Natalie DiFrank

**Question One**:

*What are the overarching themes or messages of the text?*

* Anyone can be loved even if you aren’t deemed “superior”

 i.e. comparison to the mechanical toys

* Love overcomes insecurities
* one can not live a fulfilling life without the help of others
* innocence of childhood
* Love/heartbreak and vulnerability is inevitable and a chance for change

 In order to be real you must be loved

 When he is thrown out by the boy is when he is turned into a real rabbit

* Loss of past bodies

 Coming of age

* Trust in larger plan?

 i.e. fairy saving him when he is about to be burned

***Sabrina Smalls***

 ***Question 4: How is this message related to the tasks or expectations that surround the transition from childhood to adulthood?***

Standards and Expectations

* The Journey
* Time
* Achievements/ Authenticity

*“The Rabbit sighed. He thought it would be a long time before this magic called Real happened to him. He longed to become Real, to know what it felt like; and yet the idea of growing shabby and losing his eyes and whiskers was rather sad. He wished that he could become it without these”*

Comparison

* Ability/Perception
* Social Acceptability
* Rejection

*"He doesn't smell right!" he exclaimed. "He isn't a rabbit at all! He isn't real!" "I am Real!" said the little Rabbit. ""He hasn't got any hind legs!" he called out. "Fancy a rabbit without any hind legs!" And he began to laugh.*

Experiences

Participation

Confirmation

*“When they are old and worn out and the children don't need them any more, then I come and take them away with me and turn them into Real."*

*Margie Strosser*

*Question 2: How are the overarching themes conveyed by the author? (form vs. content)*

*The fairy tale is therapeutic because the patient finds his own solutions, through contemplating what the story seems to imply about him and his inner conflicts at this moment in his life. (Bettleheim, page 25)*

*Story Structure: THE COMING OF AGE JOURNEY*

1. *The Ordinary World - the beginning of the story, the world as one encounters it*

*Christmas morning the Rabbit arrives, then “for a long time lived in the toy cupboard or on the nursery floor”*

1. *The Call to Adventure - the awareness that there is something special beckoning beyond the present world of your life*

*The Skin Horse : “Real isn’t how you are made, said the Skin Horse. It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for along, long time, just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.”*

1. *The Wise Mentor - the Skin Horse*

*“Does it hurt? Asked the Rabbit. “sometimes”, said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful.*

*4. Crossing the Threshold - leaving the old life and beginning the journey of the new*

*“One evening… Nana was in a hurry, and it was too much trouble to hunt for china dogs at bedtime, so she simply looked about her, an seeing that the toy cupboard door stood open, she made a swoop. “Here ,” she said, “take your old Bunny!” … That night and for many nights after, the Velveteen Rabbit slept in the Boy’s bed.*

*“Time went on, and the little Rabbit was very happy…*

*The Boy says “He isn’t a toy, He’s REAL.”*

*5. The Second Gate – the old world assumptions are challenged and new desires are awakened*

*The Rabbit meets real rabbits - “two strange beings”*

*The Rabbit “felt he would give anything in the world to be able to jump about like these rabbits did.”*

*“For a long time he lay very still, watching the braken, and hoping that they would come back. But they never returned…”*

*6. The Journey continues - more things change (continue)*

*“Weeks passed, and the little Rabbit grew very old and shabby, but the boy loved him just as much.”*

*7. The crisis - a difficult or dangerous situation that needs serious attention*

*“And then, one day, the Boy was ill.” And doesn’t play with him anymore*

*8. The Shipwreck – all appears lost, the abandonment (almost) of hope*

*“How about his old Bunny? (Nana) asked.*

*“That” said the doctor “Why, it’s a mass of scarlet fever germs! Burn it at once. What? Nonsense! Get him a new one. He mustn’t have that any more!”*

*And so the little Rabbit was put into a sack with the old picture books and a lot of rubbish, and carried out to the end of the garden…*

*9. The Magic Helper arrives/ The Transformation – what is most valuable is saved through the intervention of Magic (the spirit world, the non-understandable)*

*He thought of the Skin Horse, so wise and gentle, and all that he had told him. Of what use was it to be loved and lose one’s beauty and become Real if it all ended like this? And a tear, a real tear, trickled down his little shabby velvet nose and fell to the ground.*

*Then a strange thing happened. For where the tear had fallen a flower grew out of the ground…And presently the blossom opened and out of it there stepped a fairy… “Little Rabbit don’t you know who I am?... I am the nursery magic Fairy”.*

*“You were Real to the Boy”, the Fairy said, “because he loved you. Now you shall be Real to everyone.”*

*He was a real Rabbit at last, at home with the other Rabbits.*

1. *A new order (a new ordinary world) is restored - bitter/sweet acceptance that you can never return to the old and are now part of the new*

