

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Politically outspoken is a phrase always associated with Latin American writers. Because many of the Latin American countries have been besieged by these prolonged conflicts, thus, it is no wonder the writers are politically passionate. As a matter of fact, Latin American writers' preference of including politics in most of their works is due to the long history of the Spanish conquest of the continent in the sixteenth century, resulting in "frequent civil wars, foreign interventions, and economic exploitation by multinational corporations" in the country

(<http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/monkeynotes/pmLoveCholera12.asp>).

Latin America embraces different cultures, unknown to some doubtful people. According to the "European eyes", and in all probability, our eyes, South America is often depicted as "a man with a moustache, a guitar and a gun" (Marquez, 1997, p. xv). This is quite a stereotype of the continent we do not know much about. Nevertheless, the Hispanics, who are often identified as a single ethnic group, are in fact "people of many nationalities: Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Mexicans, Brazilians - to name a few" (Hart and Kerber, ed., 1991, p. 7). In addition, most are of Central American Indian descent and share the gene pool of North American Indians. They learned to speak Spanish, thus the name 'Hispanic' is because their original land was conquered by Spain. At present, nonetheless, Latin America is as it is today with its twenty nations living in harmony (Schurz, 1954).

Gabriel Garcia Marquez is a major 20th century Colombian novelist and short-story writer. Marquez is considered the pioneer of the second generation of Latin American writers other than Julio Cortazar of Argentina, Guillermo Cabrera Infante of Cuba, Carlos Fuentes of Mexico, Isabel Allende of Chile and Mario

Vargos Llosa of Peru. These Latin American writers bring a great influence on world literature of modern times, and largely through the genre known as ‘magic realism’, referring to a realistic story mixed with “elements of fantasy and supernatural” (Grant, 1998, p. 183), and the major contributor of this new literary device is Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

Marquez was born in Aracataca, a small town in Colombia. When Gabriel was an infant, his parents, who had 16 children, moved to another town where his father worked as a telegrapher, and Gabriel was left in the care of his grandparents. His childhood with his grandparents eventually became an inspiration for him and most importantly, on his literary works. According to Marquez, being a former soldier in Colombia’s civil war in the 1890’s, his grandfather liked to tell endless stories of the civil war of his youth and was Marquez’s “umbilical cord with history and reality”, whereas his grandmother, being a superstitious woman, was “always telling fables, family legends and organizing [Marquez’s] life according to the messages she received from her dreams” (Simons, 1982, p. 2). Exceptionally enchanted by her grandmother’s stories about ghosts and other supernatural beings, and also her way of telling them, Marquez thought that she was a storyteller who told “fantastic tales with absolute conviction and ‘a brick face’” (Marquez, 1997, p. xiv). Her ‘brick’ face, meaning a face without expression and flat intonation in telling such stories eventually intrigued Marquez in writing his novels in that manner, too. By combining the real and historical events from his grandfather and the magical events from his grandmother, hence, he succeeded to develop a technique that combines reality with magical events that is later known as ‘magic realism’.

Besides writing numerous fictions, Marquez also wrote screenplays and has continued to work as a journalist. His first work, Leaf Storm, and Other Stories (La hojarasca) published in 1955, is one of a collection of his famous articles exposing the facts behind a Colombian naval disaster (Allen ed., 1993). His articles were later published in a book form. Being a productive writer, Marquez again published other works like One Hundred Years of Solitude (1967; Eng. trans., 1970), The Autumn of Patriarch (1975; Eng. trans., 1976) and

Love in the Time of Cholera (1985; Eng. trans., 1988).

Considered his masterpiece, *Cien años de soledad* (One Hundred Years of Solitude) eventually won Marquez a Nobel Prize in Literature in 1982. Upon its first English translation and publication in 1970, the novel was able to achieve international recognition and it became “an instant sensation, acclaimed as the most important Latin American novel of the age, eliciting rave reviews, and, after selling out its first edition in less than a week, exhausting printing after printing” (Longman, 2001, p. 2). The novel has been translated into several languages and has sold millions of copies. Moreover, as translations appeared, it won awards and became a bestseller in Italy, France, the United States, and many other countries, bringing Garcia Marquez an “international reputation and forever ending his financial difficulties” (Longman, 2001, p. 2).

Furthermore, Marquez is an “amazingly vivid writer”, as he paints his characters fluently (<http://www.microserve.com/~thequail/libyrinth/GGM.image/garcia.marquez.image.html>). In writing the novel, Marquez examines and describes the shape, the taste and even the smell very clearly. This is because in describing an object, for instance, he cares what each object is made of and describes it vividly. Although at times his language is offensive, the details of his writing are appropriate as they “give to his characters a mineral edge, anchoring them to this world, not in the fantasy of ... romance” (Marquez, 1997, p. xxi). Therefore, in the novel, his characters seem very fictive, yet they seem real at the same time. This, hence, makes Marquez a great writer who possesses a quality as a “rare storyteller” (Allen ed., 1993, p.11), which makes his books interesting to be read continuously, and hence, to be analyzed.

