

How is love felt and expressed in literature?

In literature, love is a theme explored by many authors, in various genres, time periods or age groups. Although it is often written about, love is a complex theme, and the outcome of a work involving love really depends on the authors perception of it; his experiences, his observations, his theories... In *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel Garcia, the heartfelt theme is delved into through the entirety of the protagonist's life, as well as the other characters. Different types of love are described in the novel: platonic, romantic, fleeting and lifelong. The author even describes love as a sickness. On the other hand, in Jhumpa Lahiri's collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*, the author explores love in many ways: failed marriages, arranged marriages, platonic love, falling out of love...

In *Love in the Time of Cholera*, the pleasures of love are mixed in with all the pain and suffering but love is such a complex theme, that explaining it and comparing it, is a difficult task. The novel spans on many decades, enabling us to see how the ways that they have loved, changed over time. Following the various periods of Fermina's life, *Love in the Time of Cholera* suggests that there might be different ways to love different people at different times, depending on personality and the various stages of life. She experiences domestic love with Dr.Urbino and passionate love with Florentino Arizo. Although the marriage between Fermina and Juvenal was arranged, she discovered that it is tied together with the intense knowledge of the other, tenderness, and habit, not necessarily through romantic love. On the other hand, Florentino Ariza seems to be consumed by his love for Fermina Daza, he becomes ill because of it. Love caused him suffering and pain, yet he still held onto the hope for his love for Fermina. By the end of the novel, after the death of Dr.Urbino, Fermina's husband, the two of them reunite. The happy ending seems to be proof that Florentino's intense love has triumphed over Dr.Urbino's domestic one. However, while for Florentino the ending represents the culmination of his life-long desire to be united with the woman of his dreams, for Fermina it simply fills a gap at the end of her life. The novel shows that love can take on various forms and serve different purposes over the course of one's life.

In Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*, a few of the short stories explore the hardships of love and relationships, including arranged marriages and platonic love. For example, the following short stories' marriages have not worked: "A Temporary Matter" and "Interpreter of Maladies". "This Blessed House" and "The Third and Final Continent" are stories in which the couples prevail and overcome their obstacles. And finally, "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" is a story about platonic love. The diversity of these short stories and the type of love in them display how love evolves or disappears amongst couples, not specifically due to the racial or cultural differences but rather because of the differences in personality between the spouses.

All in all, in both novels, the authors delve into the theme of love in depth, they explore the many types of love that exist: platonic, fleeting, romantic, everlasting, lust... The complex emotion is felt and experienced by the author, who puts it onto paper under the form of words. The expression and perception of love in literature is dependant of the author's own view of it.