

3. THE CORRELATION BETWEEN DEATH AND LOVE

In general, the word 'cholera' refers to sickness. The definition of 'cholera' is, in fact, "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). The word cholera in Marquez's Love in the Time of Cholera, therefore, has another meaning behind it - death. On the other hand, the word 'love' as in the title of the novel generally means romantic love. The romantic love here is a kind of love between man and woman by "showing strong feelings of love" (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1992). This chapter provides the analysis of the process in which death correlates with love. There are two points that are analyzed here; they are the setting and the characters. It is also important to note that Marquez focuses heavily on the setting in most of his novels. Hence, in my analysis, I elaborate more on the setting.

3.1 Death as Seen in the Setting

The setting of the novel includes the land/ earth and also the waters. In the novel, the land is where the cholera disease, the civil war, and also their aftermaths take place. On the contrary, being a seaport city, the place that the author mentions is surrounded by the Caribbean Sea and Magdalena River, Colombia. In that period, water transportation was crucial and the only way to travel was by ships or boats. In other words, in the story, life goes on on the land as well as on the waters. Both the land/ earth and the waters, therefore, are used in the analysis.

3.1.1 Death as Seen in the Land/ Earth

The land/ earth is a fundamental element to all living creatures. In fact, although Steven Olderr does not give the direct definition of the symbolism of 'land', he states that the 'earth' is the symbolism of "sustainer of material life; the cycle of existence as a symbol of man" (Olderr, 1986, p. 42). In other words, the Land/ Earth has a close relation with life and the cycle of life. As a matter of fact, the Land/ Earth is the sustainer of life, and the relevant meaning of to sustain is "to keep in existence over a long period" (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1992). Besides, the cycle means that there is a chain of life that goes on and on over a period of time.

On the other hand, the Land/ Earth in the novel contradicts the traditional meaning of the symbolism of the land/ earth.

In the story, the environment on the Land/ Earth becomes one of the major causes of death. In about the 1900s in that unnamed seaport city, the population of the poor outnumbered the population of the rich. The rich and the poor live in their own separate housing areas, and thus the two thirds of the population, which is the poor, live in slums beside the swamps.

Unlike the city of the Viceroy's where the houses were made of masonry, here they were built of weathered boards and zinc roofs, and most of them rested on pilings to protect them from the flooding from the open sewers that had been inherited from the Spaniards. Everything looked wretched and desolate, but out of the sordid taverns came the thunder of riotous music, the godless drunken celebration of Pentecost by the poor. (Marquez, 1997, pp.18-19)

From the description, it is shown that the majority of the houses belonging to the poor are in a very bad and shabby condition. Instead of being built of bricks to make a firm structure, the houses are made of very old boards and zinc. These cheap materials definitely do not give enough comfort for the users in hot, windy or rainy weather. During warm seasons, the heat of the sun can penetrate the thin zinc roof, and thus causing the air inside the house to be hot and stuffy. In other words, the houses do not provide adequate comfort and safety of what a decent house can offer. Also, it is stated that "everything looked wretched and

desolate”(p. 19). This means that there is no more goodness in that poor housing area because all things simply look miserable. In addition, the houses are in a pitiable condition indeed, because there are “motionless buzzards on the roof, [and] the washing of the poor hung out to dry on the balconies” (p. 129). The meaning of a buzzard is “a large black bird [a kind of vulture] that eats dead flesh” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1992). From the description in the novel, the birds/ buzzards, which like to stay on top of the houses, is associated with death. This is probably due to the extremely dirty environment where dead animal bodies are scattered everywhere on the ground. As the buzzards feed on the flesh of the dead, therefore they can get their meals easily by staying on the roof. From my analysis, thus, it is clear that the environment is closely related to death.

Furthermore, the condition of the city in the novel is becoming more and more terrible. According to Dr. Urbino, the main male character of the novel, his city is a “death trap of the poor” (p. 23). In saying this statement, he realizes that the condition of the city is too bad for the poor people to live in. Therefore, if they live there, they will be trapped in the miserable condition and die miserably, too. Dr Urbino also thinks that his city is a city where “flowers rusted and salt corroded, where nothing had happened for four centuries except a slow aging among withered laurels. . . ” (p. 23). This means that his city becomes worse as times goes by, instead of getting better and keeps improving. In this case, the flowers rust instead of bloom, and salt corrodes. If an object rusts or corrodes, its quality declines; it then becomes useless and even dangerous for use. Moreover, it is obvious that, in the city, there is no improvement for a very long time. The only thing that the city undergoes is a “slow aging among withered laurels”. This means that the stress is once again on the declining quality of the city, because if something ages, it is always associated with death. Also, the word ‘wither’ is closely related to death because if a flower withers, it becomes dry, brownish and lifeless. Because it is lifeless, it is dead and hence, the word wither here means death. Besides, the city seems “poorer and sadder, and there were so many hungry rats in the rubbish heaps of the streets that the carriage horses

