

In Lois Tyson's "Critical Theory Today" Tyson discusses Karl Marx's theory of Marxism and the principles by which the theory is structured. Tyson states that Marxism is the "...Getting and keeping [of] economic power [which] is the motive behind all social and political activities, including education, philosophy, religion, government, the arts, science, technology, the media, and so on. Thus, economics is the base on which the superstructure of social/political/ideologies realities is built. (53)" Marxism itself can only be used to judge concrete ideologies that one sees through the everyday lives of individuals in our society. Here, Tyson focuses on the fact that the social structure/system in which we live is based on made up ideologies that we as humans have made a reality for ourselves. Tyson goes on to further argue that "Marxism works to make us constantly aware of all the ways in which we are products of material/historical circumstances and of the repressive ideologies that serve to blind us to this fact in order to keep us subservient to the ruling power system. (54) Essentially, those who are in a position of power do whatever they can to keep themselves at the top (Rich white old men) regardless of their platform, leaving no regard for those beneath. Thus, the overall power structure is set up so those who fall within the poor-middle class never move beyond their social class, meaning the wealthy get wealthier and the poorer get poorer. Viewing Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" from a Marxist perspective one can see that the structure of the poem sheds light on the class conflict between the rich and the poor. The poem itself shows how one's overall comfortability is a commodity in which one must pay for in an unfair exchange for a true sense of security.

In Rossetti's poem the "rich" are portrayed as the Goblins who hold all of the luxurious fruit. The text presents this fruit as special and a "must have" commodity. For those who do not take part in the enjoyment of this fruit the goblin men present it as fruit sold "not such in any town." On the other side of the spectrum the "poor" is presented from the perspective of the two main characters, Lizzie and Laura. From the perspective of a middle-poor class individual walking passed, this opportunity to buy and taste the fruit can be seen as a one in a lifetime opportunity that they can not pass up. Viewing this part of the text from a Marxist perspective, one can compare the structure of this situation as the rich trying to sell their goods to the poor who in turn receive nothing outside of the temporary satisfaction from the "fruit". The happiness is built in the ideology that in order to obtain true happiness one must indulge in the luxurious fruit and it could "upgrade" their overall well being. In the end the ones who are truly profiting are the rich (the Goblins) at the top, making money off the backs of the poor (Lizzie and Laura).

Rossetti portrays Lizzie and her sister as two lower class citizens living humbly in hopes of a better life. The day they go past the Goblin market Laura becomes immediately intrigued by the unusually beautiful strange fruit. When they first encounter the Goblin men Lizzie, Laura's older sister states "You should not peep at goblin men." Lizzie cover'd up her eyes, Cover'd close lest they should look;" (Rossetti) Lizzie is aware of the propaganda behind the market itself. As Laura continues to gaze at the miraculous fruit Lizzie states "No, ... No, no, no; Their offers should not charm us, Their evil gifts would harm us." (Rossetti) Lizzie can see through the crooked system in which her and her sister are stuck in. Lizzie knows not to feed into the Goblin's schemes of feeding on lower class citizens such as herself. She knows that her purchase

of the fruit is truly beneficial to one side and does nothing for the other. Unfortunately, instead of Laura taking heed to Lizzie's advice she buys into the schemes of the Goblin men. Laura states

“Good folk, I have no coin;
To take were to purloin:
I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze...”

Seeing that she had no real money to purchase the fruit she is offered an alternative. The Goblin men state

“You have much gold upon your head,”
They answer'd all together: “Buy from us with a golden curl.” (Rossetti)

The text states how Laura clipped a piece of her hair for a taste of the “forbidden” fruit. What she thinks is beneficial turns into fight for her life and overall well being. Lizzie gets sick and Laura must make the ultimate decision on what she should do to save her sister. Laura comes to the conclusion that in order for her sister to to become saved she must return to the Goblin Market.

The irony in the overall solution is the decision in which Laura found to be the only way out. Due to the ideological structure programmed into Laura's mentality she unconsciously became independent on the power structure of the Goblin market. Instead of using her own independent will or sources outside of the Goblin Market to help her sister she immediately thought to return to the “forbidden” market because she truly believed that it was the only cure to the problem. In this poem it technically was the only cure seeing that they ended up getting married and having children. The poem does not discuss whether or not they got sick again but the overall/final solution was the Goblin Market. When one views this poem from the Marxist perspective there is essentially no way out. Just like our political and social structure, the structure itself becomes a revolving system that sucks each individual in unconsciously. This is to ensure that individuals have no other choice but to depend on those at the top. Each individual must essentially find their place in society below the bourgeoisie in order to survive just as Laura did for Lizzie, she went to the Goblins for Lizzie's survival. In addition to, she fell into the The poem itself shows how one's overall comfortability is a commodity (Lizzie) in which one must pay for in an unfair exchange (Laura & Lizzie) for a “true” (unreal) sense of security.