.

Prior to going on the deep of the subject to clarify its essence, it is crucial to mention that Shirley Jackson uses various styles in her works due to her unique point of view upon the world. In general, it is potentially conveyed that her style in lottery reveals the alienation of individuals, even within the family members of the modern society.

Along this paper the authors will focus on the fact that sticking blindly to the is unacceptable.

**Key words:** Lottery, Modernity, Shirley Jackson, Style, tradition

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**"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn" (Alvin Toffler)**

### INTRODUCTION

It appears that Shirley Jackson attempts to allow the reader to conceive of the precisely visualized atmosphere of the village, which can be taken as a model of modern society, through choosing a plain narration in the story. Jackson does not let the reader connect with any of the characters. Giving great detail to the black box, Jackson makes it a non-human character. This unusual character may symbolically represent the one-track frame of a modern man's mind who has been brainwashed to obey the tradition.

Vividly inhabitants of the village are afraid to challenge the traditions of the past. This indistinguishably resembles what is seen in the - modern world about how people feel castrated by society, because of not obeying its laws. Shirley Jackson complaints about the controlling ways of modern time and decides to show her opposition through writing. "The Lottery" reveals sharp and bitter truths about society and the ridiculousness of the blind traditions that must be obeyed. Throughout the story, Jackson needs the modern man to revolt; to change the blind tradition, to make himself free from the bounds of past.

**DISCUSSION**

Obviously Shirley Jackson was ahead of her time. In modern time, the frustration of treating the modern man with such disregard for life can be easily traced in the story. In a modern society, an intellectual may never be stoned to death, literally, but he is metaphorically singled out by society when his name is drawn out of a black box of ignorance. The Lottery reminds the reader the harshness of those who follow whatever said.

The behavior of the male villagers is nervous and they use meaningless chatter to forget what is going to happen. Exactly like the modern man who tries to distract himself from the reality of life.

Soon the men began to gather, surveying their own children, speaking of planting and rain, tractors and taxes. They stood together, away from the pile of stones in the corner, and their jokes were quiet and they smiled rather than laughed. (1).

The stoning is considered as a part of the town's culture. The townspeople knew and were expecting it to happen. No reason is mentioned for it to happen. Coming back to modern society, people's minds are obsessed with stuff with no logic behind. It is up to the modern reader to figure out the connections. The story makes people rather question everything around them than accept and obey whatever they cannot understand. Facts are changing.

Another impressive fact about the style of Shirley Jackson is that the narrative voice does not change when the story shifts from calm situations to the shocking stoning; a sudden change from a small village on a sunny summer day to stoning of a villager, without any change in a tone of the author. The first sentence of the text shows this:

The morning of June 27th was clear and sunny, with the fresh warmth of a full-summer day; the flowers were blossoming profusely and the grass was richly green.(1)

This can be shown that nothing in the modern world should make you surprise even killing of people.

Another characteristic of the modern man is his indifference to his surroundings. Here again the author sharply shows this by not giving any details about the death of Tess Hutchinson, but it is clear that Tess will be stoned to death. One can clearly imagine other families picking up stones and heaving them at her body, then going home to be ready for lunch.

"All right, folks." Mr. Summers said. "Let's finish quickly." (7)

Modern man protest only when he feels things are going against his wishes. In the story, no one complains about the foolish traditions, but Tess Hutchinson who is the victim. Modern man considers himself superior to all, even his family, like Tess's child.

"The children had stones already. And someone gave little Davy Hutchinson few pebbles...." "It isn't fair, it isn't right," Mrs. Hutchinson screamed, and then they were upon her."(7)

Traces of hope can be seen through the story. The author shows that she is hopeful of changing the baseless superstitions by the new generation.

"The crowd was quiet. A girl whispered, "I hope it's not Nancy," and the sound of the whisper reached the edges of the crowd. " "It's not the way it used to be." Old Man Warner said clearly. "People ain't the way they used to be." (6)

Shirley Jackson ends the story in a shocking way instead of the typical happy ending. The writer tries to discover the existence of ignorance in the modern world rather than create a world of fantasy.

**CONCLUSION**

Traditions cannot be changed unless someone tries to protest against what is being done. Sticking to the old traditions shows the craziness of modern man and his inability in changing a single thing. People who obey the unfamiliar things will always be stuck in the past. The author eagerly wants to show the widespread violence among the people of the society who follow baseless tradition. The lottery symbolizes an idea that is followed by

the new generations unquestioningly. The people are so loyal to the system that it makes them unable to see how hysterical and absurd their belief is, stopping them even from trying to change it.

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