stumble in fright” (p. 130). The comparative words poorer and sadder clearly show that the city used to be in a more decent condition. Now, however, it turns out to be an even worse place than it used to be. Most importantly, the word ‘poor’ itself is associated with unpleasantness, as it describes the shabby condition of the city. Similarly, the word ‘sad’ also reveals that the city is pathetic and pitiful. The city is so poor and sad that even the rats are badly in need of food. Because probably there is not enough food inside the houses, they try finding it in the garbage. As the condition of the houses, their inhabitants, and even the rats are in a very poor condition, it can also be said that they are in a near-death situation. Thus, the city here means death.

Also, the markets and the slaughterhouses are responsible for the death of living creatures. The public market is located along Las Animas Bay, which is a place near the shore. Hence, this is also a place where sailing ships from various destinations would dock and trade. The atmosphere of the market is described as “rich, in fact, and profuse and noisy, but also, perhaps, the most alarming of markets” (p.134). It is alarming because there is practically no hygiene at all in the market itself and the places around it.

Set on its own garbage heap, at the mercy of capricious tides, it was the spot where the bay belched filth from the sewers back onto the land. The offal from the adjoining slaughterhouse was also thrown away there – severed heads, rotting viscera, animal refuse that floated, in sunshine and starshine, in swamp of blood. The buzzards fought for it with the rats and the dogs in a perpetual scramble among the deer and succulent capons from Sotavento hanging from the eaves of the market stalls, and the spring vegetables from Arjona displayed on straw mats spread over the ground. (p.134)

From the description, it is apparent that the market is always full of rubbish. The rubbish not only belongs to the market, but it is also from the sewers that flow into the sea. It is the waves that carry the rubbish back to the land, hence causing a hygiene problem around the market. This is made worse by the inappropriate location of the slaughterhouse, which is exactly beside the market. The slaughterhouse causes

further problems because the garbage that is produced is biological waste consisting of animals' blood and unwanted parts of the body. If these remains are not disposed quickly and properly, they can become rotten and they smell rotten as well. As the remains are not covered, buzzards, rats and dogs "fought for it" (p.134). This means there is so much poverty in the city that this fighting scene for the decaying garbage can be seen even in the market. This also shows that these animals is in fact dangerous for human being, because those animals like to loiter around the house and can infect human beings with germs that they carry from the rubbish. Hence, diseases like cholera, which is common at that time, can also be spread quickly through these animals. Similarly, in the market, the problem of cleanliness arises as all types of garbage mentioned is located close to the foods that are sold there. As a result, germs can also contaminate the foods that are later consumed by human beings, thus creating health problems and eventually, death.

In addition, the dreadful and dangerous weather is also the cause of death. During winter, sudden heavy rainfall causes problems, as it "turned the streets into sickening bogs" (p. 24). In this kind of weather, there is a risk of quick passing of contagious disease like skin disease, or worse, cholera disease. When the streets are flooded, people have to be in direct contact with the dirty water that carries various kinds of germs and viruses. As a result, diseases are passed easily from one person to the other. Similarly, summer time is equally hazardous for the people. This is due to the "invisible dust as harsh as red-hot chalk" that blows all over the city. Although the air is hot and as dry as chalk, this dust is invisible, hence the people are not aware that they are breathing unclean air. Worse still, the poor people, whose houses mainly are not equipped with proper sanitation and a closed sewage system, have a habit of passing motion in the open air. "The excrement dried in the sun, turned to dust, and was inhaled by everyone along with the joys of Christmas in the cool, gentle breezes of December" (p. 132). As a matter of fact, sometimes the winds in summer are the "mad winds that took off the roofs off the houses and carried away children through the air" (p. 24). If a person in the neighborhood suffers from cholera disease, the virus would be carried through the air and spread to another person. Therefore, cholera

virus is spread easily among the citizens through the air and causes sickness and finally, death.

