

THE POWER OF LOVE: AN ANALYSIS ON MAGGIE AND BRYCE RELATIONSHIP IN NICHOLAS SPARKS'S NOVEL *THE WISH*

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted with the aim of analyzing the power of love that made Maggie continue to love Bryce until the end of her life. Even though Bryce had passed away and chose to live alone without seeking new love. This study used qualitative research methods. The source of the data is *The Wish* novel. The data are analyzed using the triangular theory of love. This theory is popularized by Robert Sternberg. This study is intended to analyze the main character of the novel using this theory. Based on the theory, there are several factors that influence the type of love that is also reflected in this novel: they are: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Based on that theory, the results of this study show that Maggie and Bryce's relationship is included in the consummate love type because it contains three love components of the triangular theory of love. The three components of love combined create the strength of a relationship that keeps Maggie going, including love itself, memories created, and the promises made.

1. INTRODUCTION

Love is a feeling that is difficult to define, because almost everyone has their own meaning of love. Love is also intangible, but love cannot be separated from human life (Sabillah, 2021). There is no single phenomenon that can describe what love is. In the end, it is a complex series of emotional and mental sequences. Basically, the type of love that exists in everyone is different in form and different in terms of quality (Rini, 2017).

Love is a very important need for human beings so that without love, the growth and development of individual abilities will be hampered (Susanti, 2017). Meanwhile, according to Sternberg (1986), love is the deepest and most desirable form of human emotion. Humans may cheat, steal, and kill in the name of love. It is better to lose than to lose love. Love can cover everyone and on many levels (Sternberg, 1986).

Love is a feeling that makes humans willing to feel happy once and then get sick and fall many times. Because sometimes love is like a hope for those who feel it, they can keep their feelings for someone who has not even communicated for years, and amazingly there are even



those who still love their partners even though they are in different realms. Love is something that has no limits (Sternberg, 1986).

In this study, researchers analyze a relationship that occurs in the characters Maggie Dawes and Bryce Tricket in a novel by Nicholas Sparks entitled *The Wish*. This novel was a new novel from Sparks which published in 2021. This novel talks about the life of a woman named Maggie Dawes who is told in two different times, namely when Maggie was a 16-year-old teenager who was always compared to her older sister and then got pregnant out of wedlock and was sent to her aunt's house in a village called Ocracoke by her parents to cover up her pregnancy.

The first time Maggie came to Ocracoke, even Maggie never left her aunt's house, she was only feeling sorry for herself but after meeting Bryce, Maggie became a different person, where every day is full of enthusiasm and happy feelings. That is the real proof that love can easily turn human life upside down. Like Maggie, the pain she experienced as a teenager was healed by Bryce's presence which brought a feeling called love until when she grew up. She was hurt again for the same reason, namely love when Bryce died and left forever. Even though she felt down when she lost Bryce.

Maggie was able to survive and move on with life by remembering every second of the memories she had gone through when she and Bryce loved each other. Those memories motivated her so that she could live a better life than before. Started as a photographer until she has her own studio and employees. Maggie became an independent and happy adult woman. She chose to be alone that made her to be famous photographer.

After Bryce's death, Maggie decided not to have a relationship with anyone. This is the reason why researchers conducting this research to know how can love make humans survive loving people for dead even when the beloved has passed away. In general, people heal their wounds from losing old loves by finding new loves. Pramudianti (2020) conducting interviews with respondents to analyze the happiness of young women who repeatedly break up in love. She found that her respondents were looking for new love after being hurt by someone. This happened over and over again (via Laksono, 2022).

In contrast to Maggie's story, she remains loyal and continues to love Bryce. Especially when Maggie has become an independent woman, who is rich, successful. She has no children; this should be an impetus for Maggie to start a relationship again. But Maggie chose to continue living with Bryce's memories. The memories that are created between Maggie and Bryce's love affair are feelings that become a bridge so that Maggie can survive. Because when someone is gone, all that's left is a memory.

This research was conducted to analyze the problems that arise in the relationship between Maggie and Bryce with the aim of knowing the component of love between Maggie and Bryce.



