

## The Portrayal of Diseases in the Select Works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez

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### ABSTRACT

Gabriel Garcia Marquez is one of the greatest novelist to ever live. He was born in Aracataca, Columbia, on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1927. In the year 1982, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Both long and short fictions of Garcia Marquez were received well by the lay readers for its relatability while not failing to awe the most acclaimed critics.

A disease is a particular abnormal condition that negatively affects the structure or function of all or part of an organism, and that is not due to any immediate external injury. Diseases are often known to be medical conditions that are associated with specific symptoms and signs. A disease may be caused by external factors such as pathogens or by internal dysfunctions. For example, internal dysfunctions of the immune system can produce a variety of different diseases, including various forms of immunodeficiency, hypersensitivity, allergies and autoimmune disorders.

At a time when the world is hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic, this paper tries analyse the novels *Love in the Time of Cholera* and *Of Love and Other Demons*, with the aim of uncovering the different ways characters act and react at the thought of disease.

**KEYWORDS:** Disease, Epidemic, Panic, Relief

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### I. INTRODUCTION

On 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1927, the small Colombian village of Aracataca witnessed the birth of one of the greatest novelist and writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Gabriel Garcia Marquez. In the year 1982, he was granted the Nobel Prize for Literature, largely for his best loved work, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967). He was the fourth Latin American to be so regarded. He was preceded great Chilean authors Gabriela Mistral (1945), Pablo Neruda (1971) and Guatemalan author Miguel Angel Asturias (1967). Alongside Jorge Luis Borges, Garcia Marquez is the most popular Latin American author to have walked the earth. Notwithstanding his excellent way to deal with the novel, he was a brilliant writer of short stories and an acclaimed columnist. Both long and short fictions of Garcia Marquez were received well by the lay readers for its relatability while not failing to awe the most acclaimed critics.

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## II. PLOT OVERVIEW

The primary characters of the novel, *Love in the Time of Cholera*, are Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza. Florentino and Fermina begin to look all starry eyed at in their childhood. A mystery relationship blooms between the two with the assistance of Fermina's Aunt Escolástica. They trade love letters. In any case, when Fermina's father, Lorenzo Daza, finds out about the secret affair, he powers Fermina to quit seeing Florentino right away. At the point when she is unable, he moves to another city to live with the family of his dead wife. Notwithstanding the separation, Fermina and Florentino keep on conveying by means of telegraph. Upon her return, Fermina understands that her relationship with Florentino was only a fantasy since they are basically outsiders; she severs her commitment to Florentino and returns every one of his letters.

A youthful and accredited public figure, Dr. Juvenal Urbino, meets Fermina and starts to court her. Regardless of her underlying abhorrence of Urbino, Fermina yields to her dad's influence and the security and riches Urbino offers, and they marry. Urbino is a doctor dedicated to science, advancement, and "order and progress". He is focused on the annihilation of cholera and to the advancement of open works. He is a sane man whose life is sorted out unequivocally and who enormously values his significance and notoriety in the public arena. He is an envoy of progress and modernization.

Even after Fermina's commitment and marriage, Florentino pledged to remain devoted and sit tight for her; yet his indiscrimination shows signs of improvement of him. Indeed, even with all the ladies he is with, he ensures that Fermina will never discover. Then, Fermina and Urbino live a long life together, through the ups and downs of marriage. As an older man, Urbino falls to his death from a ladder in his attempt to recapture his pet parrot which was perched on a mango tree. After the burial service, Florentino declares his adoration for Fermina indeed and reveals to her he has remained dedicated to her every one of these years. Reluctant from the start since she is as of late bereaved, and discovering his advances untoward, Fermina inevitably allows him another opportunity. They endeavour build a life together, having carried on with two lives independently for more than fifty years.

Urbino demonstrates in the end not to have been a totally devoted spouse, admitting one undertaking to Fermina numerous years into their marriage. Despite the fact that the novel implies that Urbino's affection for Fermina was never as profoundly virtuous as Florentino's seemed to be, it additionally confounds Florentino's commitment by inventorying his numerous trysts just as a couple of possibly authentic loves. Before the end, Fermina comes to perceive Florentino's intelligence and development, and their adoration is permitted to bloom during their oldage.

