

Rationale:

The written task is on part 4 of the course which is the critical study of my primary text 'The Bloody Chamber'. The learning outcome is to 'Analyse elements such as theme and the ethical stance or moral values of literary texts', where I will be analysing themes.

I will be mimicking the style of 'Reddit' under the 'r/books' subreddit, which is made for book enthusiasts. It is an online forum and I will specifically discuss the way Angela Carter expresses her ideologies, using themes and language, and the effects of them. I am writing from the perspective of someone who has loved fairy tales all her life and wants to explore newer versions.

The target audience is anyone who has read or wants to read 'The Bloody Chamber'. Therefore, some understanding of the book is assumed. The goal is to inform the reader of the techniques Angela Carter uses as well as their effects. The language I will be using is relatively informal and friendly, yet the use of some elevated diction is used to convey the high level of education the people that read these forums possess. I will imitate some features, like the use of contractions, bullet points, first-person perspectives and hyperlinks.

The text type gives me the chance to explore Angela Carter's philosophies as well as use the question and answer format of a forum to answer questions on the underlying effect specific scenes or quotes in the collection have. I take the opportunity by starting the thread off with talking about general themes running through the collection and then let the comment section explore more specific examples they are confused about or are interested in. My text is open-ended like my style model.

Word count: 290

Written task: Word count:996

↑ Posted by u/jfreez 1 year ago 🇺🇸

6.7k

↓

Just finished “The Bloody Chamber” collection by Angela Carter... wow

spoiler

So I decided to read this collection as I just recently had finished re-reading some of my childhood favourite fairy tales (e.g. Cinderella and Snow White). From a young age, I have been in love with fairy tales and was eager to experience something new, so I thought to myself “Well this is in short segments and is like a rewriting of many fairy tales. I think it’ll fit the bill”.

Boy was I wrong. Not only was it not a rewriting of fairy tales, but it was also a diatribe to fairy tales. It was both grotesque and vivid, yet enlightening. Its twisted plots and detailed symbolism really shocked me. It was like a hypercritical view on gender roles in society and really focused on both genders embracing their natural needs. As well as the problematic consequences of not doing so.

What I found most profound was its ability to take us on a journey, where characters slowly break away from their suppressed forms. Initially, I was shocked by the graphic and evocative descriptions, yet as the collection went on, I realised the vitalness of it. It gives the opportunity for Carter to vividly describe the natural needs humans have. Maybe this quote could sum it up:

“TBC is like a multifaceted glittering diamond reflecting and refracting a variety of portraits of desire and sexuality”– Helen Simpson

Below are a few **spoilers** which I found specifically profound.

- That in the collection, when men express their desires and no longer must suppress their ‘animalistic’ tendencies, they transform state from their unstable human self to their animal alter ego. When they cannot express such animalistic behaviours, they become distressed and depressed. [Carter is showing that being violent and being beastly is distinctly different](#), maybe to convey that society forces men to be violent and when society accepts them for their true selves, men can finally be at peace. This is evident in ‘The Company of Wolves’ (CoW), where the wolf wants to eat Red Riding Hood. However, as the girl shows no fear, he realises he doesn’t need to continue his violent persona, and can finally be his true beastly self.
- That in the collection, there is a significant theme regarding the blurred distinction between sexuality and violence. We see, in TBC, that the Marquis lures women into his large castle to both have sex with them and inevitably kill them for his pleasure. In this collection, we are being exposed to both the darker sides of human desires and the trade-off between sex and death. From the TBC, as shown before, to the CoW, where the wolf and the girl have sex on top of her grandmother’s dead body, the trade-off is apparent. As the collection continues, there is a shift regarding which gender is in the dominating position, maybe as a message to show us how the evolution of gender roles would play out if both genders could freely express their natural desires.
- Women are constantly competing with their younger counterparts. The theme of female rivalry could be an allusion to the societal stereotype that the only thing women had to offer was their beauty. As women got older their beauty diminished and so did their confidence. Due to the prevalent patriarchal pressure (in the 1970s), older women had deep envy against their younger counterparts.

There are several other things I enjoyed in this collection. I’d love to hear your thoughts on the collection as well.

Edit: I wanted to add that by reading the collection, as well as speaking with my friends, I realised the negative impact fairy tales have on young children and its ability to imprint skewed expectations for both genders.

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SORT BY **BEST** ▾elphie93  10 1.3k points · 1 year ago

It's such a great collection; it's incredible how a collection written in the 1970s can be so relevant to the current gender power imbalance. This really shows how much work is still needed to be done to reach equality.

I do find it interesting that many feminists believed Carter wasn't a 'real' feminist. [She was a feminist](#), as she was pro-prostitution and made it clear that women are *also* imperfect.

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**jfreez**  34 points · 1 year ago

100% agree. I also see many parallels with Atwood/The Handmaids Tale.

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[deleted] 18 points · 1 year ago



If anyone has any time, can someone explain to me the significance of this quote "pale, pliant as a plant" in TBC.

