

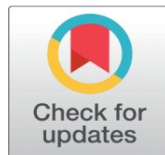
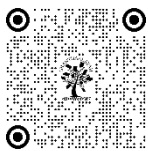


COMPARING INDIAN AND WESTERN RESPONSES TO PANDEMICS: EXISTENTIAL CRISES IN REBATI, A LIFE MISSPENT, AND TWILIGHT IN DELHI

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the existential themes in Indian and Western pandemic narratives, focusing on how pandemics are depicted in literature and their impact on human experience. Through a comparative analysis of works such as *Rebati* by Fakir Mohan Senapati, *A Life Misspent* by Suryakant Tripathi Nirala, and *Twilight in Delhi* by Ahmed Ali, alongside Western texts like *The Plague* by Albert Camus, *The Last Man* by Mary Shelley, and *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel García Márquez, this study examines how pandemics serve as catalysts for existential crises and reflections on mortality, love, and human connection. In Indian narratives, pandemics often highlight social decay, personal suffering, and the impact of colonialism, while Western narratives engage more directly with existentialism, absurdism, and resistance. In García Márquez's novel, love becomes an existential response to death, providing meaning amidst suffering. By contrasting these narratives, this paper demonstrates that while pandemics bring death and despair, they also offer profound reflections on life's meaning. The study shows how different cultural contexts shape literary responses to disease, illustrating both shared human concerns and distinctive cultural interpretations of suffering, mortality, and the quest for meaning. Ultimately, this comparative study offers new insights into the role of pandemics in shaping existential thought.

Keywords: Pandemics, Existentialism, Mortality, Suffering, Love, Cultural Context

1. INTRODUCTION

Pandemics have long captured the imagination of writers, not only as catastrophic events but as powerful metaphors for existential crises. The impact of pandemics transcends mere physical illness, providing a rich canvas for exploring themes of death, isolation, and the search for meaning in a seemingly indifferent universe. Throughout history, pandemics have acted as catalysts for profound personal and collective reflection, forcing individuals to confront their own mortality and the fragility of human existence. The narratives surrounding pandemics often lead to a reevaluation of what it means to be human, especially when faced with suffering and the unknown. In both Indian and Western literature, pandemics have sparked a variety of existential responses. In Indian literature, works such as *Rebati* by Fakir

Mohan Senapati, *A Life Misspent* by Suryakant Tripathi Nirala, and *Twilight in Delhi* by Ahmed Ali, use pandemics not only as plot devices but as metaphors for broader societal issues, such as colonialism, social decay, and the marginalization of the individual. These works tend to emphasize the social and psychological consequences of epidemics, exploring themes like despair, alienation, and the yearning for personal redemption amidst the backdrop of an uncontrollable crisis. As Bharati (2021) argues, the depiction of disease in Indian literature often highlights the personal turmoil and external constraints imposed by colonial rule. In contrast, Western pandemic narratives such as *The Plague* by Albert Camus, *The Last Man* by Mary Shelley, and *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel García Márquez, offer a more explicit engagement with existential philosophy, focusing on the individual's confrontation with the absurd and the meaninglessness of life. These texts explore the human response to epidemics through the lens of existentialism, absurdism, and resistance to the futility of existence. In *The Plague*, for example, Camus presents the narrative of a town besieged by disease as a metaphor for the absurdity of life, where individuals are faced with the indifferent forces of nature and death (Camus 1981). Similarly, Shelley's *The Last Man* explores the isolation and existential dread of the last human on Earth, a lone survivor of a global plague that wipes out humanity (Shelley 1994). In contrast to the Indian narratives, these Western works foreground individual choice and existential rebellion in the face of suffering and inevitable death. Despite their differences, both Indian and Western pandemic narratives reflect shared human concerns about the fragility of life and the desire for meaning in times of crisis. While Indian authors often link pandemics to broader social and political issues, Western writers typically focus on the individual's internal battle with mortality and meaning. By comparing these diverse literary responses, this paper examines how pandemics not only shape the human experience but also provide insight into how different cultures interpret suffering, death, and the search for meaning. Through this comparison, it becomes clear that pandemics serve as both a literal and symbolic backdrop for examining the larger existential questions that preoccupy all humanity: What is the purpose of life in the face of death? How do individuals find meaning in an indifferent universe?