Moreover, in the novel, the nature experiences an alarming rate of deforestation that eventually results in death. In the beginning of the story, it is mentioned that there is an exotic beauty of the nature in the forest of South America in the late 1800s.

The days were easy for [Florentino] as he sat at the rail, watching the motionless alligators sunning themselves on sandy banks, their mouths open to catch butterflies, watching the flocks of startled herons that rose without warning from the marshes, the manatees that nursed their young at large maternal teats that startled passengers with their woman's cries (p. 172).

From this quotation, it can be assumed that most of the countries in Latin America have very beautiful scenery. It is also clear that the country is endowed with the natural tropical beauty. The presence of the animals here indicates that the nature is still untouched by human beings. In addition, in the above description, there is more than one animal mentioned for each type, meaning that the animals feel comfortable staying in the forest. The way the animals 'nurse' their children, the way they 'sun' or expose themselves means that they really feel at home.

Nevertheless, at the end of the novel, it is shown that there is a drastic change in the nature – it has been destroyed.

Instead of the screeching of the parrots and the riotous noise of invisible monkeys, which at one time had intensified the stifling midday heat, all that was left was the vast silence of the ravaged land.

There were so few places for taking on wood, and they were so far apart from each other, that by the fourth day of the trip the New Fidelity had run out of fuel. She was stranded for almost a week while her crew searched for bogs of ashes for the last scattered trees. (p. 408)

This statement shows that the animals in the forest have disappeared. They might either have died or left the jungle that was once their home. The vanishing of the animals is primarily due to the disappearance of the trees. Since the era of

modernization in Latin America countries in the 1920s, a huge number of trees have been cut or burnt down for the sake of new buildings. It is, in fact, a price that the country has to pay for “many of the advances it is so proud to have achieved” (Deany, 2001, p. 3). As a result, when trees are needed for the ship’s fuel, there is hardly any tree. Although people search hard for trees, they still cannot find them; not even the last and scattered trees. The word ‘ash’ here refers to death. As the trees are ‘scattered’ on swamps of ashes, it reveals that the trees have been recently burnt down. From the discussion, it is then obvious that the deforestation in the novel means death.

Equally important is Marquez as the author wrote about civil wars occurring in the country as the setting of the novel. Throughout many years, these wars are basically caused by the opposing parties of the Liberals and the Conservatives, causing fear towards the people.

In August of that year a new civil war, one of the many that had been devastating the country for over half a century, threatened to spread, and the government imposed martial law and a six o’clock curfew in the provinces along the Caribbean coast. (p. 87)

Another constant terror was the war. Since the start of the journey there had been talk of the danger of running into scattered patrols... (p. 104)

From the statement, it is shown that the situation in the country is so unpredictable, or even dangerous, that the government decides to impose a curfew for the people’s safety. The situation during the times of war is also so bad that the main male character, Florentino Ariza is accused of being a spy “who sent messages in the key of G to the Liberal ships marauding in the nearby waters” when he was only playing a serenade for Fermina Daza (p. 88). Florentino is jailed temporarily before he is finally released.

Other than causing fear towards the civilians, the war causes a lot of people to be killed. As a matter of fact, the dead victims’ bodies are so many that they are thrown into the sea of the river. This is because there is simply not enough space on the land to accommodate the dead bodies to be buried properly. The massive number

of the dead indicates that the people killed due to the war is as great as the cholera victims. The war itself, thus, means death.

From the given analysis, it can therefore be perceived that the description of the meaning of the Land/ Earth in the novel is obviously different from the traditional symbolism of the Land/ Earth. The description of the Land/ Earth in the novel does not correlate with the meaning of the traditional symbolism – the sustainer of life. From my analysis, it is clear that life seems to be less and less in its value rather than being sustained. There is more death among the people and ironically, this death is caused by their own fault and indifference. It eventually results in a cycle of death, because the death is first caused by human beings and it later returns to them. If this goes on and on, it becomes a cycle of death. This statement contradicts with another traditional symbolism of the Land/ Earth - the cycle of existence as a symbol of man. In the novel, the cycle of death is more dominant than the cycle of life. If a person dies, he/ she does not exist in this world anymore. This supports the fact that the majority of the people living in that seaport city is at risk of getting cholera, which eventually causes death. Most importantly, the places that are described in the novel symbolize death. The general definition of the land is “the solid dry part of the Earth’s surface” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1992). The streets, the houses, the market and the slaughterhouse are on the Land/ Earth, and they take part in causing the spread of cholera disease that results in death. Therefore, it can be said that the Land/ Earth means death.