Despite the fact that Latin American authors’ works are rarely discussed as a thesis, I am challenged to discuss Marquez’s work. This is also mainly because I appreciate his pure effort and talents that are evident in his winning the Nobel Prize. Besides being deeply interested in reading and analyzing the work of a Nobel Prize winner, I also admire the never-ending creativity of the author. This is because his winning the distinguished award did not hinder Marquez to write

equally good works like Love in the Time of Cholera.

After publishing a series of works, Marquez again published El amor en los tiempos del colera in 1985. The novel was translated to English by Edith Grossman in 1988 as Love in the Time of Cholera. Although it did not win an award like Marquez's previous work, the novel is still a "faithful and a beautiful piece of work" (Pyncheon, 1988, p. 1). As a matter of fact, according to Julie Bowerman, Love in the Time of Cholera is "extraordinarily fluid and luxurious" as it offers the same "dreamlike quality" of [Marquez's] other works (Bowerman, p. 1). Although concerned with the politics and the cause of socialism in Latin America, Marquez does not incorporate much politics into his writing, especially in Love in the Time of Cholera. The novel, Love in the Time of Cholera, is a "creative amalgam of two starkly contrasting elements: one is the sacredness of love; the other, love's embodiment in often everyday experiences" (Couteau, 1988, p. 1). From the title itself, it is seen that love is a very crucial element, because in the novel, it reflects the journey of love among the three main characters: Florentino Ariza, Fermina Daza and Dr. Juvenal Urbino.

The setting or the background of the novel plays a major part in most of Marquez's works. As a writer with a gifted narrative talent, the author involves a lot of descriptions of the setting in his novels, and this is especially seen in Love in The Time of Cholera. The story of Marquez's Love in The Time of Cholera is actually a concoction of fiction and a history of what had taken place in Colombia between about 1880 and 1930. The novel is set in an unnamed Caribbean seaport city in Colombia, a mixture of cities like Barranquilla, Cartagena and Santa Marta. Besides, this city is a "colonial port city" that is also said to resemble Colombia itself. During that period, there are two significant events happening in the country: cholera epidemics (presumably fiction) and frequent civil wars (historical event), which eventually result in a large number of deaths among the people. While the cholera seems imaginary, the civil wars are real. As a matter of fact, the wars portray the two constantly opposing parties in Colombia at that time, which were the Liberals and the Conservatives. (<http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/monkeynotes/pmLoveCholera01.asp>).

Unfortunately, the civil war part is not elaborately explained by the author, as Marquez only makes a passing reference to several events of the war. The author only pinpoints the aftermaths of the war, which is devastation in the country. Nevertheless, this can already be an evidence of what happened at that time and although limited, this can still serve as a background of the story.

It is also important to note that in Love in the Time of Cholera, Marquez states several criticisms about the social and economic condition of his country. Most of the second-generation writers, including Marquez, are committed politically on the side of the poor and the weak against oppression and economic exploitation (Allen ed., 1993). In this case, the author reveals the kind of destructive life the society goes through due to poverty. From the novel, it is also seen that the environment of the country suffers from modernization. Therefore, through his writing, Marquez states his protests against poverty and the effects of modernization.

In the novel, there is a vivid description of the corpses floating along the river and “litter fearful villages with contamination” (Bowerman, p. 2). As Marquez has the ability to paint his ideas well, he writes even the most horrific scenes about the corpses and put them into the characters’ daily routines. As a result, the story becomes “extraordinarily fluid and luxurious” (Bowerman, p. 1). I think that the story is beautifully organized by Marquez in such a way that the beginning can correspond well to the ending, producing a surprising effect to the readers about what love, time, and death can actually do to people. Considering Marquez’s unique way in expressing such details in everyday experiences, therefore, I am interested in choosing and discussing the novel.

Besides the skillfulness of the author, the novel Love in the Time of Cholera also owes the credibility of the translator of the novel, Edith Grossman. According to Thomas Pynchon, Grossman “catches admirably and without apparent labor the swing and translucency of [Marquez’s] writing, its slang and its classicism, the lyrical stretches and those end-of-sentence zingers he likes to hit us with” (Pynchon, 1988, p. 3), thus making her a distinguished translator. Edith Grossman has translated a number of major works of Latin America’s most

important writers like Garcia Marquez and Alvaro Mutis. This award-winning translator attended the University of Pennsylvania and the University of California at Berkeley before she received her Ph.D. from New York University. She has written a book The Antipoetry of Nivanor Parra and also articles and book reviews (Marquez, 1996, p. iii). Owing to the skillfulness of Grossman as the translator, undoubtedly, Love in the Time of Cholera became a beautiful novel.