This paper compares the Indian and Western literary responses to pandemics in the aforementioned texts, highlighting the ways in which pandemics catalyze personal reflection and existential thought. The analysis also investigates the role of love, resistance, and human connection in navigating these crises, showing how both individual and collective responses to pandemics can lead to a deeper understanding of human existence. Through examining these works, this paper aims to offer new perspectives on how literature reflects and shapes our responses to global crises, helping us to better understand not just the human condition in times of illness, but also the ways in which cultural contexts inform our views on suffering, death, and the meaning of life.

2. EXISTENTIAL THEMES IN INDIAN PANDEMIC NARRATIVES

Indian literature has long grappled with existential themes, particularly in relation to personal suffering, social decay, and the inevitability of death. Pandemics, both literal and metaphorical, often serve as a backdrop to these explorations, providing a framework in which the individual's confrontation with mortality and isolation can be fully realized. In *Rebati* by Fakir Mohan Senapati, the plague becomes an almost omnipresent force that shapes the psychological and emotional landscape of the protagonist. While the epidemic is not the central plot of the story, it introduces a crisis that forces Rebati, the protagonist, to confront the futility of her life and her profound sense of isolation. Senapati's portrayal of the plague is not just a physical disease but a metaphor for the societal and emotional ailments plaguing the protagonist's existence. As Dasgupta (2021) observes, the plague serves as a catalyst that exacerbates Rebati's already fragile state of mind, leading her to question her worth in a society that has long abandoned her. The disease acts as a reminder of her ultimate solitude, reflecting the existential struggle against a world that seems indifferent to her suffering.

In the case of Nirala's *A Life Misspent*, while the narrative is not explicitly about a pandemic, it conveys a sense of societal collapse similar to what is depicted in texts dealing directly with epidemics. The protagonist of Nirala's novel, caught in an unforgiving society, grapples with profound existential loneliness. The backdrop of widespread suffering, even if not linked to a physical epidemic, mirrors the disillusionment faced by the characters in pandemic narratives. As Mishra (2020) points out, Nirala's exploration of personal despair amid social collapse suggests that existential crises in Indian literature are often intertwined with the collapse of social and familial structures, leading to a heightened sense of alienation and purposelessness. The protagonist's life becomes a tragic commentary on the futility of seeking meaning in a world where the individual is often left to fend for themselves amidst collective despair.

Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* offers a more direct engagement with the theme of epidemics and their existential consequences. Set against the backdrop of a colonial Delhi ravaged by a plague, Ali's narrative presents a chilling portrait of a city in decay. The disease not only physically ravages the population but also serves as a powerful symbol of moral and cultural deterioration. Ali uses the epidemic to critique the effects of colonialism on the city's inhabitants, emphasizing how the crisis exacerbates the already frail social and moral fabric of Delhi. As Ramasubramanian (2005) argues, the plague in *Twilight in Delhi* becomes a metaphor for the larger existential crisis that colonialism engenders, where the collapse of traditional ways of life mirrors the decay of personal identity and meaning. The characters in the novel are forced to confront their mortality in the face of collective suffering, and the existential question posed by the epidemic is whether human existence has any inherent purpose or whether it is doomed to be meaningless in a world where even the most basic aspects of life—health, social order, and love—are constantly threatened by an external force.

The plague in *Twilight in Delhi* amplifies the existential disillusionment that pervades the characters' lives. As the disease spreads, it accelerates the process of decay that has already set in, both socially and spiritually. Ali's work portrays the epidemic as a force that magnifies the characters' struggles with identity, purpose, and social meaning. "The people of Delhi," writes Ali (1940), "are but shadows of themselves, struggling to hold onto a semblance of life amidst the collapse of all they once knew." This line encapsulates the novel's core existential dilemma: how can one find meaning in life when faced with the inevitable decay of both the body and the soul? The characters' responses to the plague range from resignation to despair, but ultimately, the disease highlights their inability to escape the crushing weight of mortality and the existential void that defines their lives. Through the exploration of pandemics, these Indian texts reveal the deep existential crisis that often accompanies widespread suffering. While the nature of the epidemic may differ, the central themes of alienation, mortality, and the search for meaning remain consistent. In *Rebati*, the protagonist's confrontation with a metaphorical plague reflects a broader societal alienation, while in *A Life Misspent*, the existential despair reflects the collapse of both social and personal meaning. In *Twilight in Delhi*, the direct experience of a physical epidemic serves as a stark reminder of the impermanence of life and the futility of trying to impose meaning on a world that is, in many ways, beyond human control. These works suggest that pandemics—whether literal or symbolic—serve as powerful agents for exploring the complex relationship between the individual, society, and mortality.