What kind of love reflects their relationship by using Robert Stenberg's Triangular Theory of Love. Researcher examines how love has a big role and can give strength for Maggie to live after Bryce died.

The reason the researcher chose to use the Triangular Theory of Love is because it is in accordance with the problems examined by the researcher. This theory explains how a feeling called love is formed, besides that, this theory also provides an understanding of how to communicate, and how to treat each other that are intertwined in it can be divided into several categories. The researcher hopes that this research can provide an overview for readers, especially those who have bad relationships about love, or those who are afraid of falling in love. Sometimes love also gives strength to those who feel it (Firmansyah & Indarti, 2022).

2. METHODOLOGY

There are two sources of data used in this study. The main data of this research is the novel *The Wish* published in 2021 by Nicholas Sparks. The data are in the form of dialogues and quotations from the novel. The supporting data are taken from journal articles, books and thesis that are related with the theory used in this study.

The data collection method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Bogdan & Biklen (1998) explain that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of speech or writing and the behavior of the people being observed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The researcher collects data from the novel *The Wish* by Nicholas Sparks by reading, understanding, and analyzing the novel, to get problems that can be solved using the Triangular Theory of Love from Robert J. Sternberg.

Researchers analyze the data by grouping the data into three parts; the first analyzes the concept of love from the theory of Robert J. Sternberg which contains Intimacy, Passion, and Decision or Commitment. The second is to analyze the love categories shown in Maggie and Bryce's relationship based on the theory of Robert Sternberg which consists of seven categories, namely Nonlove, Liking, Infatuated Love, Empty Love, Romantic Love, Companionate Love, Fatuous Love, and Consummate Love. Then the last data is to analyze quotes that describe the power of love contained in the novel.



3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Components of Love

1. Intimacy

a. *The desire to increase the well-being of loved ones.*

A relationship that is built on love by both parties must have a desire to provide welfare for one another (Suyono Agus., 2008). This can be seen from how a person treats their partner gently so that their partner feels comfortable and safe when they are together. Maggie and Bryce's relationship has these elements, as in the quote below.

"I've already loaded the bags. We should probably head out, since you never know how crowded the ferry will be." As I was about to head to the van, Bryce gently took hold of my arm, signaling for me to wait. (Sparks, 2021: 174)

Based on this dialogue between the characters, Bryce gives instructions Maggie to get on the ship immediately and gives a signal with her to wait while holding her arm. This is a form of Bryce's desire to pay attention to her, so that she feels comfortable and does not feel any difficulties in living life activity.

b. *Experience happiness with loved ones*

Experiencing happiness with someone you love is one component of intimacy which can be marked by the emergence of feelings of joy and always feeling flowery (Hadianti & Resnitriwanti, 2017). In a relationship, there is no troublesome word for loved ones but instead, we feel happy because we have participated in our partner's life. The relationship between Maggie and Bryce can be seen in the following dialogue.

"You don't have to thank me," he said. "Believe it or not, I'm glad you're here. Ocracoke can get kind of boring in the winter."

"You don't say."

He laughed. "I guess you've noticed that, huh?"

For the first time since he'd arrived, I smiled. "It's not all bad." (Sparks, 2021: 157)

Maggie said thanks to Bryce but she said Maggie's presence in Ocracoke, she felt happy and Maggie also felt the same feelings. As evidenced by the smile that appeared for the first time after she came to Ocracoke. This is because when people who love each other will feel joy when doing something with their partner, they will do it with all their heart.

c. *High respect for loved ones*

Every human being must have the advantages and disadvantages of each. In a relationship, the shortcomings possessed by their partners are complement to a love bond (Iswahyudi, 2018). That



is why people often say that love is blind because great feelings of love can cover up the real situation (Schacter, 2001). This can be seen in the quotation below:

“The fact that you’re here but still enrolled in a school in Seattle? Because you’re leaving in May? Because your aunt was vague about the reason for your sudden visit? Because she asked for an extra cushy seat on your bike? Because you used the bathroom a lot today? Pregnancy was the only explanation that made sense.”

