

Voices of the americas

Literature



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Love in the Time of Cholera Question Symbolism is predominant throughout “ Love in the Time of Cholera”. Gabriel Marquez uses natural symbols to represent death and despair. Birds are natural symbols in the text. Death soon follows whenever the author focuses on a character’s encounter with a bird. For example, at the start of the book, Urbino falls to his death after climbing up a tree to search for the multilingual parrot. In addition, a man died after Urbino missed an urgent house-call after the gruesome, perfumed crows tripped him. The author describes Florentino’s pursuit of sexual partners as “ hawking for frightened little birds”, which mirrors the actions of a hawk (predatory bird) hunting its prey (Marquez 40). His affair with the pigeon fancier ended tragically after her murder. The term “ cholera” is also symbolic. For the different characters, the term symbolizes different meanings. In Florentino’s case, the suffering caused by the disease mirror his own caused by his unrequited love, which led to his indiscriminate sexual encounters with women he knew he was unable to love. Conversely, in Urbino’s case, the struggle to find a cure for the horrid disease symbolizes his attempts at ridding Fermina’s life of despair and rage.

Question 3

In my opinion, Fermina and Florentino are representative, on a dramatic scale, of the kinds of emotions most people experience in life. Love is a very strong emotion, which can be a great source of happiness or extreme anguish. The author uses experiences of the different characters to show the consequences of love. Florentino leads a life of debauchery, as he tries to fill a void caused by unrequited love. In fact, he vows never to love another woman after Fermina married Urbino choosing instead to engage in indiscriminate sexual activities with women he held with little regard.

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Conversely, Fermina proceeds to marry Urbino who was regarded highly in the society to secure her future in spite of her feelings for Florentino. To her, love did not transcend social pressures. She looked at her life from a practical, logical perspective whereby, she chose not to make long-term decisions clouded by an emotion (love) (Newell).

Works Cited

Love in the Time of Cholera. Dir. Mike Newell. 2007. Film.

Marquez, Gabriel. Love in the Time of Cholera. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988. Print.