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Frillic 15 points · 1 year ago



Yes of course. The alliteration may be pleasing to the ears, yet is juxtaposed by the unpleasant scenario the heroine is in. She feels "pliant" and that her life is being controlled by the Marquis. Both "pale" and "pliant" convey weakness, in addition to being like a "plant", which is delicate and needs careful attention, for it to thrive. Many plants, like flowers, have short life spans, where their beauty is only temporary. This is as the heroine, at this point in the story, knows what the Marquis does to women, and that she will be replaced and killed. Therefore, she is starting to lose hope, and it's reflected in the language she uses.

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**jfreez**  7 points · 1 year ago

That was a very interesting point. My teacher told us that the symbolism of stripping is very important. But I don't understand why. Can someone help?

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TeflonWizard 3 points · 1 year ago



The removal of clothes generally symbolises the exposure of a person's true self. Stripping away clothes shows the stripping away of society's pressures and is an expression of the want for equality. If we look at the "Tigers Bride", the tiger strips his purple dressing gown and mask. Carter not only commented on gender but also on class. The stripping of the colour purple suggests the removal of any royal connotations (as purple was the colour used for royal clothing). Removing his mask revealed to everyone the true animal he is. Maybe Carter was trying to tell us that beneath everything, specifically money and gender, our desires are the same. Carter wanted to show that wealth corrupts beauty, so the stripping of wealth exposes real beauty.

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hpq575

Style model:

↑
6.7k
↓

Posted by u/jfreez 1 year ago

Just finished "Fahrenheit 451" by Ray Bradbury... wow

spoiler

So I decided to read this book because I had just read a few very deep, heavy books (Ta-Nehisi Coates) and was going through lots of work and life stress in general. I was looking for a little escapism to be honest and thought, "Well this is pretty short and it's a sci-fi classic I've been meaning to read. I think it'll fit the bill."

Boy was I wrong. Not only was it not escapism, it was a diatribe against escapism. It was an indictment of distracted living and its questioning of societal norms rendered the book anything but relaxed escapism. It was more like a hypercritical view that led to lots of introspection.

What I found most profound was how a book written in 1953 is so completely prophetic and probably even more relevant to our own age than the age in which it was written. It basically paints the picture of how hollow a society without books, learning, culture, human interactions, etc. would be. Maybe my favorite quote sums it up:

"the people who ate shadows for breakfast and steam for lunch and vapors for dinner"

Below are a few minor **spoilers** which I found particularly profound.

- That, in the book, the universities dropped all the liberal arts and just became technical training schools at a certain point. [This is literally happening today to some extent](#) and I see a prolonged, unnecessary, and dangerous assault on liberal arts and humanities majors from all sides. I actually see an even greater need for the liberal arts.
- That in the book, people are constantly distracted and seek out distraction to prevent themselves from seeing the pain and disappointment of real life. They always have earbuds in (or the Bradbury equivalent) or are watching TV and have a constant stream of information, entertainment, and advertising. People don't have conversations, they watch TV together. People don't sit and think, they distract themselves with TV or earbuds. And people regularly overdose on sleeping pills. It's not explicitly stated, but ostensibly because they cannot sleep and do not want to face uncomfortable thoughts. This is super relevant to 2018 America. I've known so many people like Montag's wife Millie. They're "eating vapors" and wondering why they can't seem to find contentment or even sleep!
- People who do not adhere to the norm, and who actually live like normal humans like the family of Clarisse McClellan (i.e. have conversations with each other, sit and think, observe nature, etc.) are viewed as outcasts, freaks and lunatics.

There are several other parts I enjoyed as well. I'd love to hear your thoughts on the book. It seems to be one commonly commented on here are recommended across reddit. This book is not only a classic sci-fi novel, it's a classic of American Literature

Edit: I wanted to add that while I sought out distraction at first, this book actually proved to be a far better and more necessary salve. My work had been swallowing me whole lately and I felt overwhelmed. This book was a reminder not to simply seek out distraction, but to continually seek out wisdom and beauty as a means to soothe your soul. It was a necessary reminder

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↑ elphie93 7 1.3k points · 1 year ago

↓ It's such a great book, it's incredible how such a short novel can pack such a punch.

I do find it interesting that so many people claim the book is about censorship, but [Bradbury has refuted that](#) and says it's about how people *choose* not engage with things that challenge them or make them uncomfortable, and instead pick the easy option (in this case, TV).

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↑ [jfreez](#) 33 points · 1 year ago

↓ 100% agree here. I also saw lots of parallels with Huxley/Brave New World

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↑ [deleted] 19 points · 1 year ago

↓ If you haven't already, I highly recommend 1984. I picked it up the other day, wanting to do some light reading, but man. I guess I can't say that it's not light reading because it is pretty easy to read and follow through, but one can draw a lot of similarities between that book and 2018 culture.

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↑ Frillic 15 points · 1 year ago

↓ That was actually my second. I finished Fahrenheit a few days ago and immediately picked up 1984.

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↑ [jfreez](#) 6 points · 1 year ago

↓ I read 1984 years ago. I think it's a little different because the prose isn't so heavy and it's easier to interpret and understand. But it's still a good book and I love George Orwell

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↑ TeflonWizard 3 points · 1 year ago

↓ I read F451 a few months back, and I'm halfway through 1984 now. It is very interesting to see the different avenues authors took to get to the same conclusion. 1984 very much so reminds me of what people in N. Korea deal with, they can't trust anyone, even (especially) their own children to not rat them out. Riveting read.

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