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Fictional and Factual Framework of Diseases in *Love in the Time of Cholera* and *The Calcutta*

### *Chromosome*

Abstract: There are many writers who use factual and fictional framework for their creative writing. Usually, they use the social, political and economic backdrop for molding the story but some author, who used diseases as a backdrop for developing their plot. They use the flavor of disease to reflect the moods and emotions of the character. The story between the line of the life and death moves with strange passion towards the end and the end of life starts with the rebirth of human being. To intense the distance between life and death, the author gives descriptions of the dead people and for that, he uses many symptoms of diseases as a flavor. The disease may be in society or in neuro of the character is fictional as well as real that provides more opportunities for the reader for analysis. My intention in the present paper is to analyze how the flavor of the disease has depicted in the fictional work by authors.

#### Introduction

It is deliberated that there were no relationship between medical and literature but many characters in the fiction has affected by the disease and its symptoms. Blair Smith says that “In

medicine we are constantly dealing with stories, and there may be little substantial difference between a case history, a biographical account of illness and a fictional account of illness in a novel”<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand Rousseau aptly clarified that "Bridges between literature and medicine would seem to be the most natural of passages, requiring no justification on the brink of the twenty-first century ... What other domains of human experience and the representation of that experience could be more naturally linked?"<sup>2</sup> thus the link of medical disciplines has attached to the literature. Life and disease are inseparable parts of the human life. Many fictions have written with the combination of medical and fictional work in the literature. It provides new dimension to the expansion of fictional writing.

At the beginning of the human civilization, the disease also appeared as distracter of life. People don't know how a disease comes from but after the time they learn that it comes from ugliness and dirty living. There were no scientific progresses, so when disease increases mob of people dies in that disaster. The disease of plague, cholera, and malaria are major among them, which create fear and terror among the citizen. Many novels has depicted scenario of disease in the setting of the novel to highlight the situation of the character and to focus social disruptions of the time. Due to less scientific progress, people use local and herbal medicine. In the course of time, many heroes' died by disease in the world and also many stories also emerged from that disaster.

When human race emerged in African countries, there was the existence of germs in every walk of human life. There was an existence of Helicobacter in stomach and germs of T B were preserves with them. It was transformed to not only human being but also the wild animal like Tiger, Lion, and Panther. Before ten thousand year man started farming, lived in the company of people in the village. He has tamed bulls, horses, cat, dogs as well as hen and duck. They keep all

these animals in the farmhouse. There was close interaction between man and animal so there was an alteration of germs. Many times germs take shelter in the human body so they changed their symptoms to live there. It caused serious diseases to the human being, it was a viral disease. Many times human body developed their resistant power to battle with germs and germs also raised their power to face challenges to live in the human body. The battle has started still today to overcome each other.

In Roman period germs traveled through sea voyages and camel wagon. In Africa and Asia, animal became the close partner in life struggle so there was an outbreak of malaria, cholera, smallpox, thyroid etc. Columbus traveled germs of syphilis to Europe and Vasco de Gama extended to Kolkata. Napoleon was defeated in Russia because he has looted Poland in the midway they affected with Typhus germs and that ruined his soldiers. When soldiers had been on expedition, they never take bath properly so it produces a large number of germs. Furthermore, in the battle, they exchange not only wounds but the hazardous germs. They used germs affected slaves as the weapon to defeat other soldiers. In 1519, when Spanish ship reached Mexican coast there was giant soldiers of Azetake people so Spanish soldiers through one slave infected with smallpox and crushed Mexico. Human history has been enriched with great kings and warriors but it is also more enriched with a voyage of germs.

The present research focuses how the author uses a framework of the disease to highlight his subject matter. What is the common thread between human and germs that creates the frame to life? Why the author interested in making the disease framework to his fictional work? To provide fresh perspective of life is the one of major intention of the paper.

*Love in the Time of Cholera: Gabriel Garcia Marquez*

In the novel, Marquez painted the marvelous story of an old couple falling in love at the epidemics of cholera disease. Though the novel is full of romantic moods and aspirations the title of the novel *Love in the Time of Cholera* offers more importance to the love as well as cholera. The spread of cholera was a critical atmosphere and in this atmosphere, love story blossoms are really amazing to the readers. In the epidemics of disease everyone protects us from the infection but here is a love story. The story also unfolds sex without love and loveless marriage. It also suggests that love has no barrier of time and age. Time is also the major aspect, which shows nothing can be move with times permission. The concept of disease is not only physical but it can be mental disease. They are harmful and cross the limit of all type.

