

## **The Representation of Love in the Dystopian Novel 1984**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the representation of love in George Orwell's 1984. The data were collected from Part Two and Part Three of the book, focusing on the main characters: Winston Smith and Julia. The present study employs Rimmon-Kenan's (1983) Narratology and Sternberg's (1986) love theory as its analytical tools. The analysis shows that love is represented as three different concepts in the story: perseverance, hope, and a way of rebelling. The analysis also reveals that love is represented as the core element which contributes to the existence of rebellion in the novel. However, because of how strong the government in a dystopian setting is, love is impossible to maintain for a long time. This appears to suggest that, in a dystopian setting, any kind of hope to win against the government seems impossible to achieve. The present study is expected to provide an alternative analysis to literary works belonging to dystopian genre.

**Keywords:** representation, dystopia, love, romance, George Orwell's 1984

## INTRODUCTION

Literary works comprise of various genres that become the core of the writing. Genres such as mainstream fiction and romance tend to have a happy ending in their stories (Orr & Herald, 2013). Dystopian genre, on the other hand, does not provide the readers such a hopeful content. Sar and Murni (2012) state that this kind of genre tells readers about a chaotic and despairfilled future that could happen because of mankind themselves. George Orwell's 1984 is an example of a dystopian novel that comes as an apprehension toward the future conditions. In 1984, the society is portrayed to be under the rule of a totalitarian government which forbids the existence of private lives, private relationships, and any kind of activities that do not give any contributions to the ruler.

Through the struggle of the main character in the story, Orwell represents the idea of control and resistance as one of the core themes in the dystopian novel. That is to say, representation has an important role in constructing a story. Representation according to Hall

(1997), refers to a way to provide meaningful information by the use of language to others. Yet, how a particular idea is represented depends on the intention of the writer. For example, in dystopian novel, some elements may appear different since in a dystopian world, the reality has gone awry. Therefore, many dystopian novels explore the negative portrayal of a society that has one horrible flaw. However, dystopian genre is not all about power and rebellion. There is also another theme that can appear in the dystopian genre, such as the theme of love or romance.

Generally, the idea of love or romance in utopian literature refers to romantic love between the main characters that lead to a happy ending. On the contrary, in a dystopian novel, the idea of love or romance can be represented in different ways, such as becoming a weapon in order to control people. That is to say, romance is portrayed as something dangerous which can harm people. Nevertheless, love can also be represented as something else, such as the beacon of hope for people who lived in the dystopian world. The

interaction between each element in dystopian novel is something that builds the attraction of this genre. Thus, it also enriches the dystopian novel with issues which can be explored.

Regarding this, a number of studies have analyzed dystopian novels. Such as the study conducted by Wolk (2015). In her study, she focuses on the role of technology in American and British dystopian novels regarding cold war. The result of the study indicates that those who are in control of the latest technology is capable of controlling the population. Based on the aforementioned study, it can be inferred that a study regarding dystopian novels is worth conducting, as it can shed light on other dimensions of life. Yet, there are many elements of dystopian genre that have not been explored much, such as how the idea of love is represented in a dystopian novel. Therefore, by using the frameworks of Rimmon-Kenan's (1983) narratology and Sternberg's (1986) theory of love, this study aims to

investigate the representation of love in the dystopian novel 1984.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Representation**

Representation is a broad concept which comes in a variety of forms. Representation, as explained by Hall (1997), refers to the process of meaning production through language. Thus, according to this view, meaning is thought to be constructed. There are no meanings that simply exist in our surroundings, since people need to produce it themselves. In order to enable the process, people are required to use symbols and sign in the form of sounds, words, images, musical notes, even objects, to represent concept, ideas, and feeling. Hence, language and concept become important elements in representing the world.

### **Novel**

Novel is a literary work which is popular among people before the rise of modern movies. Eagleton (2004) defines novel as a piece of prose fiction which is written in a reasonable length. Ciaffaroni (2009)

adds that novel is a global cultural instrument that support in defining the time and space where we live, how we speak with each other, what kind of feelings we have, and what kind of actions we do. For example, the Harry Potter series, which is written by J. K. Rowling, is written when fairy tales and fantasy are popular at that time.

Additionally, there are many genres of novel. Genre, according to Chandler (2000), is a part of literature that divide literatures into several types and give them names. Examples of genres are crime, fantasy, romance, science fiction, and many more. Examining all these genres requires a knowledge of elements of novel, such as plot, setting, and theme.

