

Candidate 2

Analyse the ways in which Manuel Rivas conveys the three different types of love (friendship, adolescent, and lust) in the three short stories from “¿Qué me quieres amor?” (La Lengua de las Mariposas, Un Saxo en la Niebla, and Carmiña) and in the film adaptation directed by José Luis Cuerda; “La Lengua de las Mariposas”.

The Spanish writer, Manuel Rivas, explores the theme of love in his three short stories from the collection “¿Qué me quieres amor?”, with every story portraying a different experience of this emotion. The notion of love is complicated, and everyone has a different outlook and experience of it, which is reflected in these stories. “La Lengua de las Mariposas” deals with the friendship between Moncho and his new teacher Don Gregorio, whilst also showing us the admiration the young boy has for him. The short story “Un Saxo en la Niebla” highlights an adolescent side to love, with the young protagonist falling quickly for La Chinita, and “Carmiña”, which shows a lustful and physical love. The film adaptation of these stories; “La Lengua de las Mariposas” by José Luis Cuerda, focuses around the life and growth of the young Moncho, growing up during the Spanish Civil War in 1936. This film combines all the different short stories, and effectively conveys the different themes of love, whilst also showing the viewers what life was like during this tumultuous time in Spanish history.

In “La Lengua de las Mariposas” Rivas explores the theme of love in terms of the friendship between a young student named Moncho, and his elderly teacher, Don Gregorio. At the beginning of the story, Moncho is preparing to start to school, but he has heard rumours that his new teacher hits his students and is frightened. However, when he arrives, he realises this is not the case (“El maestro no pega”¹) and in fact, his teacher is kind and shows a liking towards Moncho.

“Me pellizcó la mejilla con cariño.”²

Moncho discovers that the rumours he has heard are completely wrong and Don Gregorio is actually the opposite. The writer creates an affectionate image of Don Gregorio, and by using the word choice of “cariño”, Rivas emphasises that the teacher is a gentle man, as this has connotations of a heartfelt and caring action. This highlights some of the most important qualities needed in a friendship and

¹ “La Lengua de las Mariposas” page 4 – Manuel Rivas.

² “La Lengua de las Mariposas” page 3 – Manuel Rivas.

further shows Don Gregorio's warm-hearted nature, as he makes Moncho feel special and loved.

Furthermore, we see the extent of this pair's relationship through their love of nature. Nature is a very prominent theme in "La Lengua de las Mariposas", with Don Gregorio being so passionate about wildlife and the outdoor world. Moncho quickly follows in his teacher's footsteps, and also finds a passion for this;

"Los momentos más fascinantes de la escuela eran cuando el maestro hablaba de los bichos."³

Don Gregorio shares his passion with Moncho, and by doing this he is suggesting that he respects and trusts him. This also allows us to see the admiration Moncho has for his friend, as he truly loves the time they spend together, as well as showing us how they no longer have just a strictly professional teacher/student relationship, but now have become true friends. In the film adaptation of this story, there is a scene where Don Gregorio takes his class outside to teach them about the butterfly's tongue. This scene is bright and colourful, and features cheerful music, reflecting their friendship and again portraying a loving image of the two friends.

This idea that Moncho and Don Gregorio have moved past the stereotypical student and teacher relationship is further shown through the use of imagery in the short story.

"cantábamos por los caminos como dos viejos compañeros."⁴

This simile emphasises the adoration they both have for each other as it compares them to two friends who have known each other for years. This suggests the idea that they are extremely close, even though this is a new friendship. However, their relationship is tested at the end of the story, due to the fact that Don Gregorio's beliefs were seen as controversial during this time in Spain. This is shown effectively particularly in the film, as we see Moncho yelling insults and throwing rocks at his beloved teacher and the other Republicans. Moncho is forced to choose between his mother and his friend at this point. It is evident that Moncho does not believe the hurtful things he is saying, and that he doesn't understand the situation in general, as when instructed to yell hateful things, instead he shouts words which his teacher has

³ "La Lengua de las Mariposas" page 5 – Manuel Rivas.

⁴ "La Lengua de las Mariposas" page 5 – Manuel Rivas.

taught him, such as “tilonorrinco, espiritrompa”⁵. This highlights the imprint that Don Gregorio has left on Moncho’s life, and the things that stick in his mind are the happy times they shared together, learning about nature.

Rivas again effectively portrays another type of love in the story “Un Saxo en la Niebla” which is more innocent and almost childlike in a way. We can see a young saxophonist, Andrés, named only in the film, and his love for a young Chinese girl he meets whilst on tour with the Orquesta Azul.

“Era como si siempre hubiese estado en mi cabeza.”⁶

The moment Andrés first sees “la chinita” is expressed in a way that implies that they have an instantaneous attraction. The way in which the young girl is being described gives the impression that she is his idea of perfection and beauty, and when laying his eyes on her for the first time he is mesmerised by her. The writer is able to put across to us the way that she has captured his full attention and he won’t be able to forget about her; she is the only thing he is concerned about at this moment. This idea is shown further on in the story as he says; “Noté el calor en mis mejillas. Me sentía rojo como el fuego.”⁷ This simile alludes to the idea of adolescent love as it shows the overwhelming nature of teenage love, as it emphasises the rush of excitement Andrés first feels when seeing her as he truly believes in love at first sight.