3. EXISTENTIALISM AND THE ABSURD IN WESTERN PANDEMIC NARRATIVES

In contrast to the Indian responses to pandemics, Western literature often engages with existentialism more directly, delving into the absurdity of life and the human struggle to find meaning in an indifferent universe. These narratives are typically marked by an exploration of the futility of human efforts in the face of suffering, yet they also propose ways in which individuals might create meaning and resistance to the absurd. The themes of existentialism and the absurd are poignantly explored in works like Albert Camus' *The Plague*, Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, and Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*, where pandemics act as metaphors for humanity's struggle with mortality and meaninglessness.

3.1. THE PLAGUE: A METAPHOR FOR ABSURDITY

One of the most well-known examples of existentialist engagement with pandemics is Albert Camus' *The Plague*. Set in the Algerian town of Oran, the novel follows the lives of its inhabitants as they are struck by a devastating outbreak of bubonic plague. Through the character of Dr. Bernard Rieux, Camus presents the idea that human suffering is both inevitable and ultimately meaningless. The plague, like the human condition itself, is an absurd event, something that occurs without reason or justification. As Rieux reflects, "the plague is not a natural disaster; it is a meaningless event that befalls the town, much like death itself" (Camus 75). This statement encapsulates Camus' philosophy of the absurd, where life is devoid of inherent meaning or purpose.

The central existential dilemma in *The Plague* is how the individuals confronted by the epidemic react to this inherent meaninglessness. The townspeople's responses vary: some attempt to escape, some retreat into themselves, while others, like Dr. Rieux, choose to fight the plague through their actions, despite knowing that their efforts may ultimately be futile. Camus uses the plague as a metaphor for life itself—unpredictable, cruel, and indifferent. In the face of this absurdity, resistance becomes the only form of meaningful action. Rieux's decision to continue his work, even when he understands that the plague may never be truly defeated, reflects Camus' belief that meaning is not inherent in

the world, but must be created through one's actions. As Camus writes, "One must imagine Sisyphus happy" (Camus 121), suggesting that even in the face of the absurd, the act of defiance and persistence can be a source of meaning.

Camus' exploration of the absurd presents a stark contrast to the more spiritual or optimistic responses to suffering found in Indian literature. Whereas in Indian works, the presence of pandemics often leads to reflections on spiritual transcendence or societal decay, Camus focuses on the personal struggle against a world that offers no comfort or answers. In this sense, *The Plague* presents an existentialist view of the pandemic as a condition of life itself, where suffering is inevitable, but the individual's choice to continue the struggle can provide a sense of agency and meaning.

3.2. THE LAST MAN: SOLITUDE AND DESPAIR

In Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, the pandemic takes on a dystopian role, as it wipes out humanity and leaves Lionel Verney as the sole survivor. The novel is a meditation on isolation, despair, and the meaning of life when civilization collapses. Verney's experience as the last living person on Earth is an exploration of the loneliness that accompanies existential realization. Shelley's portrayal of a world devoid of human companionship or society mirrors the themes of isolation found in Camus' work, but with a more intense emphasis on the emotional and psychological toll of being the last person in a dying world.

Verney's journey is a profound existential exploration, as he is forced to contemplate the nature of his existence in the absence of others. He reflects, "I am the last man; what have I to do with the world, which is no more?" (Shelley 205). His internal struggle reveals the paradox at the heart of existentialism—the search for meaning in a universe that offers none. The loneliness Verney faces is not simply physical but metaphysical, as he must grapple with the idea that without human interaction or a future to look forward to, his life seems to lack any purpose. Shelley's depiction of the end of humanity challenges traditional narratives of life, urging readers to confront the possibility that life's meaning is only a social construct, and without society, that meaning collapses.