3.1.2 Death as Seen in the Waters

Other than the sunlight and the air that we breathe, water is one of the most basic, essential and inseparable elements in our lives. Steven Olderr agrees with this statement as he states that a few meanings of the symbolism of ‘water’ are “the source of life”, “regeneration” and “refreshment” (Olderr, 1986, p. 95). In other words, the universal symbol of water is closely related to life. It is even the source of life, which means that life originates from water. Similarly, the other meaning of the symbolism of water is regeneration, which also has a strong relation with life. In fact,

to regenerate means “to give or obtain new life; form, grow again” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1992). Also, to refresh means to bring back strength and freshness (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1992). On the contrary, the Waters in the novel is pictured as a dead, filthy and foul place.

Firstly, the Waters, which covers the sea, is full of dead bodies of animals: “The ship made its way across the bay through a floating blanket of drowned animals, and most of the passengers took refuge in their cabins to escape the stench” (Marquez, 1997, p. 129). The statement shows the bad condition of the sea at that time, where ships have to pass the smelly and rotting rubbish during the journeys. The passengers are unable to enjoy the beauty of the sea and its cool breeze as they have to hide in their cabins. The dead animals mentioned here are not just a few, but there are a huge number of them, making the sea an unpleasant sight. In addition, according to Dr. Urbino, one of the main male characters, the sea also “looked like ashes” (p. 130). This is quite an unusual opinion of the sea because the physical appearance of ash is dirty, black and useless. If an object, especially a living object becomes an ash, it is always considered dead. This is because before the object turns into ash, it first undergoes a long process of burning. The burning process must be a thorough and complete process so that the object dies and finally becomes ash. Moreover, according to the Christian or the Catholic belief, a person is created by God from dust or ash. When someone of that religion dies, it is believed that the person’s body finally returns to where he/she belongs, that is the ground. During a funeral service, therefore, the clergyman would say a phrase: ‘from dust to dust, and from ashes to ashes’. This is to proclaim that the dead person finally goes back to where the Creator first made him/ her. Hence, when the sea is compared to ashes, it means that the sea is dead.

Besides, the smell of the sea is unpleasant as well. Dr. Urbino finds the sea in a terrible condition, because he thinks the sea has “the vapors of death from the open sewers” (p. 130). From the statement, it can be assumed that the air in the sea is extremely foul, and this is caused by the rubbish from the sewers that is also carried into the sea. As the rubbish contains the dead bodies of animals, the smell of the sea

is as bad as the sewer, because it directly receives the dump from the sewer. Furthermore, it becomes “the vapors of death”. This statement means that the smell of the sea itself represents death. The physical characteristics of healthy water are that it is clean, clear and free from harmful substances. On the other hand, the description of the foul smell of the seawater in the novel already shows that the water does not have the characteristics of healthy water. The rotten smell indicates that it is not safe for the consumption of living creatures. In other words, the smell of the sea represents death.

Secondly, the waters also include the river, in this case, Magdalena River. Other than the bodies of dead animals, human corpses of those who died of cholera and wars are also found in the rivers: “On a single day [Florentino] saw three bloated, green, human corpses float pass, with buzzards sitting on them. First the bodies of two men went by, one of them without a head, and then a very young girl, whose medusan locks undulated in the boat’s wake” (p. 172). It is not mentioned whether those dead people are the victims of the civil war or the plague: “He never knew, because no one ever knew, if they were the victims of the cholera or the war” (p. 172). Because the war and the plague happen at the same time, the church and the cemetery are way too crowded. The church is unable to hold the usual funeral service for the families and relatives anymore, and the cemetery is also too crowded. The massive number of the dead bodies has to be disposed immediately, and as a result, they are thrown into the sea, the river or the lake without a proper funeral service. In the bay, hence, there are a number of “drowning victims washed ashore” (p. 81). It is also important to note that, in the story, it is mentioned that the majority of the people in the country are devout Catholics. They go to the Sunday Masses regularly and attend other religious activities like the Pentecost Sunday whenever possible. According to the Catholic custom in that country, when someone is dead, there would be a funeral ceremony. The body is normally placed in a coffin in church for a few days, and people would come and give condolences to the grieving family. The next step is that the coffin with the body in it is buried in a cemetery. Something that is done outside the custom is considered uncommon. In fact, as the Catholics believe

that a dead person will return to his/ her original state, which is the ground, cremating or burning the bodies is not allowed.

