

Cassandra Clare's *City of Bones*: A Thematic Study

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ABSTRACT

This research is entitled Thematic Study of Cassandra Clare's City of Bones. The aim of this study is to find out the major themes in the novel. Subjective approach is applied in analyzing themes in the novel. There are many themes in this novel such as love, revenge, identity and struggle. These themes can be seen throughout the novel. Everything was fine at first, but everything changed when Jocelyn suddenly vanished. Clary struggles to find her mother here, and she also discovers why her mother vanished. Clary discovers the reason for her mother's disappearance while searching for her mother. Clary faces a variety of challenges, including battles with various enemies such as a vampire, a devil, and a giant. Clary is struggling not only to find her mother, but also to find the one she loves, Jace. Not only are the struggles of the main characters interesting in this novel. The novel does, however, have a moral value. Love is the main subject and what motivates the characters to take action. All throughout the novel, there are numerous instances of love. Many characters in the book try to figure out who they are. Clary discovers that her life is built on lies and that her reality is not that straightforward. She makes an effort to identify her personal identity and place in the Shadow World.

Keywords: Love, Shadowhunters, Identity, Cassandra Clare, Revenge

INTRODUCTION

A well-known American author of young adult books is Cassandra Clare. Her paranormal novel *The Mortal Instruments* made her famous. She received various honors and awards for her first book.

Elizabeth and Richard Rumelt, American Jews, welcomed Clare into the world as Judith Rumelt on July 27, 1973 in Iran. Her parents both have academic positions as business school professors and writers. Clare found stability in literature because her family had to travel frequently. She went back to Los Angeles to finish high school, where she discovered a passion for humorous story writing. She wrote a novel with the same title after

being inspired by the short story *The Beautiful Cassandra* by Jane Austen. Later, she used that name as a pseudonym in her writings.

Clare began her career as a reporter at several reputable entertainment magazines and newspapers after majoring in English, including *The Hollywood Reporter*. Before tackling more serious literary tasks, she first started writing fan fiction. Fans of the series became familiar with her fan fiction, *The Very Secret Diaries*, which was influenced by *Harry Potter's The Draco Trilogy* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Clare also submitted a short story, *The Girl's Guide to Defeating the Dark Lord*, to a Baen anthology of humorous fantasy. This was the author's first work to be published. She also contributed short pieces under the pen names *Magic in the Mirrorstone* and *So Fey* to other collections.

With *City of Bones*, the first book in *The Mortal Instruments* series, Clare began her professional literary career. She reimagined the mythologies for contemporary New York City, drawing inspiration from Manhattan's urban setting. In the novel *City of Bones*, Clary Fray is a young child who has no idea that supernatural beings exist or that she plays a crucial part in their universe. She discovered this the hard way when her mother vanished and Shadowhunter Jace Wayland had to defend her life from demons sent by Valentine, the nemesis of Downworlders. Numerous legendary concepts and fantastical creatures have been used by Clare. These otherworldly creatures include warlocks, werewolves, faeries, vampires, and shadowhunters (those who battle Downworlders), among others.

The first book in the series quickly topped the New York Times bestseller list, paving the way for the next two articles, *City of Ash* (2008) and *City of Glass* (2009). The second cycle of *The Mortal Instruments* also includes his three parts with different stories. The book has received several awards in Young Adult Literature, including the American Library Association Teens Top Ten Award (2008), the Georgia Peach Book Award for Teen Readers, and the 2010 Abraham Lincoln Illinois High School Book Award. Award-winning. In addition, *City of Bones* is slated for a major motion picture adaptation in 2013.

POSTMODERNISM THEORY

It is a late 20th Century movement in Philosophy and Literary Theory that generally questions the basic assumptions of Western Philosophy in the modern period. Postmodernism is the term used to suggest a reaction or response to modernism in the late 20th century. At its core, Postmodernism rejects that which Modernism champions. In Literature, it used to describe certain characteristics of Post-World War II Literature.

There are few features of Postmodernism:

- Irony and Parody
- Pastiche (Copying ideas & styles from authors)
- Metafiction (Awaring readers about fictional nature)
- Intertextuality (Acknowledging other texts)

Some notable writers in Postmodernism includes: John Barth, Don Delillo, Paul Auster

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM

Modernism was started in late 19th Century and ended by 20th Century. It was influenced by World War I. It used rational and logical means to gain knowledge and also rejected realism.

Whereas,

Postmodernism was started in middle of 20th Century. It was influenced by World War II. It was based on unscientific thought process and rejected logical thinking.

SCIENCE FICTION

It is a type of fiction that focuses on the impact of actual or imagined science on society or individuals. Hugo Gernsback, an American publisher, is credited with popularizing, if not inventing, the term science fiction in the 1920s. The World Science Fiction Society's Hugo Awards have been named after him since 1953. These honors are given to the best science fiction writers, editors, illustrators, films, and fanzines.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The struggle of the main character of the novel *City of Bones*. She struggles to find her mother who has been kidnapped from her own house. She also struggles for love. Even she struggles to defeat her enemies (*Muhamad Taufik Ibrahim, Ceysi N Wuntu, Imelda Lolowang*).