### **Love**

To love someone means to dedicate one's self to the other while forsaking any kind of existing selfishness. Hatfield and Walster (1978) believe that people is capable of experiencing two types of love: passionate love and companionate love. Passionate love is a state of high obsession towards the other. While the latter, companionate love, is the feelings towards a life-

long partner. In the movie *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), it is shown that love can lead to intimacy between people. Intimacy, as explained by Hatfield, Traupmann, Sprecher, Utne, and Hay (1985), is a relationship between two loving people who are entwined deeply. The relationship between Belle and the Beast is an example of companionate love. At first, Belle was afraid of the Beast since he imprisoned Belle's father for trespassing his castle. Yet, after meaningful considerations and living together for a while, they both developed feelings for each other. Belle was attracted to the Beast because they share similar hobby of reading. Acevedo and Aron (2009) further suggest that long-term relationships have a chance to experience romantic love. Romantic love emphasizes being in love with a certain individual, "the one".

### **Three Components of Love**

Sternberg (1986) has a particular love theory in which he explains that love comprises of three components: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. Sternberg

(1986) called this theory as the triangular love theory. He believes that one's love is affected greatly by these three components. This theory proceeds to seek answer to why some love last longer than the others. Sternberg (1986) believes that this theory provides people with the basic understanding of love among close relationships.

The first component, intimacy, refers to the feelings that can be found in a loving relationship, for example, closeness, connectedness, and bondedness. Sternberg (1986) clarifies that intimacy is comprised of feelings that will make one experience the warmth of a loving relationship. Intimacy is obtained from the emotional investment that has been put into the relationship. In a loving relationship, intimacy can be seen as the warm side of the relationship, since it provides the ones who experience it with the warmth which emerges from the feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness.

The second one is called passion. Passion refers to any kind of actions that will bring one to romance,

physical attraction, sexual consummation, and any kind of situation that is connected to loving relationships. This component becomes the origin of any urge or any form of arousal will lead people to experience the passion component of a loving relationship. Sternberg (1986) believes that passion is obtained when one gains enough motivation that came from a relationship. In a loving relationship, passion can be seen as the hot side of the relationship, since it is believed as a fuel to ignite the part of which is important to move the relationship forward.

The last component that Sternberg (1986) provide is decision/commitment component. This component refers to two types. The first one, it refers to the short term of the decision that one takes when he or she decides to love someone. The second one, it refers to the long term that one committed to with the intention of preserving the love they have. This component, according to Sternberg (1986), is ranging from the mental actions which are involved when making decision about any kind

of possible long-term commitment to a loving relationship. Decision/commitment component come from the chosen decision and commitment to one's relationship. In a loving relationship, decision/commitment can be seen as the cold side of the relationship, since this component is related heavily to the most important part that can test one's own patience to have a long-lasting love.

Thus, these three components hold an important role in a loving relationship. Each component can be said as a phase that one has to go through to achieve true love. Ranging from intimacy, the first phase anyone will go through to make one realize the appearance of love, passion, the second phase which lead people to indulge more in their relationship, and the third phase, decision/commitment, that grant anyone with an option whether to end or nurture their relationship. To summarize, three components of love are something that will come to exist when one start to have a loving relationship. It is impossible for one of them not to exist, because each

component balance each other to lead people to have their desired relationship.

### **Dystopia**

Moylan and Baccolini (2003) describe dystopia as the dark side of Utopia where it is located in places worse than the ones we live in. Furthermore, several characteristics of a dystopian society that makes them different from a utopian society are the existence of a figurehead that is worshipped by the society, constant surveillance by the government, and the restriction of any personal activity, relationship, and independent thinking. This makes the citizens live in an oppressed environment where they cannot express themselves and they have to be obedient if they want to be alive and well.

Dystopia is a literary genre that can be used to show that there is a possibility the world will become worse in the future. Sar and Murni (2012) support this argument since they believe that dystopia genre tells the readers about a chaotic and despairfilled future that could happen

because of mankind themselves. Thus, reading a dystopian literature can help people on preventing human-made disaster for happening in the world. For example, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) shows how bad the condition is if everyone in the world does not have individuality anymore. Even though the world finally achieves true peace, the price to pay does not seem to be fair, since humans are social being at their core. They do not have any kind of unique characteristic that makes them different from the other and their communication is limited to their basic human nature, such as lust.