For [Dr. Urbino] had often expressed his desire to be cremated and not shut away in the seamless dark of a cedar box. His religion would not permit it, of course: he had dared to broach the subject with the Archbishop, just in case, and his answer had been a categorical no. It was pure illusion, because the Church did not permit the crematoriums in our cemeteries... (p. 340)

In this case, Dr. Urbino thinks that he can help minimize the spreading of bacteria, especially the deadly cholera disease that is easily passed through the water, by building crematoriums to cremate the dead people. By doing so, he hopes that the corpses would not have to be thrown into the waters, and the city would be more hygienic. His noble plan, however, is rejected by the Catholic leader in his country. This is because cremating the dead would be an insult to the people's religion, the custom, and even to God. The corpses, thus, have to be thrown into the sea/ the river.

In addition, in the novel, there is a newly widowed woman who also becomes one of Florentino's lovers who has a traditional concept of the dead. For her, her dead husband is "in the coffin nailed shut with a dozen three-inch nails and two meters under the ground" (p. 182). The concept of treating a dead person is, therefore, a body being put in the coffin, and then being buried in the ground. This description is a contrary to the real situation the people have to face. Due to the high demands for space in the church and the cemetery, it is not possible to conduct a funeral service or bury their family members properly. The people may even feel that it is indecent that their loved ones must be thrown into the sea or the river, yet they have no other option to dispose the dead bodies that way. When the cremation of the dead is not allowed, the living beings have to suffer the foulness of the land and the water. It can be said that the people corrupt the purity of the water and harm the living, and eventually causes death.

From the description of the Waters, it is obvious that the meaning of the Waters in the novel is far from the general symbolism that means 'the source of life',

'regeneration' or 'refreshment'. In the novel, for the people in the country, the Waters are still necessary and are needed to make life goes on. They need water for their drinking and washing purposes, and also for a means of transportation. However, it is also stated that the people use the unhealthy water, which in turn causes the easy spreading of cholera disease. The contaminated water is being used by the people, and they eventually become sick. This goes on and on and forms an inevitable cycle of death. Water, the agent that is supposed to cleanse and purify dirt, have lost its meaning. As a matter of fact, the waters bring death rather than bringing life. In this case, the dead bodies of the victims of cholera disease and also the war in the waters become the source of death for the people and other living creatures. Besides, the Waters do not regenerate and refresh the people, but the waters endanger them instead. Hence, the Waters in the novel mean death.

Death, therefore, is clearly projected in the Land/ Earth and the Waters. In both the Land/ Earth and the Waters, the place where all living beings dwell, are contaminated with impurities and foulness caused by human beings. As a result, there is a continuous chain of death that contradicts the universal symbolism of the land and the water.

3.2 Love and Death as Seen in the Characters

Generally, it is known that setting inevitably affects the characters in a novel. Similarly, in Marquez's Love in the Time of Cholera, the characters are greatly influenced by the time and place in which they live in. In this case, the Land/ Earth and the Waters affects Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza's lives.

Florentino Ariza, the main male character, experiences a feeling of love that is excessive. In the novel, Florentino is a non-sensible romantic man who falls in love with Fermina. He is so romantic that he likes to "recite sentimental poetry by heart, and who was always willing to play violin serenades to his friends' sweethearts" (Marquez, 1997, p. 67). From this quotation, it is clear that Florentino's life is filled with romance. His heart is filled with so much love and he expresses it through reciting poems about love – a very popular way known to win a woman's heart.

Moreover, he plays serenades or love songs, which are also a much-liked method in expressing love at that time. Also, he is the type of man who believes in love at the first sight: “that casual glance was the beginning of a cataclysm of love that still had not ended half a century later” (p. 68).

His way of being romantic, however, can be said to be excessive and is different from other people. As a telegraph operator, “he was always thinking about Fermina Daza, and he had never learned to write without thinking about her” (Marquez, 1997, p. 206). This proves that he thinks of her every single day, and it is conveyed in his extremely romantic way of writing. In other words, he is so obsessed with Fermina that he loses his other feelings in his life. As a result, he keeps acting in an excessive way. An example stating that Florentino’s love towards Fermina is so excessive is that he is obsessed with her until he wants to ‘taste’ her.

