

1. *Love in the Time of Cholera*, as the title indicates, interweaves experiences of love with those of disease and sickness. Why does the novel suggest that love = cholera? What does it imply about the nature of passion? Establish through examples what you understand this metaphor to mean in the novel, and then analyze the relationships between the three principal characters in the light of your definition. It will be crucial to your essay that you account for the ending of the novel. How does Garcia Marquez resolve the paradoxes that follow from understanding love as a disease? What are we as readers meant to learn from Fermina Daza's and Florentino Ariza's decision to remain on that ship forever?

2. "Without river navigation," says Uncle Leo XII to young Florentino Ariza, "there is no love" (168). What is the irony in this statement? For this essay, explore the theme of love in its relation to business, work, and social class. How does the love story involve questions of social inequality and justice? What do these questions tell us about that nature of love and passion in the world?

3. After making love to Ausencia Santander, Florentino Ariza says, "You treat me as if I were just anybody." She laughs and replies: "Not at all: as if you were nobody" (178). One theme from *Love in the Time of Cholera* centers on the tension between "true" and "false" love. How can you tell the difference between them in the novel? When is love faithful, and when is it faithless? When is it sincere or authentic, and when is it just about using others as "means to an end"? Explore the ironies and ambiguities present in the novel whenever love takes place (or seems to take place) with the three main characters. Analyze their motives. Why does Dr. Urbino marry Fermina Daza? Why does Fermina Daza reject Florentino Ariza? And why does Florentino Ariza remain "faithful" his whole life to the memory of Fermina Daza?

4. Many of you have probably noticed how *Love in the Time of Cholera* does not read in a linear or chronological order. Garcia Marquez skips back and forth through time, confusing his reader to the point where you often don't know "where you are." What is the name of the city where the story takes place? What is the name of the country? Why is it that we learn nothing about the civil war raging in the background of the story except that it involves "Liberals" and "Conservatives"? Garcia Marquez deliberately creates a sense of being "nowhere," and for this essay I'd like you to explore the theme of being out of this world, otherworldly or in your own world. What is the connection between this "nowhere" and the enchantments—or disenchantments—of love?

5. Explore the tension in the novel between intimacy and strangeness, closeness and distance. Are there characters who seem intimate but really aren't (Fermina Daza and her husband?), and characters who act like strangers but really aren't (Fermina with Florentino)? What is Garcia Marquez trying to tell us about the nature of love through his careful blending and confusing of these experiences?