Moreover, Shelley's narrative resonates with existential themes of isolation and the human need for connection. Verney's sense of alienation is not just from the plague, but from the larger universe that no longer provides answers or guidance. His final moments of solitude encapsulate the ultimate existential question: if humanity is destined to perish, what is the point of living? Shelley's work, while more tragic and apocalyptic than Camus', also suggests that the human struggle against a universe that seems indifferent to individual suffering is a core aspect of existential thought.

3.3. LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA: LOVE AS RESISTANCE

Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera* offers a slightly different existential perspective, focusing on the theme of love in the face of mortality and disease. Set during a cholera outbreak in a Caribbean town, the novel follows the lifelong love story of Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza, whose love survives decades of separation and the threat of death. While not directly addressing existentialism in the same way as *The Plague* or *The Last Man*, the novel uses the cholera epidemic as a backdrop to examine the ways in which love can serve as a resistance to the absurdity of life.

In Márquez's narrative, the presence of cholera acts as a constant reminder of mortality. However, rather than succumbing to despair, the characters, particularly Florentino, find meaning in their love for one another. As he reflects on his feelings for Fermina, Florentino states, "It was love at first sight, at last sight, at ever and ever sight" (Márquez 123). This enduring love becomes a form of existential defiance against the inevitable decay of the human body and the encroaching threat of death. While *Love in the Time of Cholera* does not engage with existentialism as directly as the works of Camus or Shelley, it aligns with existential themes by suggesting that even in the face of suffering and death, human connection and passion can provide a sense of purpose and meaning.

In this sense, Márquez's work contrasts with the more nihilistic perspectives of *The Plague* and *The Last Man*. Whereas Camus and Shelley portray characters confronting the absurdity and isolation of existence, Márquez offers a more hopeful view, where love and human connection provide a means of transcending suffering. However, even in this more optimistic reading, the threat of cholera—and by extension, the ever-present awareness of mortality—remains a defining force in the characters' lives, shaping their choices and interactions.

Western pandemic narratives, particularly in the works of Camus, Shelley, and Márquez, explore the absurdity of life and the human struggle to find meaning in the face of suffering and mortality. Camus' *The Plague* frames the pandemic as a metaphor for the absurdity of existence, while Shelley's *The Last Man* depicts the despair of solitude and the collapse

of human civilization. Márquez, on the other hand, presents a more hopeful existential response, suggesting that love can provide meaning even in the face of death. Despite their differing tones and approaches, these works all grapple with the core existential question: how does one find meaning in a world that seems indifferent to human suffering? While Indian pandemic narratives often focus on societal decay and personal suffering, Western works take a more philosophical approach, using pandemics as metaphors for the absurdity of life. The existential dilemmas presented in these Western narratives highlight the ways in which individuals navigate suffering, isolation, and the search for meaning in an indifferent universe. Whether through resistance to absurdity, isolation, or love, these works suggest that meaning can be found—even in the most dire circumstances.

4. LOVE AS RESISTANCE IN LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA

In contrast to the bleakness of *The Plague* and *The Last Man*, Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera* introduces a more hopeful, albeit existential, response to disease. The cholera epidemic in García Márquez's novel is not merely a backdrop for personal suffering, but a profound lens through which the characters explore the nature of love, time, and mortality. Unlike Camus and Shelley, who depict characters grappling with the absurdity of existence and the inevitability of death, García Márquez's portrayal of love presents a form of existential resistance—a force that offers meaning in a world otherwise defined by decay and suffering. Florentino Ariza's unwavering love for Fermina Daza is a central theme of the novel, spanning decades and surviving the obstacles presented by time, separation, and disease. This enduring love is symbolic of the broader human struggle against the ravages of time and mortality. In the face of a cholera epidemic that wreaks havoc on the community, Florentino and Fermina's relationship serves as a counterpoint to the nihilistic forces of illness and death. Florentino's declaration of love, even in the face of disease and decay, suggests that love itself can act as a form of resistance. While the characters may be physically subject to the ravages of time and mortality, their emotional and spiritual connection offers them a transcendent sense of purpose.