*Autumn passed and Winter, and in the Spring, when the days grew warm and sunny, the Boy went out to play in the wood behind the house. And while he was playing, two rabbits crept out from the bracken and peeped at him…*

*And around his little soft nose and his round black eyes there was something familiar, so that the Boy thought to himself: “Why, he looks just like my old Bunny that was lost when I had scarlet fever!” But he never knew that it really was his own Bunny, come back to look at the child who had first helped him to be Real” (continue)*

*THE POWER OF NARRATIVE RESOLUTION:*

 *hope and courage*

*the message to accept the problematic nature of life and not be defeated by it (maturity)*

*(end Q 2)*

*Rebecca on Question 5:*

 How is text mirroring or shaping of the discourse around gender, race, socioeconomic status, sexuality, or disability?

The story can easily be interpreted as demonstrating the nature of being marginalized because of one’s socioeconomic status (velveteen being outshone by the more expensive materials) or appearance, which could relate to gender, race, or disability.

Disability/ableist judgment

* "The mechanical toys were very superior, and looked down upon every one else; they were full of modern ideas, and pretended they were real. The model boat, who had lived through two seasons and lost most of his paint, caught the tone from them and never missed an opportunity of referring to his rigging in technical terms." (comments on both ability and socioeconomic status, because other toys don’t understand the fancy words he flaunts).
* "Even Timothy, the jointed wooden lion, who was made by the disabled soldiers, and should have had broader views, put on airs and pretended he was connected with Government." (though Timothy is disabled, he does seem to have a higher socioeconomic status that he tends to flaunt).
* Rabbit assumes that what you’re made of makes you real (mechanical, which could have to do with ability and/or access).
* “But all the while he was longing to dance, for a funny new tickly feeling ran through him, and he felt he would give anything in the world to be able to jump about like these rabbits did.” (Real rabbits judge him on his smell and ability, flaunting their own, but he understands that his identity is more important than those things, while still feeling self-conscious and inferior.)

Inferiority based on materials he’s made of/how he appears (socioeconomic & potentially race/gender)

* "The Rabbit could not claim to be a model of anything, for he didn't know that real rabbits existed; he thought they were all stuffed with sawdust like himself, and he understood that sawdust was quite out-of-date and should never be mentioned in modern circles." (born into the world conceiving of his inferiority).
* “once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand." (you do have one kind of superiority when you are loved, despite that some may not understand).

Finally, being loved by someone helps you deal with difficult situations and marginalization based on arbitrary means, like the contents of your insides as a toy, or your physical ability.

In order to be loved, you must have a different kind of strength that has nothing to do with your physical ability, but rather, your ability to love and be loved in return, which is a difficult task, and may wear on you.

Through love, you develop a new kind of identity that will fulfill you.

\*\*\*\*\*\*Polly has added questions 2 and 4 to the powerpoint. Just waiting on 1, 3, and 5. As soon as I have it all together, I’ll email it to everyone and feel FREE to email with any corrections or anything at all with formatting, etc. :)

Hi Group, I am one sick puppy, don’t know if this is a stomach flu or food poisoning- but I’ve been down for a solid two days. You might want to give some thought to who might read my things if I’m still unable to make it to Tuesday’s class- (just in case). I will be letting Sara know by Monday- perhaps she might read my answers if you are not able to. Will keep you all in the loop as things progress.

P.S. I’ve really enjoyed reading your answers- it has added greatly to my thinking about this exercise and hope I can join you

on Tuesday.

Polly, realizing I’m the last one I tried to organize these into their own frames in the hopes it might make it easier for you given the time crunch. But by all means please feel free to format it as you see fit. The 1st frame etc, was just to indicate the frames, so please don’t include that, also if stating the question also seems redundant or anything seems too clunky, do what you deem is appropriate. Thank you for undertaking this tremendous task for us!

1st frame:

How is author communicating the overarching themes in words, images and symbols?

With mass media so prevalent we forget that all written words were once only spoken and flowed out of the deep wellspring of oral traditions as a means for the desire to express and communicate and for passing on vital information.

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2nd frame:

***Words:***

***“There was once”*** a velveteen rabbit, and ***“in the beginning”*** is indicative of many fairy tales which start with a poetic phrase like ***“once upon a time”*** to:

· ***prime the listeners*** attention

· ***develop patterns*** to remember structure of consequential movement (i.e. because this, then that)

· ***stimulate the imagination*** (Plato’s cave) projections which explore self and other

· ***entertain*** while passing on knowledge and ways of discovering the world

· ***provide*** ***sophisticated messages*** about human nature which is absorbable at the child’s developmental level

· ***building language skills***, vocabulary, and abstract concepts of morals, culture and values.

