

## **Modes of communication in Laura Esquivel's *Like water for Chocolate***

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### **Abstract**

Laura Esquivel examines communication expression and repression in her book *Like Water for Chocolate*. Esquivel illustrates the value of interaction for both people and communities via the use of enchanted reality, the Mexican Revolution, interpersonal interactions, and cuisine. Tita, the protagonist of this book, is deprived of her basic right to communicate. Although Tita has complicated relationships with all the members of the home, Mama Elena, Tita's mother, tries to silence her by prohibiting Tita from expressing her feelings verbally. She has to discover alternative ways to express her innermost thoughts and aspirations as a result of this denial. Esquivel may have wanted to show via *Like Water for Chocolate* how vital communication is and how oppression of one's capacity for communication can manifest itself in whatever way possible. The purpose of this article is to show how protagonist Tita communicates when normal way of expressing is deprived for her.

**Keywords:** communication, food, revolution, Esquivel, grievance.

Humans have a basic desire for communication. It is essential to everyone's existence and development. Every kind of tyranny starts by either removing this or by fostering an atmosphere in which communication becomes completely irrelevant and ineffective. For numerous individuals, the ability to voice their opinions and get recognition is frequently suppressed from birth, rather than being offered as a choice. For these individuals, silence and the inevitable obedience of the downtrodden are produced by the combination of their cultures, religious beliefs, political environments, and—most importantly—family dynamics.

The main topic of Laura Esquivel's book *Like Water for Chocolate* is dialogue. Through the relationships between the characters, magical realism, revolution setting, and food preparation, the author makes it evident. However, she also suggests that for an individual, family, or society to thrive, communication is essential. According to her, women in restrictive circumstances use the kitchen as a communication channel, and when this channel is blocked, it negatively affects both their emotional and physical well-being.

A mind's reality frequently shows itself indirectly when it is unable to express itself freely. It appears that the truth about the human psyche always finds a way to surface. Leading psychologist Alice Miller, who specializes on how childhood trauma affects an individual's life and society at large, has written extensively about the investigation of how an individual's true expressions manifest in their job. The tales, drawings, and other artistic media they provide frequently become intricately entwined with the reality in which they weren't free to speak. However, Miller contends that if an individual's truths do not reach their conscious awareness for integration, they frequently manifest as physical illnesses or even events that appear to be outside of their control. Miller wrote a whole book,

The Body Never Lies, about the former in which she describes how the past affects how both ordinary people's and celebrities' bodies work.

The narrative starts when Tita, at fifteen, falls in love and asks Pedro for her hand in marriage. Since Tita is the youngest of the three daughters she has, Mama Elena, Tita's mother, bans the marriage, reasoning that Tita must stay single in order to take care of her mother when she becomes older. Rosaura, Mama Elena's eldest daughter, is the one Pedro should marry instead. Pedro gives in so he may be near to Tita. Roberto is Pedro and Rosaura's son, whom Tita looks for and later breastfeeds when Rosaura lacks the ability to give milk. Tita finds solace in the kitchen after being born there and spending much of her childhood there under the care of Nacha, the family chef. It is there that she quickly realises she can express her feelings.

Tita's cuisine starts to influence her family, evoking lustful feelings and tears in an almost magical way. When a soldier passes by Tita's sister Gertrudis, whose warm body draws his attention, it is her food that proves to be most shocking. He leaves on horseback with her, and thereafter, Gertrudis rises to the rank of colonel in the Mexican troops. Mama Elena is hesitant to trust Tita and Pedro, so she makes Pedro and Rosaura relocate to San Antonio, Texas. When Roberto passes away, Tita becomes mad. Dr. John Brown takes her from a mental facility and brings her back to health, relocating her into his home. After Mama Elena is hurt during a rebel troop raid, Tita goes back to her house to prepare food for her resentful mother, who believes Tita poisoned her.

After Pedro and Rosaura return for the burial, Pedro and Tita start dating, even though Tita has already accepted John Brown's proposal of marriage. Reassured that she is carrying Pedro's kid, Tita calls off her commitment to John Brown. Rosaura has a daughter named Esperanza, whom she plans to maintain in the role of carer as she ages. Years later, Pedro is free to wed Tita, and Esperanza is free to marry John Brown's son following Rosaura's death from a stomach ailment. Both Pedro and Tita die in a passionate union, lighting the farm on fire with the depth of their love, after being aroused by the dinner Tita prepared. Ultimately, the only thing still present at the ranch is Tita's cookbook.

After several years of not having the ability to express herself, Tita seduces her sister Gertrudis to a life of liberty and desire for pleasure one day when she prepares an incredible lunch. Upon her return to the ranch, Gertrudis is devastated to learn of her mother's passing from Tita. She misses the chance to show off her prosperity and her departure from all conventional ideals, despite her misgivings. Tita uses her energy to focus on cooking and other housework as a method to rebel against her mother's oppression. She is skilled at using the circumstances that constrain her to express herself creatively. Tita is set free by her mother's passing, yet her mother's spirit follows her about. She says, "I know who I am," casting off the spectre of her mother. An individual who is completely entitled to live her life as she pleases. "I will not put up with you; please leave me alone once and for all! I have always disliked you, and I still do (Esquivel 199)." With this, she ultimately gains the ability to express her true sentiments about her mother and reclaims her right to define herself.

Rosaura's disobedience was entirely subliminal. Her feelings were suppressed, and suppressed emotions typically result in serious sickness and early death. All of a sudden, Gertrudis flees, Tita stays, battles, and eventually wins, and Rosaura's only way out is via suicide. Whether affecting an entire family or a country, fundamental change typically necessitates a variety of struggles and sacrifices. Although this family suffered greatly, their generation did manage to upend deeply ingrained family structures that had been present for many generations.

The author gives the characters a means of communicating their need for communication through the Mexican Revolution, cuisine, and magical realism. Every element of a biological system has to be in some sort of communication with every other element for the system to live and grow. They must continue to be receptive—both to receiving what they require and to environmental changes that may require them to adjust. Mama Elena's domineering presence caused her household's residents much distress. Tita ultimately lived a life devoted to others rather than having the opportunity to fully enjoy her own because of Rosaura's rejection, which ultimately killed her. Gertrudis managed to escape, but not without a price: she became estranged from her family.

Esquivel may have wanted to show how important communication is and that when someone's ability to communicate is oppressed, it will manifest itself in any way possible by looking at the different ways it is expressed throughout *Like Water for Chocolate*. Every element in the book

serves as a communication tool. Laura Esquivel explored relationships, magical realism, the Mexican Revolution backdrop, and the recurring topic of food as a means of addressing communication.

In the narrative, Tita's primary means of communicating is through food. The sole means of self-expression Tita has been trained is through this communication method. Throughout the whole book, the author employs magical realism as a means or result of communication. In certain cases, the definition of "Like Water for Chocolate" is given as "Water at its boiling point." This type of communication is evident when the protagonists are at their most desperate. Everyone who eats the cake is moved to tears by Tita's emotions, and in a final nod to fantasy, Tita and Pedro burn down the ranch when their love is complete. Esquivel changes the nature of communication and its importance as a tangible basis in the literary arts. However, the article examines the characters' emotional intensity in light of their escape from reality. Through brave speech, one may undoubtedly refuse to live an oppressed existence.

### **Work Cited**

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