The Dangers of Gullible Reading: Narrative as Seduction in García Márquez' Love in the Time of Cholera

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Abstract
Gabriel García Márquez's Love in the Time of Cholera has frequently been read largely as a beautiful love story involving the lifelong fascination of Florentino Ariza with Fermina Daza and the eventual consummation of that fascination. Meanwhile, the text gains much of its energy from an opposition between the poetic romanticism of Ariza and the practical (though somewhat sinister) scientific thinking of Dr. Juvenal Urbino, Fermina's longtime husband. However, this opposition is not nearly as simple as it might appear. Ariza and Urbino being just as susceptible to the narrative of scientific progress as Ariza is to bad poetry, and Ariza being just as blind to the negative effects of his actions as is Urbino. Numerous elements of the text also militate against reading the book as a simple love story, though the text is clearly constructed to invite such readings. Love in the Time of Cholera invites, then undermines a number of reading strategies, thereby demonstrating the seductiveness of narrative in general and warning against gullibility in the reading of texts or of the world.

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The hero of Love in the Time of Cholera, ladies and gentlemen. Let's give him a round of applause. If anyone wants to join me in the corner, I will be staying here for the rest of the week.

...more. I have no tolerance for that kind of behavior. Sometime during the Seduction of the 600, it says that Florentino Ariza thought that when a woman said no, she really meant something else (that's a paraphrase). This is another thing I have no tolerance for. Which is why, when I started reading Love in the Time of Cholera, one of the things I noticed immediately was the lack of the subtle brand of magic that I had so enjoyed. I missed it and was on the loo. This review is now also available at The Bombay Literary Magazine (TBLM): The Infinite Capacity for Illusion.