

Comparing and contrasting themes across genres essay



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Creating a theme helps fiction writers convey an important message. The story “ And of Clay Are We Created,” is fictionalized from the newspaper article “ Ill Equipped Rescuers”. Both the story and the newspaper article express a similar theme and purpose, but they also have some difference in them. In “ And of Clay Are We Created” and “ Ill Equipped Rescuers,” authors Isabel Allende and Bradley Graham use terms like “ loss” and “ hopelessness” to develop a theme that portrays the devastating tragedy that struck Colombia. In the fiction story “ And of Clay Are We Created,” Allende focuses its theme more on memory and reminiscence.

For Rolf Carle, the most important thing that happens during his days with Azucena is his confrontation to his horrifying past. He had forbid himself to think about the prisoners he buried, dealing with an abusive father, and seeing his mother naked and crying. While being with Azucena he learns to find the courage and look back and accept the horrific memories. As Rolf Carle is remembering his horrible past, he starts to tear up. Remembering his past has a huge affect on him. He begins to lose focus on everything he loves.

Rolf starts creating a gap between himself, his work, and even his companion. He spends most of his time looking out the window at the mountains remembering and finally learning to deal with his past. The narrator, his companion, says “ You are back with me, but you are not the same man. I often accompany you to the station and we watch the videos of Azucena again; you study them intently, looking for something you could have done to save her, something you did not think of in time” (265). She

knows it is important for him to go through this voyage so he can find the courage in himself.

She says “ I know when you return from your nightmares, we shall again walk hand in hand, as before” (265). Bradley Graham’s newspaper article, “ Ill-Equipped Rescuers,” which is based on the real event in Colombia, has a theme that focuses more on tragedy and destruction. The article explains the mess the eruption caused, where as the story focuses on explaining and expressing Rolf Carle’s and Azucena’s thoughts and emotions. Graham’s article goes into great detail about the “ Scattered belongings and crushed bodies buried under brown watery slush... ” (267).

Because there were about 20, 000 or more people dead, officials claimed that Armero was “ holy ground” (Graham 268). There were many people there to try and help all those who were injured and those who were stuck in rubble. According to Alferez, there could have been 1000 people trapped alive in the city’s ruins (268). After the volcanic eruption, a flood of mud arose. This made it much more difficult for rescuers to dig out those who were stuck in the rubble and debris. Graham’s article also informed us about all those who were buried alive, stuck in the rubble, or were drifted away in the mud.

The Red Cross Team and Air Force members helped to search for bodies all throughout the town. Some people were on roof tops of their homes, and others were on trees. A rescuer said that “ once survivors were found, the process of freeing them was a lengthy, arduous effort” (268). Allende’s story, “ And of Clay Are We Created” and Graham’s article “ Ill-Equipped Rescuers,”

also have themes that they both share. Those themes are hopelessness and unselfishness. Rolf Carle and the rescue teams go out of their way to try and save as many people as they can.

Rolf Carle does all he can to save Azucena from the mud and rubble, while the rescue teams also try and save as many people that are either trapped, injured, dead, or have drifted away by the mud flow. By doing this they are putting themselves at risk of getting caught in the rubble. This proves that Rolf Carle and the rescue teams are unselfish and do everything in their power to save those in desperate need of their help. They both also express hopelessness. In the story this is shown through Azucena. She gives up hope of being rescued while being stuck in the mud for three days. She knows she will die.

Azucena starts to lose all faith because she can feel her body weakening and she is in a lot of pain. Rolf Carle tries to have her keep faith by telling her he's going to save her and that the pump to suck the mud out would arrive shortly. Rolf Carle truly did believe he was going to save her. When the pump arrived though, Azucena had given up her hope completely. In Graham's newspaper article, hopelessness is expressed through the thirty-four year old man, Efrain Gomez Primo. He was stuck under his collapsed house. His brother told him not to worry and that help was on the way but he never returned.

Then a Civil Defense worker saw him but lacked the tools needed and he left. The man started losing hope. When help actually arrived and stayed to help, he said he felt half dead and said he was having trouble breathing. He

thought he was going to die. The rescuers were able to save him from the rubble. He had a broken leg though, but he was out. Alferez, the Red Cross chief, also shows hopelessness. He was the one there with the real Azucena, Omaira Sanchez. She was stuck under the mud and what made it more difficult to get her out was that her dead aunt was grasped onto her.

Rescuers said “ The girl’s eyes were red and swollen,” (269). The chief tried and tried getting her out but nothing seemed to work. While watching all the desperate attempts to save her, Alferez shook his head in despair (269). “ This makes one feel useless,” he said. “ What can we do? ” (269). Even though authors Isabel Allende and Bradley Graham use different forms of writing, the two stories go together because the story is a fictionalized work of the newspaper article. Both the story and article shared similar themes but each also represented a different theme.