The central character of the novel *Of Love and Other Demons* Sierra is the twelve-year-old girl. She is the daughter of the Marquis and Bernarda, his drug addict wife. Her hair has never been trimmed, as it was dedicated to the saints, when she was brought into the world with the umbilical cord around her neck. She was raised by the slaves, conversant in numerous African dialects, and acquainted with the traditions. She is bitten by a rabid dog in the beginning of the novel. Despite the fact that she gives no indications of rabies, she is dependent upon different "recuperating" techniques, which can be viewed as torment. She is sent to the monastery of Santa Clara to be exorcised, which has led many people to their deaths. She gets consideration from a cleric, Father Cayetano, who is benevolent to her and at first accepts she is not to be exorcised. Father Cayetano is enamoured by Sierva Maria and proclaims her his adoration; not much longer, he starts visiting Sierva Maria in her cell stealthily, moving up from the sewer (which is later barred after his confession). They eat, rest, and recount verse together, despite the fact that it doesn't create the impression that they are explicitly included. Later Father Cayetano is sent away to an outsider emergency clinic where he would like to get the illness yet never does. Sierva Maria meanwhile is last called to be exorcised and she dies "of love" when her hair is cut as part of the exorcism, pondering where Father Cayetano is. After her demise, her hair mystically regenerates.

### **Panic and the Fear of the Unknown**

Panic is an abrupt vibe of dread, which is so solid as to rule or forestall reason and coherent reasoning, supplanting it with overpowering sentiments of uneasiness and unhinged disturbance steady with a bestial battle or-flight response. Panic may happen uniquely in people or show out of nowhere in enormous gatherings as mass frenzy (firmly identified with crowd conduct).

In psychology, panic is recognized as a turmoil and is connected unequivocally to natural and mental elements and their co-operations. A view portrayed one of its rates as a particular mental weakness of individuals to decipher typical actual sensations in a calamitous manner. Leonard J. Schmidt and Brooke Warner (2002) describe panic as "that terrible, profound emotion that stretches us beyond our ability to imagine any experience more horrible" adding that "physicians like to compare painful clinical conditions on some imagined 'Richter scale' of vicious, mean hurt ... to the psychiatrist there is no more vicious, mean hurt than an exploding and personally disintegrating panic attack."

People are additionally defenceless against panic and it is frequently viewed as irresistible, in the sense one individual's panic may effectively spread to others close by and soon the whole gathering acts unreasonably, however individuals likewise can forestall as well as control their own and others' panic by focused reasoning or preparing, (for example, catastrophe drills).

Fear is a feeling actuated by apparent risk or danger, which causes physiological changes and eventually conduct changes, for example, escaping, covering up, or freezing from apparent horrible mishaps. Fear in people may happen in light of a specific boost happening in the present, or in expectation or desire for a future danger saw as a danger to oneself. The fear reaction emerges from the view of risk prompting encounter with or escape from/dodging the danger (otherwise called the battle or-flight reaction), which in outrageous instances of dread (loathsomeness and fear) can be a freeze reaction or loss of motion.

Fear of the obscure or unreasonable dread is brought about by negative reasoning (stress) which emerges from nervousness joined by an emotional feeling of anxiety or fear. Silly dread offers a typical neural pathway with different apprehensions, a pathway that draws in the sensory system to assemble substantially assets despite peril or danger. Xenophobia or the dread of the obscure is essentially brought about by two components. They are – Lack of consistency and lack of control.

Lack of consistency - Feeling that you need more data to create exact forecasts can make your nervousness rise. One approach to balance the absence of consistency is to get more data. For instance, in the event that you are encountering trepidation of the obscure identified with another school or neighbourhood, you should seriously mull over investigating the territory before your turn. You can make face to face or web based investigating undertakings to discover more about what your new life will resemble.

