

**“We were always helpless, whoever was in power”:
Cultural Materialism and Thatcherism in *The Passion***

Author’s Statement

In 76-106, Writing about Literature, Art, and Culture, I worked with Professor Elizabeth Dietrich to write a Theoretical Lens Essay on Jeanette Winterson’s *The Passion* (1987). The assignment was designed to deepen students’ understanding of various theoretical frameworks and their application to literary texts. I originally wrote a ten-page essay to meet the class requirement. However, as I delved deeper into cultural materialism and other concepts like Marxism and the Cult of Domesticity, my essay aimed to reveal how the underlying economic and class struggles shaped the characters and themes within the novel, offering a critique of power dynamics that are otherwise normalized or hidden. I found the process of working on this paper to be incredibly enlightening, pushing me to synthesize complex theories with textual analysis. My application of a feminist-materialist theoretical lens to *The Passion* illuminates the influence of Thatcherism on cultural productions, showing how power and material conditions like binary gender constructs are deeply intertwined in the construction of narratives. This paper not only meets the academic requirements set by the course, but also enriches the broader discussion on the interplay between literature, politics, and society.

- Cassie May