· ***Words contain*** the etymological ancestors of meaning and life experiences as well as the historical changes embedded in their meaning over the course of time and are living vehicles which embody ideas/perceptions.

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3rd frame:

The illustrations give us ***visual cues*** to a place in time long ago, to the passage of time, as in the seasons, to give a ***sense of place***, and a means to underscore ***macro themes*** of ***values*** and ***lessons*** of the story.

Much detail and information is conveyed through images. While ***sight*** is assumed to be an outer stimuli, it is a much more ***complex inner activity*** which involves large areas and interconnecting functions of the brain and not simply the stimulating of the optic nerve.

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4th frame:

***Images:***

· ***“Christmas Morning”*** depicts winter, a quiet inner time, waning light as is depicted by the shadows on the wall either by the weak winter sunlight or a fire in the hearth.

· ***“The Skin Horse Tells His Story”*** depicts those to whom we aspire to become because of the insights and kindness they imparted which in turn, illuminated us on a journey, (the Fairy Flower later represents this archetypal character as well.)

· ***“Spring Time”*** time of renewal and rebirth, metamorphosis.

· ***“Summer Days”*** time of growth, exploration, ability to ponder and make meaning, “being on top of it all”, a time to play, practice, prepare.

· ***“Anxious Times”*** depicts transitions, what is tentative, unknown, illness and loss.

· ***“The Fairy Flower”*** depicts the potential gains which rise up out of despair, growing out of old ideations, being challenged to reach for new meanings, learning new skills and acquiring confidence to weather difficulties.

· ***“At Last! At Last!”*** Attainment, triumph, adjustments necessary for the new circumstances, attaining confidence and discernment.

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5th frame:

How do we really learn something and internalize it so that it becomes uniquely who we are?

The archetypal symbols inherent in this fairy tale draw from larger spheres of human perception transcending cultural, religious, historical and social contexts.

The symbols synthesize how we experience these universal themes about what it is to be human.

Symbols serve as codes on how to give and receive love and manage all the challenges encountered along the way.

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6th frame:

***Symbols:***

· ***Christmas:*** Birth of the Innocent (Christian) Horus’s same birthday symbolizing cycles of life and rebirth for time immemorial (Pagan)

· ***Rabbit:*** symbol of fertility and believed by many in the ancient world to be a hermaphrodite who reproduced without the loss of virginity. (concepts of virgin birth adopted in Christian beliefs. (who are our mothers?) early infancy/early childhood.

· Interestingly, the main character is a rabbit. Subsequent Christian rites and holidays subsumed these symbols not only the rabbits attributes of producing plentifully,(abundance, being provided for, trusting) but as in the story; attaining a “life ever after.” In the Velveteen Rabbit the rabbit’s earlier existence on earth as a stuffed toy (one dimensional)is switched with being the symbolic life ….and the rabbit’s real existence (as we would imagine realness) actually occurred in the other realm where he was taken to, by the spirit fairy. (Rebirth, reincarnation, the notion of continuation.)

· Symbol of ***“waiting”*** Like the Waiting Room in the Magus, symbols of going out into the wilderness, and many other stories which depict the theme of isolation, separation from others proceed renewal (Spring, Easter) in order to prompt continued development and growth into a new existence.

· There is no fear of impermanence, given the understanding of the indwelling capacity for abundance, of replication from within the self spiritually, figuratively. There is a reassurance imparted that ***“Life goes on.”*** These symbols and themes may be what provides the scaffolding for later as we enter old age and face our own deaths.

\*\*\*\*\*\*I see Donna is writing the last of her submission now so I will finish up the PP tomorrow (if not tonight). I will present from Donna if she is unable to make it to class on Tuesday. - \*\*\*\*\* OOPS, many thanks Polly…..also would you like to share in the reading of any of this? certainy are more than welcomed to do so.? Donna

You are so funny and Dear! Whatever works, just thought I would offer due to the fact that there is plent here.. Very well...am going to lay me down now….It is a comfort to know, thanks.Great….by the way this is the first time i’ve used google docs and it’s very cool! Because I am going to bed, I wanted to give you my phoine number in case you need ito reach me. 575 654 3676. nite. You’re just the best!!

\*\*\*\*Donna, I would love to avoid presenting. I suck at it. I will happily do it to contribute but it simply isn’t my forte. \*\*\*\*lol - I’m honest at the very least. :) I will prepare to step in for you if you need me to. I hope you feel better soon but don’t worry if you can’t make it to class. We will persevere. I also never used it before and it’s pretty amazing. I think I’ll use it again in the future. It’s convenient and I like it. Now go lay down. :) Bye!!!! Awesome. As soon as I have the powerpoint finished, I’m going to email it to everyone for them to look at. I’ll have time Monday evening to make any corrections to it that are requested or reported by the group. :)