

Position 7 (Set 1)

Analysis: "Terrible Things" Allegory

Position: Thesis

This paper scores a 7 for the thesis: "The story "Terrible Things," by Eve Bunting, allegorizes the Holocaust, a genocide that occurred throughout Europe during the 1930s and 40s, to illustrate both the horrors of this time period and the failure of the masses to protect each other; by using this symbolic representation of a historical event, the author simultaneously simplifies and strengthens her message." While this sentence is long, it is grammatically correct, clear, defensible, comprehensive of the entire war, focused on how and why the author uses allegory, and analytical. By pointing out that simplifying the message actually strengthens it, while true of allegories, goes beyond explaining how the author uses allegory and illuminates why the author uses allegory. More notably, the author does this without listing assertions, which is ultimately more sophisticated than listing assertions with commas in a series.

Essay: "Terrible Things" Allegory

Prompt: Analyze how "Terrible Things" is an allegory.

Throughout human history, works of literature have been used by people to present their ideas and opinions on societal norms and regulations. "Terrible Things," by Eve Bunting, is an example of this type of writing. In her story, she writes of a placid clearing in a forest in which many animals reside. Unfortunately, their peace is disturbed by a group of hunters, referred to as the Terrible Things, who come to the forest to take animals that they dislike, and they refuse to let live. Similarly, during the Holocaust, groups of people were discriminated against for their race, religion, and their appearances. The Nazis were the group responsible for this racist persecution. The story "Terrible Things," by Eve Bunting, allegorizes the Holocaust, a genocide that occurred throughout Europe during the 1930s and 40s, to illustrate both the horrors of this time period and the failure of the masses to protect each other; by using this symbolic representation of a historical event, the author simultaneously simplifies and strengthens her message.

One element of allegorical fiction is the use of symbolism; the guns used by the German military are represented by the nets used by the Terrible Things. Both the nets and the guns, used to capture their targets,

were meant to serve the same purpose. In “The Terrible Things,” by Eve Bunting, she explains how the Terrible Things use their nets and fling them high “[to catch] the birds.” Symbolism is the fictional representation of an historical object or place. The nets, the historical object represented, are used in order to “[catch] the birds” from the woods and take them to where the Terrible Things want the animals to go. Linking to the Holocaust, according to nonfiction text #5, the Walther P38 was made in 1945 meant “for the German military.” The Walther P38 killed many Jewish people and also threatened some to go to the concentration camps, like the nets in “The Terrible Things.” As cruelly as it was, the guns and nets had blatantly usurped the freedoms of the victims from their everyday lives and had forsaken human life by being apathetic with regards to taking faultless civilians lives.

Another element of allegorical fiction is that characters often represent real people; the animals that did not do anything to stop the Terrible Things represent the French Police of Vichy France. During the Nazi invasions, many groups were turned against themselves, such as the French police. Correspondingly, in the story, the animals turn against themselves. Whenever any animal questioned the Terrible Things’ reasoning for taking the animals, Big Rabbit would say, “We mustn’t ask.” The fact that Big Rabbit said “we mustn’t ask” shows how the animals did nothing to stop the terrible events going on around them, even though they later rued not doing anything. On July 16 1942, the Nazis invaded the nation of France and terrorized the people. According to Adrian Gilbert, author of “These Black Hours in Vichy France,” the French police were turned against their own people by the Nazis. This act of turning against their own people is used in “Terrible Things” when the animals refuse to stand up against the Terrible Things. The characters in the story were representations of actual people during the Holocaust, proving it is an allegory.

The final element of allegorical fiction is that the events in the story should be parallel to actual events that occurred in real life; just as the Nazis targeted specific groups of people, the Terrible Things target specific animals with certain characteristics. Although some events were inevitable, some could have been put to a halt. For example, when the Terrible Things first come into the clearing in the forest to look for certain groups of animals, the animals could stand up for themselves. Unfortunately, their fear takes control of them. In the story, the Terrible Things told the animals that they are looking for “every creature that swims.” This characteristic of being able to “swim” shows that the Terrible Things persecuted animals who were different just as the Nazis persecuted other people who were not fit to be considered the “perfect race”. During the actual Holocaust, the Nazis targeted people who they thought did not meet the criteria to be part of the “perfect race” (which meant having fair hair and blue eyes). The Nazis targeted people who were Jewish, Catholic, Romani (formerly known as gypsies), Soviet prisoners, Polish (Poles) and Soviet (Slavs) civilians,

homosexuals, people with disabilities, non-whites, Jehovah's Witnesses, freemasons and many other types of people. These people were targeted because of their appearances and their lack to meet Hitler's criteria for his "perfect race." In the end, events from the story were parallel to the real life events that actually happened, which make it an allegorical piece of literature

Overall, the actions done to the people during the Holocaust were devastating and detrimental to them and the people worldwide. The story "Terrible Things," by Eve Bunting, shows how the Holocaust and persecutions affected people of different races. By using forest animals and a forest clearing, Bunting makes the effects of the Holocaust accessible to people and children of all ages. This story allows people to understand the dangers of racism and not standing up for what they know is right in order to make the world a better place to live in. The "Terrible Things" is a useful allegory that can help people do what is right in order to prevent another disaster like this from ever happening again.