Florentino Ariza and Farmina Daze are the central characters in the narrative discourse. Florentino falls in love with Farmina and writes many romantic letters to the beloved. She falls in love with Florentino but her father was against this love. He suggested many times to Farmina that was not love but infatuations. She rejects all the consolations and continued her relationship with him. Unfortunately, her father sends her to other places far away from the love of Florentino. After some time, she also realized that it was not loved but a romantic idea of Florentino attracts too much her. She married to the doctor Urbino, who dies at the age of fifty-two and once again Florentino proposed Farmina at the time of her husband's funeral ceremony. She once again accepted Florentino and loves him. When she feels awkward about her love at this age she requested Florentino so he declares that ship has infected with cholera so no one can disturb newly engaged couple.

In the novel, three incidents are very significant regarding this research paper. First is doctor Urbino's friend, who commits suicide because he fears to tackle with old age. The fear of old age compels to the person to commit suicide because he swore that he will die at the age of

sixty and not willing to face problems of old age. This is one of the epiphanies that used to realize that aging is dangerous. Second, the marriage of Farmina and Urbino, they lived together as an adjustment of marriage because her father thinks that economical settlement is important in life. They quarreled early in morning every day but that become the habitual action of the couple. When Urbino dies, Florentino proposed it's somewhat dangers like the disease that at the funeral process of husband he proposes widow. At first, she feels furious about the matter but at the night she saw dreams of Florentino as a lover. The third is the most important that shows the significance of the title. The couple tries to make conception on the boat but at the first time they are unsuccessful. At last, they engaged in love forgetting the entire world. Florentino suggested captain of the ship that he should declares the ship is infected with cholera so no one can disturb them. According to Anne Hudson Jones

“The title, *Love in the Time of Cholera*, is associated with many aspects of the novel. Urbino first meets Fermina because he is called in to attend her when she falls ill during a cholera epidemic. Her father fears she has cholera, but Urbino correctly diagnoses a minor stomach ailment instead. Florentino suffers physically from symptoms that look like those of cholera, green vomit and diarrhoea, when he suffers most from love. He has attacks as a young man, when he is first wooing Fermina, and he has a memorable attack the first time Fermina agrees to receive him in her house a year or so after her husband's funeral.”<sup>3</sup>

Colombian writer Garcia Marquez has well depicted political violence and technological developments with an aging love story. Disease in the framework of love story has multiple meanings regarding political atmosphere of the country. Latin America has been facing the

problems of violence. There are large numbers of the massacre. The Mexican revolution and civil war also affected the climate of the nation. It was not directly fingered to the issue but indirectly shows that cholera has destroyed many people. Cholera is the symbol of rottenness of the society. In the name of modernity, they are losing old natural values of the glorious nation. Dr. Juvenal Urbino functions within the novel as the flag bearer of innovative ideas and positive modernity. He belonged to the class that was interested in order and progress but still he follows the party politics. Cholera epidemic brings him as a guardian of social health but still, he obliged to support his values and his belief that

"the city, his city, stood unchanging on the edge of time: the same burning dry city of his nocturnal terrors and the solitary pleasures of puberty, where flowers rusted and salt corroded, where nothing had happened for four centuries except a slow aging among withered laurels and putrefying swamps" (LTC, P.16).

Dr. Urbino is central character related to Scio-economic power network in the modernity on the other hand slave quarters are described as a death trap for the poor. Cholera as a political violence is the vital aspects of the novel. Thus, for example, at the opening of the fifth section, when Dr. Urbino with his wife makes their first tour in a balloon for the merriment of the new era, they discover through a telescope a number of dead bodies in the banana plantations which they attribute to cholera widespread.

"Well, it must be a very special form of cholera," [Urbino] said, "because every single corpse has received the coup de grace through the back of the neck" (LTC, p.117).

Florentino Ariza reveals his eccentricity in love with Farmina, he is kind of lunatic lover, who handled all the forms of love to court woman. He used romantic style to impress with poems, roses, love letters and perfume. He eventually involved in a feverish correspondence with himself,

is the height of romantic attitude. It looks like not love but the syndrome of disease of love. When he saw the reflection of Farmina in looking-glass in one of the restaurant, he insisted to buy it from an owner. After the half-century, he met his beloved, when he became bald and toothless. Along with commercial and sentimental writing, he contributes as a resourceful writer in the poetry competition. He has gathered all details in a book that was titled "Women" and that describes the story of his romantic adventures. There were

"some twenty-five notebooks, with six hundred twenty-two entries of long-term liaisons, apart from the countless fleeting adventures that did not even deserve a charitable note" (LTC, p.152).