This was the time he gave in to his desire to eat the gardenias that Transito Ariza grew in pots in the patio, so that he could know the taste of Fermina Daza. It was also the time when he happened to find in one of his mother’s trunks a litter of cologne that the sailors from the Hamburg-American Line sold as a contraband, and he could not resist the temptation to sample it in order to discover other tastes of his beloved. He continued to drink from the bottle until dawn, and he became drunk on Fermina Daza in abrasive swallows... (p. 80)

Florentino eats gardenias because it is the kind of flower that Fermina likes to wear as a garland on her head. Similarly, in his peak of falling in love, by drinking the cologne, he is always reminded of Fermina’s fragrance. Unfortunately, because he cannot have her by his side, he apparently wants to taste Fermina’s fragrance so that his senses are filled with her. This is done by eating flowers and drinking perfume. In addition, he drinks the cologne abrasively, meaning that he does it quickly, harshly and passionately. His action here reveals that he is thirsty of her scent. It is not enough for him just to smell the fragrance of the perfume. He wants to imagine Fermina by tasting the fragrance, because by doing this, her fragrance would be inside him.

Furthermore, throughout his life, Florentino is so obsessed with his feeling towards Fermina that he loses his feelings towards other women. When his love is strongly objected by Fermina's father, and Fermina eventually marries another man, he waits for her for "fifty-one years, nine months, and four days" (p. 66). Although the amount of his waiting time is extremely long, Florentino even counts the time he has spent for his waiting. This proves that Florentino is very loyal, and he believes that his love never dies. Moreover, he waits for something that is unsure, because there is no guarantee that after waiting for Fermina for so long, she would be his. Due to his inability to be with Fermina, Florentino "had loved in silence for a much longer time than anyone else in this world ever had" (p. 62). This again reveals that Florentino proves his everlasting love.

In addition, as he cannot have Fermina, Florentino finds a considerable number of women to sleep with. He even keeps a note every time he goes to bed with them, and in fact, he has done it for more than 622 times over the years.

These were his only weapons, and with them he joined in historic battles of absolute secrecy, which he recorded with the rigor of a notary in a coded book, recognizable among many others by the title that said everything: *Women*. His first notation was the Widow of Nazaret. Fifty years later, when Fermina Daza was freed from her sacramental sentence, he had some twenty-five notebooks, with six hundred twenty-two entries of long-term liaisons, apart from the countless fleeting adventures. (p. 185)

From this quotation, it is clear that in his obsession towards Fermina, he does things excessively. Although he sleeps with the women, it is obvious that he does not have any feelings for them. Florentino only uses them to fulfill his sexual needs, and as a compensation for being unable to possess Fermina. It can also be said that Florentino has sex with the women, but without any feelings of love for them as the women are just tools and do not mean anything for him. Florentino is only able to relate to the women physically, but not emotionally. He is unable to give them his heart. Even though Florentino has slept with numerous women, yet for Fermina, he "remained a

virgin” (p. 411). This statement reveals that it is only Fermina who can have his feelings of love. He has reserved all his feelings and emotions for her, not just a mere physical pleasure. By being a ‘virgin’ for her, Florentino is considered still pure and clean. He regards his mind and emotions as something precious that goes beyond his body. He cannot forget her no matter how long it takes or how many women he sleeps with. In this case, Florentino lives only for his obsession. In his whole life, there is no joy and happiness without Fermina, the woman he loves dearly and he suffers because of that. Thus, it can be inferred that he experiences death in his feelings due to his unrequited love in his life.

On the other hand, Fermina Daza, the main female character, undergoes a death in love and passion. As a fifteen-year-old teenager, when she still has her love and passion, she falls head-over-heels in love with Florentino. Unfortunately, Fermina’s love towards Florentino is forbidden by her father, Lorenzo. This is basically due to the difference in their social status. No matter how hard she fights her father, she cannot win. As a result, she often hides in her bathroom when reading or writing Florentino’s letters, so as not to be found out by her father.

She would lock herself in the bathroom at odd hours and for no reason other than to reread the letter, attempting to discover a secret code, a magic formula hidden in one of the three hundred fourteen letters of its fifty-eight words, in the hope they would tell her more than they said. (p. 83)

From this statement, it is obvious that Fermina is a romantic person. She really enjoys reading every word of Florentino’s letters. Moreover, finding out the ‘secret code’ or the ‘magic formula’ in the letters shows that every time she reads them, she finds new joys and excitement. She even counts the numerous letters and counts the words in each letter, meaning that she regards Florentino’s letters as something precious.