The love story in *Love in the Time of Cholera* challenges the notion that death and disease are merely forces that cause despair. Instead, García Márquez elevates love as a transformative power that endures beyond temporal constraints, offering a means to resist the existential void. Florentino's devotion to Fermina is not just an expression of romantic affection, but an act of rebellion against the inevitability of death and decay. His love persists even when societal norms, the passage of time, and even the physical distance between him and Fermina seem insurmountable. As he reflects, "It was love at first sight, at last sight, at ever and ever sight" (Márquez 123). This declaration encapsulates the idea that love, in its purest form, is timeless and invincible—a force that survives beyond the limitations imposed by both human existence and the chaos of disease. In contrast to the characters in Camus' *The Plague* or Shelley's *The Last Man*, who ultimately face the crushing weight of nihilism and isolation, Florentino and Fermina's enduring love represents a resistance to despair. While the plague in García Márquez's world is a devastating force, it does not define the characters' existence. Instead, love becomes the force that enables them to transcend suffering. In a universe where disease and death are ever-present, love offers a form of meaning that allows the characters to endure. This portrayal of love contrasts with the more nihilistic or absurdist responses to disease found in Western pandemic literature, where characters often confront the futility of their actions in a universe devoid of inherent meaning.

García Márquez's novel thus offers a counterpoint to the bleak, existential themes of *The Plague* and *The Last Man* by presenting love as a path to transcendence. In his narrative, love is not merely a passive reaction to suffering, but a dynamic force capable of transforming the existential struggle against time and death into a celebration of life. In a world marked by the inevitability of death and the devastation of disease, love offers a meaningful resistance, providing the characters with a sense of purpose and continuity. Moreover, the recurring motif of cholera in the novel symbolizes the destructive power of time and mortality. The epidemic forces the characters to confront their own fragility, yet it is precisely through their love that they find meaning in an otherwise transient existence. While the disease affects their physical bodies and the lives of those around them, it is through love that Florentino and Fermina ultimately achieve a sense of spiritual fulfillment. This narrative arc presents love not as an escape from reality, but as an active form of engagement with the human condition, offering a sense of purpose that defies the existential void.

The ultimate message of *Love in the Time of Cholera* is that love is not a simple remedy to the suffering caused by disease, but a powerful force that shapes the characters' perceptions of life, time, and death. García Márquez's work resonates with existential themes, but unlike Camus and Shelley, he suggests that love, rather than resignation to the absurd or despair, provides the most meaningful form of resistance in the face of life's impermanence. In this way, *Love*

in the *Time of Cholera* expands the conversation about pandemics in literature by presenting love as a force that can defy even the most destructive forces of nature.

5. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EXISTENTIAL RESPONSES IN INDIAN AND WESTERN NARRATIVES

While both Indian and Western pandemic narratives share existential themes, the responses to these crises are often shaped by cultural, philosophical, and historical contexts that influence the portrayal of suffering, mortality, and the search for meaning. In Indian literature, the pandemic is frequently depicted as a metaphor for the decay of both personal and societal existence. Writers like Fakir Mohan Senapati, Suryakant Tripathi Nirala, and Ahmed Ali use the framework of epidemics to highlight not only the suffering brought by disease but also the broader social and existential crises precipitated by colonial rule, cultural stagnation, and social oppression.

In *Rebati*, for example, Senapati sets the plague against the backdrop of societal and familial collapse. The protagonist's personal suffering is deeply intertwined with the larger narrative of a community struggling under the weight of tradition, fate, and social structures. The pandemic, while not the central focus, becomes a powerful symbol of isolation and the inescapable forces that define the characters' lives. Similarly, Nirala's *A Life Misspent* reflects the despair of an individual confronted by the futility of his existence, exacerbated by the social decay that a wider crisis or pandemic would magnify. In both works, there is a sense of inevitability—a resignation to the reality that the individual's life is shaped by forces beyond his control, including fate and society. This reflective tone suggests that the existential crisis in Indian literature often leads to a search for meaning that is overshadowed by larger societal and cultural forces. In contrast, Western pandemic narratives, particularly those by Albert Camus, Mary Shelley, and Gabriel García Márquez, explore existentialism through the lens of individual agency, the absurdity of life, and the individual's struggle to make meaning in an indifferent universe. Camus' *The Plague* uses the outbreak of bubonic plague in the town of Oran as a metaphor for life's absurdity—an event that has no inherent meaning but forces individuals to confront the meaninglessness of existence. The character of Dr. Bernard Rieux exemplifies Camus' existential hero, whose resistance to despair and commitment to action in the face of overwhelming suffering symbolize a defiance of the absurd. Through Rieux, Camus suggests that while life is indifferent to human suffering, humans can still create meaning through their actions, rejecting nihilism and choosing to fight in the face of existential crisis.

Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, on the other hand, explores existential themes in a post-apocalyptic context where the plague ravages humanity, leaving only one survivor. The novel paints a bleak picture of isolation and the loss of purpose, but through the character of Lionel Verney, Shelley delves into the solitude that forces the individual to confront the ultimate question of existence: What is the purpose of life when all that has defined human civilization is gone? Verney's journey through isolation and loss ultimately reflects a search for meaning in an absurd world, akin to the existential struggles presented in Camus' work. Meanwhile, in *Love in the Time of Cholera*, García Márquez introduces a more optimistic twist on existential themes. Rather than succumbing to nihilism, the novel suggests that love can provide meaning in a world beset by time and suffering. Florentino Ariza's unwavering love for Fermina Daza, despite the passing years and the disruptive cholera epidemic, exemplifies an existential resistance to the inevitable decay of time and death. In contrast to the more nihilistic outlook of Camus and Shelley, García Márquez offers a narrative where love itself becomes a form of rebellion against the futility of existence.

This contrast between Indian and Western responses to pandemics can be traced to cultural and philosophical differences. Indian literature often reflects a more fatalistic view, grounded in the understanding that human suffering is an inescapable part of existence, shaped by both social structures and the forces of fate. The response to the pandemic in these works often centers on acceptance, resignation, and introspection, with characters unable to transcend the harshness of their circumstances. In contrast, Western literature tends to emphasize individual agency, with a focus on resistance to absurdity, personal autonomy, and the possibility of creating meaning despite suffering.

While both traditions explore the inevitability of death and suffering, the Western tradition frequently emphasizes active resistance to the absurdity of life. Camus' *The Plague* and Shelley's *The Last Man* suggest that even in the face of annihilation, individuals can find a sense of purpose through their resistance to the meaninglessness of the universe. In contrast, the Indian responses to pandemics, such as those seen in Senapati, Nirala, and Ali, present characters who are more likely to experience a resignation to fate and societal structures, reflecting a more passive engagement with existential crises. Furthermore, García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera* introduces a more optimistic narrative,

presenting love as a powerful form of resistance to existential despair. In his novel, love transcends the ravages of disease and time, offering an alternative form of meaning in a world marked by suffering and decay. This portrayal of love as resistance provides a contrast not only to the nihilism of Camus' and Shelley's works but also to the more fatalistic outlooks found in Indian literature. Love, in García Márquez's narrative, becomes a force of transformation, providing characters with purpose and a sense of continuity in the face of inevitable mortality.

Thus, the comparative analysis of Indian and Western pandemic narratives reveals distinct cultural and philosophical responses to existential crises. While Indian writers often explore themes of fate, societal decay, and resignation in the face of suffering, Western authors focus on the individual's search for meaning through resistance to absurdity or the assertion of love as a form of defiance against death. Ultimately, both traditions offer valuable insights into the human condition, providing different paths for confronting the existential dilemmas posed by pandemics and the inevitable loss they bring.

6. CONCLUSION

The exploration of pandemics in literature reveals profound insights into the human condition, particularly in the face of mortality and suffering. Through works like *Rebati*, *A Life Misspent*, and *Twilight in Delhi*, Indian writers highlight the existential crises caused by social decay and personal isolation, often in the context of disease. In Western works such as *The Plague*, *The Last Man*, and *Love in the Time of Cholera*, authors examine the absurdity of life and the search for meaning amidst overwhelming suffering. While the Indian narratives often focus on the futility of existence and societal constraints, Western literature offers more explicit philosophical engagement with existentialism, emphasizing personal resistance to meaninglessness. García Márquez's portrayal of love as a powerful, enduring force provides an alternative to the nihilism of Camus and Shelley, showing that even in the face of death, human connection can offer meaning. These literary works, both Indian and Western, demonstrate that while pandemics may destroy lives, they also provide a space for profound reflection on the nature of existence and the potential for resilience.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

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