Though A Mark Clarfield says that "in this story, cholera can be many things: a killer, an excuse to take a long love-filled boat journey, or a metaphor for war. Regarding the latter, throughout the story, bloated corpses turn up intermittently and disturbingly. The author never quite makes clear whether the bodies are the result of 'el cholera' the disease or 'la cholera'—anger, which if not controlled can end in violence and ultimately war".<sup>4</sup>I think Garcia Marquez's narrative achievement in *Love in the Time of Cholera* reflects meaning in life can be achieved in the world only by the love. He linked directly love with the disease because in modernity we lost natural values. The weakness of modern world cannot fulfill without love and this is disease must be conquered by the bringing back the love like Florentino and Farmina.

#### *The Calcutta Chromosome: Amitav Ghosh*

Amitav Ghosh is the prominent voice of postcolonial Indian English writers, who came into limelight with the publication of *The Shadow Line*. He is one of the most genuine scholars crafting fiction in English today. He is recognized as the finest practitioner of the genre among those who developed out of the post-Midnight's Children boom in Indian English fiction. John

Thieme remarked that "At first sight, Amitav Ghosh may appear to be one of the burgeoning group of post-Rushdie Indian novelists in English for whom globalization is an everyday fact of existence".<sup>5</sup> He has composed reliably great fictional and non-fictional writing which have won incredible praise both in India and abroad. Amitav Ghosh has been the subject of many critical works and much more are likely to be published because of his developing worldwide fame. Barbara Romanik comments that "He {Ghosh} retells the story of Sir Ronald Ross's discovery of the transmission of malaria."<sup>6</sup> Critics have recognized his extraordinary virtuosity as a faithful chronicler of the contemporary world. He has improved our insight of buried histories and established a powerful witness to the historic events of our times.

*The Calcutta Chromosome* is one of the best novels written by Indian author and anthropologist Amitav Ghosh. The leading character Antar, who is Egyptian-born and computer savvy worked in the International Water Council. In his New York flat, he was monitoring his computer's processing in a bored way thinking that he will walk to Penn Station and dinner later with his neighbor, Tara. Unexpectedly he saw scorched ID card with the Life Watch logo, and he remembers an eccentric colleague obsessed with a malaria pioneer. He intended on going to Calcutta to visit L. Murugan. Thus begins Ghosh's story of fevers, delirium, and discovery that unfolds buried history of malaria before centuries ago in Indian continents. The story moves back and forth between New York and Calcutta in Renupur.

In the novel, the belief among the malaria researchers is that the disease transference the mind from one body to another. The DNA conglomerate thus uncovered is the biological connection to the human soul. It happens because the malaria parasite residing in the brain's non-regenerative tissue alters the brain's chemistry in a strange way. Therefore, the infected person not only hallucinates but shifts his perception into another time and place, even into another body. It

is like that old idea of re-embodiment was explained by pseudo-scientific is truly justified. It was the idea that migration of the soul from one body to another, it may be human or animal means transformation of the soul. The idea is cleared by Murugan is that It is the psychic essence and not just the physical body, which is transferred by the disease. The person with a four-finger left hand – Lutchman, Lakhan, Ronen, and Lucky- suggests even a physical reproduction. It is more vital are that almost all characters behave in this way and perform a similar function.

The chromosome for Ghosh is the chromosome that contains the DNA and predicts the progression of an organism, holding its basic arrangement in a compressed form. It is also passed on from one generation to the next, thus helping a life-form survive and evolve over time. This "Calcutta Chromosome" transfers personality traits from one individual to another, in a way suggesting immortality. As Murugan tells Antar:

"Just think a fresh start: when your body fails you, you leave it, you migrate – you or at least a matching symptomology of yourself. You begin all over again, another beginning, a technology that lets you improve in your next incarnation" (TCC, p. 91-92).

It is clarified that the chromosome to be investigated is the one that is common to Tagore, Ray, and Ghosh. It is what might be called "the bhadrlok chromosome that carries from one generation to the next, the crisis of the bhadrasamaj." <sup>7</sup>The middle class who adopted notions of courtesy and politeness, whose ethos and values constitute the foundation of national culture.

The bhadrasamaj of Bengal was able to decipher the fruits of the Enlightenment into its own identity of humanism in spite of the humiliation and self-alienation created by colonialism. From Rammohan Roy to Ramakrishna Paramhansa, from Bankim Chandra Chatterjee to Satyajit Ray, and from Rabindranath Tagore to Sunil Gangopadhyay, the bhaderlok was able to accommodate in India. The ultimate target of the rationalized cultivated group was not just

individual right but collective sovereignty. Such courageous transformation into the conceptualization of fiction has marvelously mingled by Ghosh, especially more fruitful in *Calcutta Chromosome*. The author cares that this notion of a chromosome is unique because it is not transmitted from generation to generation by sexual production but because it develops out of the process of recombination and is particularly to every individual.