However, when her father finally discovers her relationship with Fermina and tells her to leave him, she fights her fathers. As a matter of fact, she even “locked herself in the bathroom, refused to eat or drink” (p. 98). This reveals that she loves

him so much that she puts all her effort to show that she is serious in her relationship. Fermina knows that she is unable to win from her father; therefore she does what she can in order to object him. Another evidence showing Fermina's determination in being with Florentino is by putting "the meat knife to her throat, without dramatics but with a steady hand and eyes so aghast that [her father] did not dare to challenge her" (p. 99). This statement reveals that she is willing to take her own life if her wish to be with Florentino is not fulfilled. She also dedicates her love only for Florentino.

She is then separated from Florentino when her father forces her to stay at Valledupar, a relative's place, for a three-year visit. The purpose of this journey is apparently to make Fermina forget about Florentino, and when she returns, she finally does; she loses her romantic dreams.

In an instant the magnitude of her own mistake was revealed to her, and she asked herself, appalled, how she could have nurtured such a chimera in her heart for so long and with so much ferocity. She just managed to think: My God, poor man! Florentino Ariza smiled, tried to say something, tried to follow her, but she erased him from her life with a wave of her hand.

"No please," she said to him. "Forget it." (p. 126)

From these lines, it is shown that Fermina has changed drastically. When she first fell in love with Florentino, she was still fifteen years old and is very young. At that time, she is also still naïve and innocent, because she just loves Florentino without any rationalization or further consideration. By being a teenager, she does not have any burden in loving someone as her love is purely based on her romantic dreams. Moreover, she does not mind the fact that Florentino is poor and without a good social status. In this case, she does not think more deeply that if Florentino really becomes her husband, she would also be poor. At that moment, all she thinks is that if she is with Florentino, she is sure to be happy. Nevertheless, when she returns from her three-year-journey, she becomes a matured and a grown up woman. Fermina's maturity is also shown from her new appearance from her journey.

She was taller than when she had left, more polished and intense, her beauty purified by the restraint of maturity. Her braid had grown in, but instead of letting it hang down her back she wore it twisted over her left shoulder, and that simple change had erased all girlish traces from her. (p. 122)

Fermina's new look represents the change from her childhood to adulthood. Although in her long journey in Valledupar she sometimes still thinks of Florentino, apparently there is a part of her that makes her think more rationally about her future. In this case, she no longer considers love and romance as the most vital elements in a marriage. On the contrary, she starts to think about responsibility as well. Fermina eventually agrees with her father to go through "a marriage of convenience" with a man of her father's choice (Couteau, 1988, p. 1). Hence, she chooses a man like Dr. Urbino instead, who can give her good status and a promising future. This reveals that she uses her logic instead of her feeling.

At the moment when Fermina returns and meets Florentino, she is able to 'kill' her love for Florentino instantly. This is because she realizes that her relationship with Florentino is a teenage mistake. Fermina is aware that she cannot be with him, so she dismisses him. However, when she kills her love for Florentino, she also unavoidably kills her love for other men, including Dr. Urbino, her husband-to-be. She no longer believes in the existence of romantic love and she regards it as a foolish daydream of a teenage girl.

In Fermina's marriage to Dr. Urbino, she also kills her feelings for her duty and responsibility. Being a mistress in the Urbinos' house, she has several heavy expectations to meet. Since she comes from a lower class than the wealthy and respectable Urbinos, she is often being underestimated by people. Her mother-in-law and even the society expect her to devote all her life to her husband and children. As an obedient woman according to the social tradition at that time, Fermina "carries out her roles as a wife and mother and attempts to find her place in society" (Deany). As a matured woman, she is able to think logically and ignore her feelings of love, and lives only for her responsibility. She is able to meet all the duties she has to carry out,

but she does them out of obligation. Although she is married to Dr. Urbino for many years and bears his children, she is unable to love him.

She could not remember when she had also begun to help him dress, ... but for the past five years or so she had been obliged to do it regardless of the reason because he could not dress himself.

That was why she did not treat him like a difficult old man but as a senile baby... (p.35)

From this quotation, it can be assumed that Fermina has no love and passion her husband and for the routines she that does in her house. By considering her husband as a baby, Fermina actually deceives herself in order to survive in the Urbinos' house.