I wasn’t sure whether I was more surprised by the idea that he’d figured it out so easily or the fact that there was no judgment in his tone or his expression as he said it. (Sparks, 2021: 154)

The excerpt from the conversation above between Maggie and Bryce when they found out that Maggie was pregnant without a husband at such a young age. This situation did not make Bryce judge or look at Maggie differently. But he confirmed Maggie's pregnancy without any judgment in his tone. He also does not have a scornful expression. He still respects Maggie and does not change his views on her despite knowing the facts.

d. Intimate communication with loved ones

If someone tells something about himself to others in detail, then other people tend to reveal it in detail too. But if he tells other people only a small part or not in detail, then other people also tend to disclose it in no detail (Gainau, 2018).

“I know you’ve mentioned that your sister, Morgan, is the perfect one,” he said, “but it’s not easy having Richard and Robert as brothers, either.” His voice was soft enough that I had to strain to hear him as he went on. “Did you know that they took the SAT last September? Remember, they’re only twelve, and both of them got nearly perfect scores: 1570 and 1580, which were a lot higher than I scored. And who knows if Richard will even need to go to college? He could go straight into a career in coding. You know about the internet, right? It’s going to change the world, trust me on that, and Richard is already making a name for himself in the field. He earns more than my grandfather does, working part-time and freelancing. He’ll probably be a millionaire by the time he’s my age. Robert will do the same. I think he’s a bit jealous about money, so for the last couple of months, he’s been working with Richard on programming, in addition to building his plane. And of course, he finds it laughably easy. How can I compete with brothers like that?” (Sparks, 2021: 257)

Based on the data above, it shows that Bryce and Maggie share stories about their personal lives. Bryce shared that having brothers like Richard and Robert was not much different from Maggie having a sister like the perfect Morgan. He feels pressured and fears that he might not be as successful as his brothers. Being open to each other and sharing stories with each other, you



can reduce the burden on your mind. That is a relationship, doing deep talk with your partner can strengthen the relationship that exists.

2. Passion

The desire component in a relationship is important as the other components but this component is seen differently. It is formed from physical and sexual attraction, resulting in doubts about the existence of feelings love and the desire for a relationship (Imbang Hasiolan, 2015). The first component in Maggie and Bryce's relationship they were attracted to the intimacy component, the desire component came later and brought their relationship closer. As in the quote below.

It wasn't my first kiss, or even my first French kiss, but it was the first kiss that felt perfect and right in every way, and when we finally separated, I heard him sigh. "You don't know how long I've wanted to do that," he whispered. "I love you, Maggie." Instead of answering, I leaned back into him, allowing him to hold me, feeling as his fingertips gently traced my spine. I imagined his heart beating in unison with my own, even as his breath seemed steadier than mine. (Sparks, 2021:305)

The conversation above shows a desire preceded by Bryce. For the first time since they had been close, he worked up the courage to kiss Maggie after so long he had suppressed the urge. The dialogue is also shown that Bryce wanted to kiss her for a long time, but he only did it when, he was sure. A relationship whose closeness begins with the intimacy of communication, representing desire is a far and difficult step to do, this is a sign the relationship that exists between both is real.

3. Commitment/decision

Commitment is an important component and makes a relationship feel clearer because before someone decides to commit with someone else, they must have gone through a long thought. The commitment that exists between Maggie and Bryce can be seen in the conversation below.

*"I love you, Maggie. Do you love me?"
Even though I knew where all of this was going, I couldn't lie to him. "Yes, I love you."
He looked up at me, eyes beseeching. "Will you marry me?" (Sparks, 2021:392)*

Bryce's statement when expressing his intention to ask Maggie to marry, means that he is sure Maggie also has the same feelings, if Bryce is not sure then he will not dare to take the risk to ask Maggie to marry him.



