

Essay on symbolism in tim winton's cloudstreet

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Cloudstreet, written by Australian novelist Tim Winton, is essentially the chronicle of two contrasting rural families, the Pickles and the Lambs, which come to share a house in Perth, at One Cloud Street. The story is very much a celebration and exploration of life and the meaning of it, every character undergoing their own personal journey. Cloudstreet is a novel in which not everything should be taken at a literal level, as one of the most prominent literary devices used by the author is symbolism, providing a deeper understanding and insight into the story's main themes. The house itself, spirituality and the river add profound meaning and contribute to conveying Winton's ideas on family, love, identity and determination and their roles in the search for fulfillment. The house is one of the most important symbols in the novel, being the place where the two families share their lives for twenty years and each element of the building developing its own personified characteristics.

However, the library is the part of the house that holds the deepest meaning in terms of symbolism, the author using it to portray his opinion on the Australian racial policies in the 50s. The library is the darkest place at Cloudstreet, haunted by the ghosts of an Aboriginal girl who poisoned herself and the house's evil previous owner, becoming a symbol of tragedy and the hardships faced by the stolen generation. However, this is also the room where Rose and Quick show their passion and where Wax Harry is born a few months later, and thus the library is purified by love, light and family. Therefore, the library can also be seen as symbolism for the battle between good and evil. Another recurring symbol the reader can notice throughout

the novel is the river, which further emphasizes the themes of family, love, spirituality and determination.

As Quick states himself, all the most important events in the two families' lives happen near the river, the site where everything starts and everything ends. The river also symbolizes spirituality, becoming the place of miracles, the place of revelation, the place of regeneration, the place where sins are washed away. Another religious symbol is the name of Fish Lamb, character who is also most deeply connected with the river. The last name is clearly a representation of spirituality, leading the reader to the "Lambs of God" and Psalm 23: 1 ("The lord is my shepherd"), while "Fish" is a reference to Ichthus, the well-known symbol of Christianity. Furthermore, the near drowning of Fish can be seen as a reference to religion too, reminding of the biblical story of Samson.

In his near-drowning experience, Fish loses his ability to communicate to other people and his mental faculties, just like Samson loses his immense strength after his hair was cut. However, he gains visionary abilities and an unbelievable bond with the water, while Samson finds his power again through faith. Both characters have lost some of their strengths, but found new opportunities and insights afterwards. This religious symbolism can be noticed all throughout the novel, embedding a deep sense of spirituality within it. Even if the Pickles are not religious and rather believe in luck, that luck can also be seen as the hand of God. Therefore, to gain a complete understanding of the novel, one must read it in a religious sense.

To conclude, the author uses symbolism as his main vehicle for conveying profound messages and providing a deeper insight into the themes approached. The river, the house, and the religious symbols emphasize Tim Winton's endorsement of family, love and spirituality as the keys to completeness.