

Homework: Ehrenreich

In Barbara Ehrenreich's illness narrative "Welcome to Cancerland," she examines her experience with breast cancer diagnosis and treatment within a larger social context.

1. How would you describe Ehrenreich's tone? What effect/influence do you think she hopes to have on the reader? How did you react to Ehrenreich as a writer?

2. What is the most memorable part of her description of her own experience with cancer?

3. Briefly respond to the following quotes from Ehrenreich:
 - a. "Possibly the idea is that regression to a state of childlike dependency puts one in the best frame of mind with which to endure the prolonged and toxic treatments. Or it may be that, in some versions of the prevailing gender ideology, femininity is by its nature incompatible with full adulthood—a state of arrested development. Certainly men diagnosed with prostate cancer do not receive gifts of Matchbox cars."

 - b. "The personal narratives (of breast cancer survivorship) serve as testimonials and follow the same general arc as the confessional autobiographies required of seventeenth century Puritans. First, there is a crisis...then a prolonged ordeal...and, finally, the blessed certainty of salvation."

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21W.022.03 Writing and Experience: Reading and Writing Autobiography
Spring 2014

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