### **Narratology (Narrative Theory)**

Narratology is a term related to narrative theory that derived from the word narrative. According to Fludernik (2009), narrative refers to daily situation concerning the act of telling something to somebody else. On the other hand, narratology, or narrative theory as described by Fludernik (2009), is related with a branch of knowledge focusing on narrative study. As a branch of knowledge, the focus of narratology

is on the elements that are joined together in constructing a narrative. Moreover, Fludernik (2009) argues that narrative theory relates to the modern use of linguistics features; therefore, sentences are the main unit of analysis in narratology. Onega and Landa (1996) also explain that narrative theory deals with the representation in semiotic systems intended to create meaning by several ways. Therefore, narratology can be related to linguistics and also representation, since narratology works around the study of language.

introduced by Tzvetan Todorov in his *Grammaire du Décaméron* in 1969. A webpage from Encyclopedia Britannica (n.d.) explains that narratology's theoretical core comes from the general knowledge which narratives can be found and shared through various media, such as oral and written language, gestures, and music. Felluga (2002) agrees with the above statement, since he believes that narratology studies how narrative construct how people view cultural artefacts and the world around them. Following these statements,

narratology can also be involved in the study of culture for its research subject also originates from people's culture.

Narratology uses text as its subject, which makes narratology can also be called as text-oriented theory. All of the elements of a text are explored by narratology in order to find how the sentences turn into a narrative. In academic field, narratology is considered as a part of literary study. Moreover, it is also related to the study of genre, semiotics, and poetics. In line with the study of genre, as stated by Fludernik (2009), narratology deals with the differences between lyric, drama and poetic. Narratology also focuses on the typological and historical aspects of a text.

As a part of literature study, narratology can be adapted in analysing a variety of literary works, such as a fictional text. Accordingly, RimmonKenan (1983) provides a term narrative fiction. Narrative fiction is the narration of a succession of fictional events, or in other words, how a fiction is being told. She further explains that the term narration is

described as a communication process where narrative is used to deliver a message to one another. Rimmon-Kenan (1983) classifies three basic aspects of narrative fiction: events, verbal representation, and the act of telling or writing. Further, she gives each aspect a label for convenience. They are story, text, and narration respectively.

These three aspects can be said as narrative main approaches that appear in literary works. Additionally, those three aspects branch into more aspects: the story aspect contains events and characters; the text aspect contains time, characterization, and focalization; and the narration aspect contains levels, voices, and speech representation. In search of representation in literary works, some of these aspects can be used to gain better results, they are event, characterization, and focalization.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach in order to uncover the representation of love in the novel. According to Mack,

Woodson, MacQueen, Guest, and Namey (2005), qualitative research is a type of scientific research which aims to seek answer to questions by means of description. They elaborate the advantage of using qualitative method by stating that qualitative research, which adopts open ended questions, can give more options to the researcher in answering the questions. From the explanation, qualitative method is chosen because it is suitable for the present study, which aims to uncover the representation of love in the dystopian novel.

#### **Data Collection and Data Analysis**

The data for the study are collected through a close reading of the 1984 novel (George Orwell, 1949). The collected data are parts of the book which illustrate the romantic events that happen between the main characters, Winston Smith and Julia. The events themselves are chosen by using the framework provided by RimmonKenan (1983) on narratology, in which this study focuses on the component of “event”. The data are then put into a table and

classified according to the three components of love using Sternberg’s (1986) theory of love.

#### **RESULT**

Data analysis reveals that love is constantly represented as perseverance, hope, and a way of rebelling throughout the story. Those representations of love are particularly shown through the characters’ attitudes and actions, which are intertwined with the phases of relationship they are in. More details will be further elaborated in the next sections.

Perseverance can be defined as continued effort or the determination to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition (Merriam-Webster). In experiencing love there should be enough commitment to go through the process of love. One has to face many ordeals to obtain the desired love even going as far as to break any set of rules. Love is represented as perseverance through the characters’ efforts from how they want to start the relationship to the way they maintain said relationship.

In the novel, Julia is the first one to show her perseverance in building the relationship. It is seen in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 1. He flattened it out. On it was written, in a large unformed handwriting: I love you. (p. 108)

Excerpt above shows Julia's determination in conveying her feelings to Winston. She even gives herself a small injury just to do a trick of slipping the small paper into Winston's pocket. Furthermore, this kind of action is seen as breaking the law of The Party, since The Party does not allow its Outer Party member to have relationship outside the ones which are allowed by The Party themselves. However, Julia's determination is enough to go against the rules, even if it means risking her own life just to achieve her objective to have a relationship with Winston.

Dystopian novels, especially 1984, have a bleak setting where the citizens live in sorrow while the government live in riches. Winston Smith is just another member of the Outer Party who lives his life while always being obedient towards the Party's rules. However, in reality he

always thinking of a way to rebel against the Party. One day, Winston meets Julia who change Winston's life. She becomes his hope by entering his dull life. Hope is defined as something good that is wanted to happen in the future, or a confident feeling about what will happen in the future (Cambridge Dictionary). In this novel, hope is represented by events which raise Winston's expectation of the future.