Besides, when Fermina is old and is reminiscing about her past, she feels that her marriage with Dr. Urbino is very bland. Although Dr. Urbino is an ideal husband for a woman, yet when Fermina "recalled their life she found more difficulties than pleasures, too many mutual misunderstandings, useless arguments, unresolved angers" (p. 399). Because of her feeling of dissatisfaction, therefore, it can be said that Fermina experiences a kind of 'death' – the death in love and passion.

Nevertheless, there is a turning point the lives of the two characters when Fermina finally accepts Florentino again. When Florentino pledges his vow of love, at first Fermina was furious and offended because he expresses his words of love during her husband's funeral service.

Fermina Daza said goodbye to most of them at the altar, but she accompanied the last group of intimate friends to the street door so that she could lock it herself, as she had always done, as she was prepared to do with her final breath, when she saw Florentino Ariza, dressed in mourning and standing in the middle of the deserted drawing room. She was pleased, because for many years she had erased him from her life, and this was the first time she saw him clearly, purified by forgetfulness. But before she could thank him for the visit, he placed his hat over his heart, tremulous and dignified, and the abscess that had sustained his life finally burst.

“Fermina,” he said, “I have waited for this opportunity for more than half a century, to repeat to you once again my vow of eternal fidelity and everlasting love.”

Fermina Daza would have thought she was facing a madman if she had not had reason to believe that at that moment Florentino Ariza was inspired by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Her first impulse was to curse him for profaning the house when the body of her husband was still warm in the grave. But the dignity of her fury held her back. “Get out of here,” she said. “And don’t show your face again for the years of life that are left to you.” She opened the street door, which she had begun to close, and concluded:

“And I hope there are very few of them.” (p. 64)

From these lines, it can be assumed that Florentino has done a very big step in order to get Fermina. In doing this, he says his vows in an inappropriate time and place, which is in Fermina’s husband’s funeral. Fermina’s intense anger here indicates her protest against Florentino’s indifference. Fermina, however, does not realize that it is the beginning of a great emotion stirring inside her that is finally aroused again after her death of emotions. Since she broke up with Florentino more than fifty years ago, her death in emotions started, and from that moment, she ‘kills’ all her feelings of love and passion. Her meeting with Florentino again in the funeral causes her emotions to stir again, especially at the moment when she weeps for feeling lonely and angry, yet, “while she slept, sobbing, she had thought more about Florentino Ariza than about her dead husband” (p. 65). This hence, becomes the turning point in Fermina’s life – the awakening from her death in emotions.

Fermina’s revival in her feelings of love and passion consequently has an effect on Florentino. At first, Florentino’s love is not fulfilled because Fermina rejects him and marries another man. Since Fermina is unable to return his love, Florentino experiences a death in his feelings. He lives only for Fermina, his obsession, and is unable to be really ‘alive’ in his life. After the event in the funeral service, he keeps making a bold move in pursuing Fermina again. This is done by

sending her a series of “meditative and philosophic” letters (Couteau, 1988, p. 1). Florentino’s great effort in pursuing Fermina finally ends when she agrees to sail in a ship with him forever.

From the discussion, it can be perceived that both Florentino and Fermina at first experience the death in emotions. Florentino’s death in his feelings is caused by his unrequited love towards Fermina. By not being with the woman he loves, he loses the essence of his life as his life is only focused on Fermina. In his obsession for Fermina, he does things excessively. Similarly, Fermina also undergoes a death in love and passion due to her unfulfilled love towards Florentino. She kills all her feelings of love and passion in her life, and lives for her duty and responsibility instead. Nevertheless, when Florentino and Fermina are together again, they are able to overcome their death in emotions. Florentino’s death in his feelings and Fermina’s death in her love and passion clearly reflect that both of them need each other in order to prevail their ‘deaths’: “it is life, more than death, that has no limits” (p. 422).

Through the analysis of the characters, it is obvious that the setting has a great influence on the characters. The land/ earth and the waters, as well as the main characters experience a kind of death. As the place and the time the characters live in at that time reflect death, they also undergo death. However, it is important to note that the characters, Florentino and Fermina, can eventually survive in the midst of the death around them. As they can finally find love again, their death in emotions disappears. It is their love that prevails during the hardships they have gone through – death.