Moreover, we soon learn that this can only be a forbidden love, as Andrés asks Boal about his “daughter”;

“– No es mi hija – dijo Boal, muy serio –. Es mi mujer.”⁸

This is a turning point in the story, as we now realise there is no future for the young couple. Andrés never suspected Boal and La Chinita were together, as they didn’t act like a married pair. As well as lying about his wife’s wounds, saying that they were from wolves, Boal doesn’t treat La Chinita with the respect or the affection that Andrés thinks she deserves. However, Andrés believes that he is her rightful love,

⁵ “La Lengua de las Mariposas” (1999 film) – José Luis Cuerda.

⁶ “Un Saxo en la Niebla” page 6 – Manuel Rivas.

⁷ “Un Saxo en la Niebla” page 9– Manuel Rivas.

⁸ “Un Saxo en la Niebla” page 9 – Manuel Rivas.

and could appreciate her unlike her husband does, and still holds onto the hope that the young girl would leave her husband for him, again suggesting a naïve approach to love.

Furthermore, when we see Andrés perform with the band, we really understand just how much of an impact La Chinita has on him;

“Yo sabía que había gente, mucha gente, bailando y enamorándose entre la niebla. Tocaba para ellos. No los veía. Sólo la veía a ella, cada vez más cerca.”⁹

Andrés has always struggled to control his nerves, but the fact that she is in the crowd watching him calms him, as he is only able to focus on her in the distance. There were plenty of other people there, dancing and enjoying themselves, but she gave him strength which allowed him to enjoy the moment. When in his saxophone lessons, Andrés was taught how to hold the instrument properly; “Firme y con cariño, como si fuera una chica”.¹⁰ Whilst he was performing in front of La Chinita, Andrés began to make sense of what his teacher had shown him and imagined it as if he was holding her, which allowed him to play effortlessly. This emphasises Andrés’ feelings towards La Chinita and shows not only how she has captivated him, but also how Andrés’ love for music is now connected to her; he is able to show his love and desire for her through his music.

The final short story, “Carmiña”, moves onto the next stages of life where we see a purely sexual and physical love. This story describes the relationship between two adults, a man named O’Lis de Sésamo and a woman named Carmiña. We can see the way O’Lis feels about her from the way that Carmiña is described;

“Era buena moza, la Carmiña, con mucho donde agarrar. Y se daba bien.”¹¹

It is clear that this is not similar to the other types of love we have seen, and this is based purely on physical attraction. The indecent language that is used shows us how O’Lis doesn’t respect her, suggesting he doesn’t truly love her. It could be argued that he is in love with her, but he loves her for what is on the outside and that is all he cares about. This could also be compared to the love Andrés feels for La Chinita in “El Saxo en la Niebla”, since he falls in love with the young girl’s beauty the moment they meet. However, the way Andrés describes her suggests that he has

⁹ “Un Saxo en la Niebla” page 10 – Manuel Rivas.

¹⁰ “Un Saxo en la Niebla” page 1 – Manuel Rivas.

¹¹ “Carmiña” page 1 – Manuel Rivas.

more true feelings for her and doesn't just want her in a physical way, unlike Carmiña and O'Lis, which is essentially just lust.

All of Rivas' short stories progress just as one would through life. The first story of "La Lengua de las Mariposas" describes the love experienced from a child's perspective, but in a friendly and amiable way. Whereas "Un Saxo en la Niebla" explores the love experienced in the next stages of life; the adolescent side of love which has an overwhelming nature that makes the teens feel flustered and excited when they're together. Furthermore, "Carmiña" illustrates an adult love which is based purely on physical attraction. All these themes are explained and shown in different ways, but Manuel Rivas uses techniques, such as imagery and effective word choice, to convey the importance that they all have in people's lives.

Word count (excluding quotes, footnotes, and bibliography.)
1511

Bibliography

"La Lengua de las Mariposas" (1995) Manuel Rivas

"Un Saxo en la Niebla" (1995) Manuel Rivas

"Carmiña" (1995) Manuel Rivas

"La Lengua de las Mariposas" (2000 film) José Luis Cuerda

To be completed by the candidate

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Please tick (✓) the option chosen and note the portfolio title. A tick (✓) should also be entered to confirm the inclusion of the bibliography, and the word count should be indicated.

Portfolio option (please tick (✓) <u>one</u> option only)		
Literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Language in Work	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Portfolio title	Analyse the ways in which Manuel Rivas conveys the three different types of love (friendship, lust and adolescent) in the three short stories ; "la lengua de las Mariposas, Un Saxo en la Niebla, and Carriña) and the film adaptation by José Luis Cuerda "La lengua de las Mariposas".	
Bibliography enclosed (please tick) (✓)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
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