Winston's feeling of hope begins when he feels something when he helps Julia to get up. As can be seen in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 2. A curious emotion stirred in Winston's heart. In front of him was an enemy who was trying to kill him; in front of him, also, was a human creature, in pain and perhaps with a broken bone. Already he had instinctively started forward to help her. (pp. 105-106)

Before, he was being wary of her since he believes that she is the member of the Thought Police. But his curiosity gets a hold of him and he helps her instead. Later on, after he meets up with Julia and they decide to form a relationship, Winston's hope is growing because of it.

In dystopian setting, especially in 1984, almost every citizen has been brainwashed by the Party's ideal. Some people, specifically Winston and Julia, still able to think and act outside of what the Party has set their citizens to do. In the novel, it is shown that Winston has been thinking of ways to crush the Party. One of them being doing a rebel against them. Rebellion can be defined as action against those in authority, against the rules, or against normal and accepted ways of behaving (Cambridge Dictionary). He has been hearing information about the existence of a group of rebels called Brotherhood who have been doing actions that go against the Party's ways. He is thinking of joining them but do not know how. One day, he meets with Julia and ever since he formed a relationship with her, he thinks of their love as a tool to rebel against the Party.

Excerpt 3. That was above all what he wanted to hear. Not merely the love of one person, but the animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire: that was

the force that would tear the Party to pieces. (p. 126)

The above excerpt proves that Winston does think of their love relationship as a tool to fight against the Party in the beginning. It is shown in the sentence "Not merely the love of one person, but the animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that would tear the Party to pieces." Winston believes that he finally taking a step of fighting back against the Party.

## CONCLUSION

As previously mentioned, this study aims to investigate how the idea of love is represented in the dystopian novel, 1984, by George Orwell. To answer the question, it employs the theory of narratology by RimmonKenan's and Stenberg's three components of love as its analytical tools.

The study reveals that love is represented as three different concepts throughout the story: perseverance, hope, and a way of rebelling. These representations have been able to be uncovered through the characters' attitudes and actions

which depict the idea of love. It is interesting to note that the idea of love in dystopian world do not refer to the same concept of love in utopian world.

Love as perseverance is shown first by Julia in her efforts to build a relationship with Winston. Later on, both Winston and Julia's love as perseverance appear during their effort to go against the Party's law to live the way they wanted to. On the other hand, love as hope in 1984 emerges as the beginning of rebellion by Winston. Lastly, love as a way of rebelling relates to the previous idea regarding love as hope in a dystopian world.

With regard to the dystopian story, the analysis reveals that in 1984, the idea of love is represented as the core element which contributes to the existence of rebellion as the main conflict in the novel. The beginning of rebellion started at the same time with the existence of first type of love in the story, which is empty love (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.4). It kept growing until it became consummate love and slowly deteriorating into nonlove in the end

of the story. Different from the utopian genre, which usually ends right after the love reaches its peak, in the dystopian genre, the idea of love ends as nonlove. This condition is the result of the idea in which the oppressed party will never win the battle in the dystopian world. Therefore, no matter how strong the love is, it will not affect the end of the story in any way, since dystopia is the dark side of utopia and that the outcomes are generally worse than in utopia (Moylan & Baccolini, 2003).

## **DISCUSSION**

Although throughout the story love is represented as perseverance, hope, and a way to rebelling, in the end, however, the characters' love did not result in a happy ending. The idea of a better future vanished, and the Party keeps on ruling the society the way it is. The nonexistent concept of a perfect society and state is clearly the characteristic of a dystopian world. Yet, the idea of having this perfect society seems impossible in the real world, since human beings are far from perfect. Unfortunately, various examples of dystopian societies can

be found in the world today, such as in North Korea and Gaza. Regarding this, it is already known that up to the moment of writing this research, people who live in Gaza have been struggling with poverty, violence, intimidation, health issues, and freedom. In the last few years they have existed under an Israel-imposed siege. Similarly, citizen of North Korea is controlled through their fear towards the government. The ruler intentionally restricts technology in order to limit people's freedom, including their choice of religion. Any rebellious act will lead them to be executed. Moreover, a lot of propagandas are spread every day in the country by the media under government control (Jeffries, 2013). The aforementioned cases are concrete examples depicting the concept of dystopia in the real world. However, even though there are not many totalitarian governments in this world, we, to certain extent, can be said to be living in a dystopian world.

The example of a dystopian condition that is close to us is the excessive use of social media, which leads to the act of dehumanization

through cyber bullying (Smith, 2010). It is already well-known that we are now living in the age of digital technology (Chatfield, 2016). People can access unlimited information and communicate with other people easily. On the other hand, the benefit of technology, specifically regarding social media, seems to replace a reallife relationship and can cause negative emotion. While scrolling through social media it is common to find people leaving negative or hate comments toward others.

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