The plot of the novel seemed to be more interesting with the details of how Ronald Ross and others worked to decipher the actual cause behind the spreading of the dreadful disease 'malaria'. It is about a man's quest for finding the truth behind the cause of malaria and the research that went behind it. We move back and forth to the period when Ross was researching. It shows that Ross's research was the cause of malaria in order to find some other top-secret. Ghosh enriches the touch of Hindu mythology to the science story. What emerges out of the novel as a fundamental concern is the utter neglect of what existed in India as science and later, also the racial discrimination that Indian scientists faced in the highly structured 'colonial science' service dominated by the British? Sakoon N Singh commented that "By juxtaposing the story of malaria research and an actual scientist and his lab boy with the esoteric going on of this mysterious sect he creates a breathtaking pacy narrative that moves between silence and knowledge, science and non-science."<sup>8</sup>

In May 1895, Ross made his first important step when he detected the early stages of the malarial parasite inside a mosquito stomach. But he was unfortunately transferred to Bangalore to examine an outbreak of cholera. In Bangalore, there were no regular cases of malaria. He said to Manson that "I am thrown out of employment and have 'no work to do'." But in April he, fortunately, visited Sigur Ghat near the hill station of Ooty, where he finds a mosquito on the wall in a strange posture, and for that, he named "dappled-winged" mosquito. He was shifted to

Secunderabad in June 1896. After two years continuous efforts, in July 1897, he managed to culture twenty adults "brown" mosquitoes from collected bugs. He successfully infected the mosquitoes from a patient named Husein Khan. After blood checking, he separated the mosquito and found a circular cell from the gut. This finding was published on 18 December 1897 issue of British Medical Journal. On August 20, 1897, he confirmed the existence of the malarial parasite inside the gut of mosquito and in next day he also confirmed the evolution of the parasite in the mosquito. In the evening, with happy mood, he composed the following beautiful poem for his discovery to send his wife.

This day relenting God  
Hath placed within my hand  
A wondrous thing; and God  
Be praised. At His command,  
Seeking His secret deeds  
With tears and toiling breath,  
I find thy cunning seeds,  
O million-murdering Death.  
I know this little thing  
A myriad men will save.  
O Death, where is thy sting?  
Thy victory, O Grave?

Thus Ghosh traces the history of the mysterious and fascinating "*Calcutta Chromosome*" that aims at 'immortality' through interpersonal transference in his medical thriller. The main thrust is Ronald Ross's discovery of the life cycle of the malaria parasite. The novel negates the

rational view of science and the universe. It unfolds discovery over an important area of knowledge that wrenched by Europeans and granted by Indians. It is novel of discovery and the mystery of malaria research re-channeled through India.

## Conclusion

In the paper, I highlight the aspect of the disease, how Marquez has used as a fictional framework in his novel. The background he has described is not in details but always gives the glimpses of the disease affected environment that we always feel that there are disease affected circumstances. One time it feels that love becomes like a disease that girl loves boy not on human values but on the bases of healthy bank balance. For example, Farmina's father suggested love is not important but the settlement is important in life. Florentino also follow his love half a century, making sex without love and love with uncomfortable sex. It also highlights that Colombian society has got the disease of ferocity and political horizon has darkened with full of violence. Even, it is suggested that love is vital rather than disease affected minds. The author used the imaginative border of disease to highlight the value of human love in the world

Ghosh is mostly interested in presenting forgotten and untold stories though colonialism, religion, and identity crisis are major issues in his fictional universe, the discontent of knowledge and scientific rationality also an important aspect of his fictional work. He narrates the stories of passed people and bygone times to offer the opportunity to evaluate historical reality. The chromosome story is a hidden or untold account of malaria para-colonial knowledge within a colonial and post-colonial environment. He has used the factual framework that discovery of malaria disease by British scientist Ronald Ross and his Indian assistances in Calcutta. It was intensively searched in the colonial period to cure the epidemics of disease. It was interesting truth behind the finding of malaria research story that real credit of research goes to Indian subordinate

people. Though research of malaria has credited to British scientist but it was in the chromosome of Indian mythology and Hindu tradition. Though the end of the novel is abrupt that challenges the reader to find out historical fact in the medical research.

Both these dazzling novelists enlarged the scope of fictions by their inquiry into the disease affected world. Though their shaping is in different cultures - one in Colombian and other in Indian - their depth of perceptions have similarity. They depict the struggle of human life through the epidemics of disease and it perceives entirely new realization of life.

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