Lack of control - Feeling that you cannot control your conditions makes certain to cause your tension level to rise. Age and handicap can both decline your feeling of organization (the conviction that you can assume responsibility for your own life). To recover your feeling of organization, you can begin by breaking down your conditions and posting the things you can and cannot control. You can diminish vulnerability by making an arrangement that incorporates steps you can take in territories inside your control.

In the novels *Love in the Time of Cholera* and *Of Love and Other Demons*, the encounter with a relatively unknown disease and a perceived disease causes extreme fear and panic in the minds of the characters. In the case of *Love in the Time of Cholera*, it is an epidemic of cholera which had very little chance of survival for the victims. The fear in the minds of the entire nation and the world as a whole is portrayed quite picturesquely in certain instances. The fear springs from the lack of knowledge about the causes and cure of the disease. The people appear terrified at the thought of being infected by Cholera.

When Florentino falls in love with Fermina and awaits the reply for his first love letter, he becomes love-sick and his symptoms resembled more of Cholera rather than that of love. Transito is horror-struck when she finds Florentino sick. As a mother, she had celebrated the lovesickness of her son till then, but when it worsens and appears like cholera, it aroused fear in her mind.

... his anguish was complicated by diarrhoea and green vomit, he became disoriented and suffered from sudden fainting spells, and his mother was terrified because his condition did not resemble the turmoil of love so much as the devastation of cholera. (LTC, 43)

Similarly, the first meeting between Fermina and Dr. Urbino happens when he comes for a house call on a suspected case of Cholera. The otherwise hot tempered Lorenzo Dasa was terrified at the thought that his daughter might be infected with cholera. To his relief Fermina was diagnosed with intestinal infection and not Cholera. The status associated with the doctor's family name coupled with the joy of his daughter being safe from Cholera made Lorezo pay Dr. Urbino with a gold pezo.

When it comes to *Of Love and Other Demons*, the fear springs from the suspicion of rabies infection to Sierva Maria. She gets bitten by a dog which was allegedly rabid and suffers from a fever as a result. The doctor, Dr. Abrenuncio, dismiss the possibility of her being infected but the religious head of the locality is unconvinced of it and calls it a demonic possession. His method of treating her was the barbaric and cruel exorcism which has led to the death of many people.

In either novel, it can be seen that scientifically inclined persons are free from the irrational fear due to their knowledge about the reason for fear. Being doctors, Urbino and Abrenuncio are immune to the mass panic and fear owing to their knowledge of the disease which is the reason for fear.

### **Disease as Relief from Social Norms**

The novels portray a wide range of human behaviour in times of epidemic. The most striking feature among these is the particular reaction of certain characters who make use of the disease and associated social stigma and fear to their advantage both positively and negatively.

To delve deeper into *Love in the Time of Cholera*, the ending of the novel is when Florentino asks the Captain to hoist a yellow flag signalling the presence of Cholera on-board and thus preventing anybody from entering the boat and disturb the old couple while they intend to sail eternally in the river. Here, Florentino and

Fermina are indulged in a relationship which would not be accepted by the society and therefore they want it to be hidden from the society. Also, they wish to never end their relation. For this purpose, they make use of the fear that the public has towards Cholera. This is an innovative way that they make use of.

In *Of Love and Other Demons*, Sierva Maria initially tries to rebel against her confinement due to her alleged illness, but then she comes across Father Cayetano, who is the only person to love her. Though, she hates her confinement, she embraces her situation as she is able to experience love. Though she is not attached to her captor, she is definitely attached to her captivity. Therefore, this can be likened to Stockholm Syndrome.

Further, Father Cayetano is filled with regret at his relationship with Sierva Maria and begs God for forgiveness. When his relationship is discovered, he is sent to a hospital where lepers are treated. He embraces the punishment with the hope that he might contract the disease and die which can be a relief to his tormented existence.

### III. CONCLUSION

To sum up, it can be said that, initially, everyone responds to diseases, specifically unknown ones, with panic and fear, but, with time, they gain more information about it and this leads to a better understanding of it. Once they acquire a better perspective of the situation, fear gives way to enlightenment. Later, this new found wisdom helps the individual to leverage the situation to his/her own benefit.

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