Because *City of Bones* is a young adult novel, much of the plot revolves around Clary's relationships and group dynamics, as well as those of her human best friend Simon and the three Shadowhunter teenagers who help Clary when her mother goes missing. Much of the plot revolves around an uprising led by a Shadowhunter named Valentine, who holds similar political views to Hitler, but with Downworlders replacing the gipsies and Jews (*lovevampires.com, 2007*).

The third person is used in the writing of this book. To be honest, I've never been a big fan of books written in the third person. I prefer the first person point of view because it allows for more emotions in a story and allows you to become more invested in your main character. Clary Fray: Clary was extremely sweet and kind to me. Although I must admit that there were times when I couldn't stand her. For instance, when she was upset with Isabelle because Simon was stupid. I'm not sure what she expected from taking Simon with her (*Featz Reviews*)

There are many different themes that like to hide in conflicts, character emotions/actions, and archetypes in Cassandra Clare's book "*City of Bones*." All of these elements add up and show significance while I was tracking themes in my book. Cassandra Clare, the author, used these various techniques (also known as author's craft) in her book to make these. It will be explained in the following paragraphs how some of these components interact within the text. To begin

with, there are some emotions and actions that the main character, Clary, experiences while a major conflict occurs at the beginning of the book. (*Cram.com*)

THEMES OF CITY OF BONES – CASSANDRA CLARE

LOVE

Love is the main subject and what motivates the characters to take action. All throughout the novel, there are numerous instances of love. The motivation behind Jocelyn's decision to make the ultimate sacrifice in order to protect her daughter—and the reason she chose not to flee—is love. She stayed behind even if it meant risking harm and possibly being kidnapped since she knew there was a potential that Clary might go home despite her warnings not to. Also keeping Jace, Alec, and Isabelle together is this kind of love. Even though they are not blood relatives of Jace's, he still loves them and thinks of them as his siblings.

The book also discusses romantic love. Luke stays with Jocelyn and takes on the role of Clary's dad despite the fact that he knows she might not feel the same way. He murders a pack leader to get Jocelyn back after she is abducted. Even though Clary thinks he abandoned her, he still sends werewolves to follow her and take care of her when necessary because of his love for Jocelyn.

Although Clary and Jace's connection starts to develop romantically, neither of them expresses their emotions for the other. Jace discovers at the end of the book that he and Clary are related, and he decides not to travel with his father in order to stay with her. Even though he won't see Jocelyn, he still cares about Clary, whether or not his feelings are romantic.

IDENTITY

Many characters in the book try to figure out who they are. Clary discovers that her life is built on lies and that her reality is not that straightforward. She makes an effort to identify her personal identity and place in the Shadow World. She first refuses to accept that she is a part of a much larger world because she is terrified to let go of her former life and old personality. Another person who has trouble accepting his feelings is Alec. He knows that if he comes out as homosexual, he will be marginalized by society and possibly even by his own family. He tries to hide his affection for Jace, using his status as Paravati as a shield for his feelings.

JEALOUSY

Jealousy is part of growing up, and that's what City of Bones is all about. It's because of hormones. Clary didn't find Simon attractive until he showed an interest in Isabel. This shows that the motive for unrequited love is often jealousy rather than pure love.

REVENGE

"You go in there and do for your friend what I could not do for my brother." (14.109)

At this point, we don't know if Raphael is actually a vampire, but even if he isn't, he still hopes Jace and Clary will succeed in their mission to satisfy their own vengeance.

"Perhaps [Luke] saw an opportunity to turn the tables. To hurt [Jocelyn] as he'd been hurt." (18.138)

He loved Jocelyn, but was angry enough to hurt her. At least, that seems to be the working theory here. And why shouldn't it? Everyone else in the book seems motivated by revenge.

RELIGION

"Demons, [...] religiously defined as hell's denizens, the servants of Satan, but understood here, for the purposes of the Clave, to be any malevolent spirit whose origin is outside our own home dimension." (1.64)

The Shadowhunters don't seem to know if the demons are Satan's offspring, and this ties in with Jace's internal religious conflict. Either way, you wouldn't want to meet these demons in a dark alley...or anywhere. Perhaps their religious or non-religious background is completely irrelevant.

CONCLUSION

The themes are love, desire for revenge, and jealousy; however, these themes intertwine throughout the book. Clarissa 'Clary' Fray, Jace Wayland, Alec and Isabelle Lightwood, Simon Lewis, and Lucian 'Luke' Gray mark are the main characters. Throughout the novel, Clare emphasizes the interplay of love, vengeance, and jealousy, and how they all contribute to one another. These themes can be seen throughout the novel. Once you get into the story, City of Bones is still enjoyable to read and a fairly creative addition to the urban fantasy genre.

WORKS CITED

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