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daughters in the
essay



Mothers have an essential role in the lives of their children and therefore have a huge impact on the way their children turn out as adults, and this is the reason we find mothers playing a very central role in realistic fiction texts such as *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* and *So Long a Letter*. Mothers tend to contribute significantly to the development of plot in the story and to certain events that change the course of the story in both the texts being analysed. Thus by looking at the mothers of different characters we also tend to get different ideas that the author was trying to put across to the readers. In both *So Long a Letter* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* similar scenarios regarding the choice of husbands is portrayed. Ramatoulaye's mother wanted her to marry Daouda Dieng while in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* Pura Vicario wants Angela Vicario to get married to Bayardo San Roman.

In both texts it seems that the suitors preferred by the mothers have good financial backgrounds and this tends to show that in both cultures portrayed in the texts wealth is of significant importance as compared to the happiness of the woman getting married. However in both cases the daughters do not want to get married to the respective partners chosen by their mothers. For Ramatoulaye this is shown by the fact that she marries Modou Fall despite her mother's reservations about Modou which are shown by the phrase "... before the indignation of my frustrated mother..."

"... For Angela Vicario even though she gets married to Bayardo San Roman her marriage does not last a night, due to the fact that she was not a virgin, even though she was in a position to fake her virginity and continue with her marriage, she did not, yet she was aware of the importance of virginity in her

marriage and the consequences of not having it, which seems to show she really did not want to stay with Bayardo, her hesitation is also first seen when she opposes her marriage on the lack of love which is disregarded by her mother using the phrase " Love can be learned too. ". The above scenario also brings out contrast in regard to the voice of women in the two societies portrayed in the two texts being studied. It seems that the society in *So Long a Letter* is much more liberal than the one portrayed in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, as Ramatoulaye ends up marrying who she wants despite her mothers reservations while Angela has to marry Bayardo whether she likes it or not.

Although both Angela and Ramatoulaye get away from the men chosen by their mothers, it seems that the authors in both the texts create feelings of guilt in the respective characters as a result of declining their mother's choice. For Ramatoulaye, this is shown in the 6th and 7th chapters as Ramatoulaye is thinking of the past when she was deciding to choose her husband and she remembers her mothers choice a sense of guilt seems to be created in her mind as to why she did not listen to her mother, which is shown by the sentence " I no longer scorn my mother's reserve concerning you (Modou), for a mother can instinctively feel where her child's happiness lies. " this sense of guilt is also enhanced further by the nostalgic mood evoked in the respective chapters. Marquez also creates this feeling of guilt in Angela Vicario, by her obsession of Bayardo once he leaves her, through the numerous letters she writes to Bayardo, her visions of Bayardo immediately she closes her eyes and becoming a virgin for Bayardo. Although the element of guilt is seen in both the characters the guilt of

Ramatoulaye is justified due to Modou's betrayal to her, but Angela's guilt seems to be mysterious as Marquez does not seem to be giving a clear hint of why she started loving Bayardo all of a sudden. Some decisions that are made by mothers in the texts regarding their daughter's lives seem to be symbolizing the change that mothers would like a different life than the one they had.

For instance Victoria Guzman in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* does not want her daughter, Divina Flor, to go through the life she went through as a mistress who eventually ended up as servant of Ibrahim Nassar, Santiago's father. She does this by protecting her daughter from sexual advances by Santiago. Her desperation to do this is shown from her action of disembowelling the rabbits in front of Santiago. Marquez not only uses this action of Victoria as a way of discouraging Santiago from Divina, but uses this as a symbol of cleansing the society in that the bowels of the rabbit are the parts that cannot be consumed as they are unhealthy so they are removed, however the rabbit seems to be representing the society and the disembowelment signifies the removal of the negative elements of the society which are unhealthy to it.

A similar decision is made in *So Long a Letter* by Lady Mother in Law (Binetou's mother) to marry her daughter to Modou for financial reasons so that her daughter can live a luxurious life which she did not. Although this decision is similar to Victoria's in that it wants a different life for her daughter, it has much more selfish motive behind it than Victoria's decision because Lady Mother in Law is also benefiting from a luxurious life as well. This seems to show that there is much more selfishness in the society

portrayed in *So Long a Letter* than there is in the society of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. The inferiority of women in the societies portrayed in the texts is also brought out by the forced marriages the women undergo in order to keep their parents happy, and in both cases it is the mothers of the women who force them to get married. In *So Long a Letter* we see Nabou's marriage to Modou forced upon by her mother so that she may live a good life with the money Modou promised to pay in return for marrying her daughter and in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* we are given the rushed marriage of Angela Vicario to a Strange new comer into the town Bayardo San Roman, this was also forced upon by Angela Vicario's mother Pura Vicario as she was charmed by Bayardo's wealth.

Using both of these cases the authors seem to be putting questions in our mind that are women indeed their own worst enemies? In both texts we see again that the author has tasked mothers to be the ones to develop the climax of the story. Pura Vicario's insistence on her daughter getting married to Bayardo is what eventually sparks the honour killing of Santiago by Angela's brothers in vengeance of taking away her virginity and consequently her being returned by Bayardo on her wedding night on the same grounds. As for in *So Long a Letter*, Lady Mother in law seems to be credited for the development of the climax which is Modou's betrayal to Ramatoulaye by marrying a second wife, as she is the one who forces Binetou to marry Modou despite in order to receive a better life. However in both the texts after the climax is reached the mothers who helped create it are treated with lack of respect which is portrayed in a similar manner in both texts.

In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* Pura Vicario and her family is forced to leave her home and go to live in another town, in *So Long a Letter* Lady Mother in Law and Binetou are compelled to live their home as it has been bought by Daba, Ramatoulye's daughter. As we see a lot of influence exerted by mothers in different aspects of their daughters lives in both the texts, the authors seem to be giving us a reflection of how they hold their mothers in their respective culture, the authors also seem to be showing their personal reservations about maternal influences in their culture. The authors' use of maternal influences in their texts also contributes to making the book realistic, as it easily brings out the ideas regarding the social and cultural environment of the text in relation to how they shape the story the authors are trying to tell as mothers are close to the social and cultural environment within their society.