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Mistreatment of the Blackwoods: Why the Blackwood Girls Are Happiest Alone

Carpenter, Lynette. "The Establishment and Preservation of Female Power in Shirley Jackson's

'We Have Always Lived in the Castle.'" *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1984, pp. 32–38. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3346088.

This essay was written by Lynette Carpenter in 1984. In this essay, Carpenter argues that "female self-sufficiency ... specifically women's forceful establishment of power over their own lives, threatens a society in which men hold primary power and leads inevitably to confrontation" (32). She uses *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* to defend her argument by discussing how the town treats Merricat and Constance badly just because of their family name. Carpenter explains how the town is run by the men and they feel threatened by the Blackwoods because they are too independent. This helps to defend the feministic side of the novel and how the girls are basically bullied by men. She also discusses the expectations held for Constance and Merricat and she also goes into detail about the witch-like behavior of the girls and how that also affects them. I am going to use this in my essay to help defend my argument that the girls are treated as victims and no one believes that they can take care of themselves even though they are incredibly self-sufficient.

Silver, Marisa. "Is It Real?: On Shirley Jackson's *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*."

Southern Review, vol. 49 no. 4, 2013, p. 665-667. *Project MUSE*.

This source was written by Marisa Silver and published in 2013. In this article, Silver discusses the odd behavior of the Blackwood family, specifically Merricat and Constance. Silver details the gothic elements to the book and the witch-like behavior of the Blackwood sisters. She discusses how the town dislikes them and explains their behavior by saying, “the Blackwoods’ response to societal rejection is to become agoraphobic, to live in a world that is limited by boundaries both physical and behavioral” (Silver 667). I plan to use this statement in my paper because it helps explain that the Blackwoods seclude themselves from the town because of the backlash they face from them. They feel most comfortable when they are only around each other and the “magic” that Merricat uses to protect them is what allows them to remain secluded.

Wallace, Honor McKittrick. “‘The Hero Is Married and Ascends the Throne’: The Economics of Narrative End in Shirley Jackson's ‘We Have Always Lived in the Castle.’” *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2003, pp. 173–191. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20059137.

This article was written by Honor Wallace in 2003. In the article, Wallace uses *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* to discuss how “female protagonists claim economic desire for their own” (173). Constance is the heir to the Blackwood fortune which is why Charles tried to work his way into the family. I plan to use this article because it helps explain how the Blackwood money affected the girls. In the article, Wallace mentions that even though it’s nice to have money, it actually does a good amount of harm. This helps lead into an explanation of how their family’s money is at the root of the problem for why the town hates their family. Wallace explains this by saying, “while wealth ensures the regular companionship of other well-off members of the community, it

separates the girls from the largely poor village and creates hostility towards them among the villagers. Moreover, money's mere presence threatens to reinstitute the marriage plot, insofar as Constance is sought, not merely for her beauty, but for her possessions. Such a plot resolution would reduce Constance to a mere stand-in for her dead father" (179). Their family's money is the reason why the town hates them and it reduces Constance down to someone who just carries on her father's name.