Parallels Of Latin American Culture Essay, Research Paper

There is an uncountable amount of references of Latin American culture found within the

literature, Pedro Paramo by Juan Rulfo, and No One Writes To the Colonel by Gabriel

Garcia Marquez. The question is; can the reader whose cultural experiences are based in

the United States of American relate and make relevant to themselves the aspects of Latin

American Culture? Through the comparison of sport, such as cock-fighting, a Latin

American pastime, The roles of a small town vs. a large urban American city, and the part

the Patron plays in the community, it can be seen that the United States reader does not

have the Latin American experiences necessary to easily relate to many of the situations

presented in the texts.

Cock-fighting is an important sport in No On Writes to the Colonel, and is referred

to many times through out the book. Cock-fighting is used as a means for economic gain

and an improvement in one’s standing in the community. Cock-fighting in the story is

viewed in different lights. To some, the fights represent the risk of gambling and the

decaying state of the society. These people would see the violent and greedy nature of the

sport as the people’s last resort for economic stability with a high price to pay; morals and

decency. The other side of the spectrum would view the sport as a highly entertaining

pastime that has monetary as well as social benefits. A man could become rich and

respected off the fighting ability of his trained animal. Interestingly enough there is a

highly similar sport in the United States that faces these exact clashing viewpoints; for

example, the highly regarded and disregarded sport of professional wrestling. One side of

the United State’s population would cite this activity as an immoral and disgusting sport

that feeds on the lust for money and violence of a lower-class group of individuals.

However, the opposing side views it merely as a good laugh and an easy and entertaining

outlet for mans inscrutable appetite for gambling. These two parallels between Latin

American culture as presented in these two texts and United States culture, obviously give

the U.S. reader the ability to make the situations and pastimes presented in the book

relevant to themselves.

In Pedro Paramo , the plot is based around an extremely small and isolated town

named Comala, in the midst of the Mexican landscape. This setting is often presented in

Latin American literature because it is only there where small towns are isolated from each

other and the rest of the world because of barriers in the terrain and communication, as

well as tradition. The city of Comala, and isolated and desolate ghost city is not

questioned or uncommon when viewed in Latin American literature, however there is very

little like this to be found in the United States. The United States reader would know that

throughout the U.S. landmass even small distant cities are connected to the tangle of

communication, commerce and tourism that is America. It is because the U.S. reader has

never been in an environment as isolated and completely separated from a mainstream

society as seen in Comala in Pedro Paramo, it is hard to really relate to that type of

setting. This is one example of the vast differences between the two cultures that

interferes with the readers ability to connect with the relevance of some of the material in

Latin American literature.

One more example that demonstrates the effect that the differences in the cultures

of Latin American and the United States have on the readers ability to relate to the text, is

the role of a Patron in a community. Throughout both of the texts the Patron plays a very

important part. He is feared, he is respected and he is the corrupt owner of towns and

their inhabitants. In the Latin American culture it is not considered to be a monopolistic

type of situation, rather more of a community leader controlling the town. In a land of

free enterprise and a place where the government has control over the amount of control

that one person can have over the people, the readers in the United States have very little

to relate to when it comes to the role of the Patron. Although the Patron plays a very

solid role in Latin American society, there is very little comparison to something of that

sort in the U.S. Once again there seems to be one more difference in the cultures that

presents itself as a gap between the U.S. reader and the relation of situations in Latin

American Literature to situations in the reader’s own library of experiences.

Although we are provided with a few instances where the references to Latin

American culture, such as sport, are parallel to specific examples of United States culture,

there is still a vast amount of differences that cannot be compared. The setting of a small

completely isolated town such as Comala in Pedro Paramo by Juan Rulfo, for instance

cannot be paired with any strong similarities in U.S. culture that would have enough

substance to bring the two cultures into one underlying experience. This is also the same

with the highly visible and integral role of the Patron in Latin American culture in

comparison to the United States culture which boasts next to nothing that can be seen as a

comparison to the Patron. Pedro Paramo and No One Writes to the Colonel , simply do

not contain enough cultural examples that the U.S. reader can relate to though cultural

experiences found in the United States. Had either of the two works presented more

universal settings and traditions, The reader based in the cultural setting of main-stream

America would have been able to make to aspects of Latin American culture relevant to

themselves through personal experiences with United States culture.