
A Jury of Her Peers: Short Answer Reader's Response

Select one of the short stories and discuss how a particular social group is constructed eg race, gender, socio-economic status.

Particular social groups are often constructed in a negative light. In the short story "A Jury of Her Peers", the author, Susan Glaspell constructs a patriarchal society in which females are tremendously disregarded. The author uses various narrative conventions to convey this theme. The story features two males trying to solve the murder of a husband, while their wives are collecting the dead husbands, wife's belongings. The writer creates a dichotomy and tension between the men and the women in the story; the men are logical and deductive whereas, the women are emotional and intuitive. The men are investigating the physical evidence of the crime, and trying to find a motive. On the contrary the women are investigating the mental deterioration of the wife, and can empathise with her, because they can relate to her experiences. Furthermore, the author uses symbolism to display the harsh treatment towards the women in this story. The wives in the story find a quilt which was knitted by the suspect. This quilt represents the horrific life that the suspect suffered. It starts of nice and neat, but as it continues, it starts to become careless and sloppy, even unravelled much like her life.

Women are traditionally the victim in genre narrative. Discuss this with reference to one or more.

Women are often victimised in today's society. The short story, "A Jury of Her Peers" represents this social atrocity successfully. The story, written by Susan Glaspell, features a common but disappointing aspect, a patriarchal society in which women are constantly bullied by their male counterparts. This is conveyed to the audience by the use of an array of narrative conventions. The story features two lawmen investigating a murder, their two wives have come along to the crime scene to gather belongings for the suspected murderer. The two wives start to piece together their own versions of the crime scene, but their husbands almost instantly discredit them and dismiss her efforts as a "trifle" because women are not capable of understanding the elements of a crime scene. The male lawmen use gender to deny the women their opinion and this happens frequently throughout the story. Another instance of women being victimised is during a short story, "The Whole Town Sleeping". This story written by Ray Bradbury, features a group of women making their way to the cinemas to watch a movie, during a mysterious murderer is terrorising a small town. The women are seen as weak and defenceless by the males in this society, and are often told to go home and hide because of how weak and futile they appear to be. The women are the victims of violence inflicted by men, and constantly have to be alert and cautious. A dichotomy is created between the two genders of this town, the men are free to go out alone in the darkness because they can protect themselves and this is normal for men, while the women belong in their houses, locked away from any danger. These two stories represent the harsh reality majority of women face daily.