An important element that is the backbone of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Love in the Time of Cholera is 'cholera'. The word 'cholera', according to Thomas Pyncheon, it can be divided into two kinds of meaning: *el colera* (cholera disease and epidemics) and *la colera* (anger, or in an extreme way, war) (Pyncheon, 1988, p. 3). These two types of cholera contain important meanings as they keep appearing throughout the novel and in the setting of the novel, they happen at the same period. In accordance with the given meanings of cholera, the general definition of 'cholera' is "an infectious disease caused by a bacterium which attacks especially the stomach and bowels causing severe diarrhoea, sickness, etcetera, and often leads to death" (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1992). This is usually associated with the literal meaning of cholera: *el colera* (cholera disease). On the other hand, in the novel, the figurative meaning of cholera, *la colera* (anger/ war) is more implicitly used. In the novel, both *el colera* and *la colera* leads to death. Cholera disease at that time was incurable. As medicine was not advanced, it eventually became an epidemy, killing a massive number of people. At the same time, there were conflicts in the country that results to wars. These wars also inevitably caused further deaths among the people. As a matter of fact, death itself becomes the most important 'director' behind Marquez's invented world. His stories often revolve around a dead person – someone who has died, is dying or will die (Allen ed., 1993).

On the contrary, love is an equally significant element as suggested by the title of the novel. The kind of love here is romantic love between a man and a woman. In this case, Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza, the main characters in the novel, experience a kind of death and love. Death is always associated with

hopelessness whereas love is closely related to hope. Considering this, therefore, I am interested to discuss the correlation of death and love.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Love in the Time of Cholera contains two significant elements namely death and love as suggested by the title of the novel. Therefore, I am curious to know in what ways death correlates with love in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Love in the Time of Cholera in the settings and the characters.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

I would like to discuss the correlation between death and love as reflected in the Land/ Earth and the Waters, and also the characters in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Love in the Time of Cholera.

1.4 Significance of the Study

It is known that Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Love in the Time of Cholera is basically a story about love, which is a commonly found theme. The story, however, contains other considerable elements other than love. The readers of this novel may also find out that there is an element called cholera that leads to death. In this way, I would like to show the readers that there is actually a connection between death and love - two elements that are contradictory.

Furthermore, as Latin American twentieth century works are considered quite new, they are not too widely known in Indonesia. By writing a thesis about Marquez's work, Love in the Time of Cholera, it is hoped that the thesis can be useful for students of the Faculty of Letters or readers in general who want to find out more about the works of Latin American authors, especially Marquez. Since this thesis can provide the students with the relevant information they need, it is then hoped that this thesis may give them a more profound understanding about the work and may interest the students to write their thesis on other works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

The scope of this thesis is the correlation of love and death found in the setting in Marquez's Love in the Time of Cholera. In the setting, I discuss the Land/ Earth and the Waters, also to prove how they mean death, and later I compare it to the traditional symbolism of the land and the sea. Moreover, in order not to make the analysis too broad, I limit the discussion of my study by discussing only certain characters. In my analysis, I deal with the two main characters - Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza. In the characters and characterization, I discuss the death and the feelings of love between Florentino and Fermina.

1.6 Methodology

In this study, I use Marquez's Love in the Time of Cholera to be analyzed as a primary data. This novel is published by David Campbell Publishers Ltd. in London in 1997. I collect the data by using library research. This novel is then analyzed using literary approach, which includes literary theories and a theory of symbolism in order to answer the statement of the problem. The literary theories consist of the setting, the characters and characterization, and also a theory of symbolisms. In analyzing the characters, I utilize a theory of characterization. Whereas in analyzing the setting, I use a theory of setting. The theory of symbolism is applied as a comparison to the meaning of cholera in the setting (the Land/ Earth and the Waters) only. Moreover, I also collect relevant information and criticisms about Marquez's novel Love in the Time of Cholera from books and the Internet as a secondary data to support my analysis.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first or the introductory chapter consists of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations, the methodology, and the organization of the study. Furthermore, chapter two, the review of related literature, consists of the theories. In this chapter, I affirm the theories namely literary theories and a theory of symbolism to support my analysis. Next, chapter three contains the analysis and the finding of the study. Chapter four then concludes the discussion done in the previous chapters. The references, biography of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and the synopsis of Love in the Time of Cholera are included in the last part of my thesis.