Benjamin Ha

Ms. Giraudo

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A Deadly Tradition

In Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery,” traditions lead to the destruction of a society by desensitizing people so that they develop apathy towards one another. For instance, while preparing for the lottery the townspeople behave like any other day, “Soon the men began to gather, surveying their own children, speaking of planting and rain, tractors and taxes.” (1 Jackson). Even though the men demonstrate care towards their children, they converse about mundane topics in order to shield themselves from the consequences of the lottery. This defense mechanism blocks out the horrors that would otherwise cause great emotional harm and potentially break up peace within the community. Moreover, when Bill Hutchinson draws the marked piece of paper condemning a member of his family, Mrs. Hutchinson points a finger at her daughter, shouting "There's Don and Eva. .. Make them take their chance!"(5). Mrs. Hutchinson fights for her life, no longer as a member of her family, but as an outcast. The lottery forces people, like Mrs. Hutchinson, to abandon family values in order to appease their conscious. Additionally, when the townspeople begin to attack Tess, she yells, “It isn’t fair, it isn’t right.”(7). Tess no longer values the tradition of the lottery; she rejects the tradition because now it impacts her directly. She sees the lottery from a new perspective because she is now an outcast of her own society by her own traditions that she used to value and consequently questions the morality of this tradition. Traditions enable people to turn a blind eye to the injustices and ultimate destruction of society.

In this second attempt of the same essay, I felt that I did much better on my commentary in so many ways. Instead of looking at the evidence so hard, I took a step back and I would just let thoughts flow in my head and then I would write them down. I was trying too hard. I was overlooking the simplicity of the subject. After I did this, I felt my commentary possessed more insight and was much more meaningful which it should have been the first time. Even though I have been working on my commentary for quite a while now, I still need to continue this. Commentary can never be perfect, but it is a continuous work in progress. What I found interesting in my newly corrected essay was before I was too scared to add to many details in my commentary. That made my commentary to vague which is now corrected. Over all, I am quite pleased of my work as a whole but I still have a lot more work to do ahead,