B. Kinds of Love

The type of love in a relationship can be known from the fulfillment or not of three components in Robert Sternberg's triangular theory of love (Firmansyah & Indarti, 2022; Sternberg, 1986). In the relationship between Maggie and Bryce, the type of love described in its consummate love. It has been explained in the quotation above that their relationship contains three components of love: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. Companionate love is usually found in a marriage relationship, but Maggie and Bryce are proof that marriage is not a benchmark for the perfection of a relationship.

C. Power of Love

The feeling of love that exists in Maggie and Bryce's relationship is very strong because their relationship is made up of the three components of love without exception. Their relationship has a solid foundation and is not easily destroyed even though the storms of problems that hit it are enormous. The love produced is also not just love felt by couples who are dating, or married couples who then end up bored because of the eroding of sexual interest between them (Astria Novera & Laksono, 2017). Their love is a feeling that gives a special strength to Maggie after Bryce died in Afghanistan. This is influenced by several factors including love itself, the memories created, and the promises made.

1. Love

Maggie and Bryce's love is the definition of true love where feelings are able to give strength to Maggie who feels them. Even though Bryce is gone. His love continues to grow in Maggie's heart and mind. This can be seen from the quotation below.

"But never forget that love is always stronger than fear. Love saved me, and I know it will save you, too."

They were her very last words. (Sparks, 2021: 450)

The dialogue above is the last words of Maggie who said to her son, Mark before she died. With the aim that Mark would not be afraid to imagine life after Maggie. The biological mother he had just met, died. She said don't be afraid of anything because fear is nothing bigger than love. This sentence means that love is one of the biggest reasons she can survive when problems come. From a young age, life was never easy for Maggie.

Many problems surround Maggie and don't make her sink or give up on life. She kept trying to do her best with the love she felt for Bryce. She didn't make love the reason for her sorrow,



but she turned it into a great power. Take a boldstep to start living the way he wants. Until the end of his death, she was able to survive and become a great person without anyone by his side.

2. Memories

Every relationship formed between humans with each other will produce memory that can later be remembered again. Memory is an important tool for survival. By remembering past experiences, humans can avoid the same dangers in the future and learn from their mistakes (Schacter, 2001). Memories can be generated from all activities carried out by humans, can be in the form of conversations, places, or items to be remembered. Shown in the quote below.

“Do you still have the necklace that Bryce gave you?”

Instead of answering, Maggie reached behind her neck and unhooked the clasp before sliding the necklace off. She handed it to him, watching as he carefully took it. He stared at the front before flipping it over and examining the engraving on the back.

“It’s so delicate.”

“I can’t think of a day I haven’t worn it.” “And the chain never broke?”

“I’m pretty careful with it. I don’t sleep with it on or shower with it. But other than that, it’s part of my everyday ensemble.”

“And whenever you put it on, you remember that night?”

“I remember that night all the time. Bryce wasn’t just my first love. He’s the only man I’ve ever loved.” (Sparks, 2021: 319)

The quotation above shows that Maggie keeps and uses the necklace given to her by Bryce after tens of years. She cannot go away without using the necklace. The necklace that Bryce gave is a precious thing for her and holds many memories that she can remember. Maggie tells Mark that the necklace is a symbol of memories of how happy she was on the night when Bryce gave her the necklace. A moment she can't forget until the end of his life.

Forgetting Bryce is something that is almost impossible for Maggie. She is always there in the most difficult times and it's great that Bryce can turn it into beautiful memories that can't be forgotten. Those memories were one of the factors that kept him going when his life was messed up again after Bryce's death.



3. Promises

The promise is something that must be kept because it happened because of a joint decision and agreed to what was agreed upon. There are many factors that make someone enter into an agreement (Weis, 2006). In the relationship between Maggie and Bryce made an agreement as shown in the data excerpt below.

“On your twenty-fourth birthday, let’s plan to meet at the beach. Where we had our date, okay?”

I nodded, wondering if it would even be possible, and when he kissed me, I thought I could almost taste his sadness. Instead of staying with me, he helped me to my feet and put his arms around me. I could smell him, clean and fresh, like the island where we’d met. (Sparks, 2021: 401)

The dialogue spoken by Bryce to Maggie when his marriage proposal was not accepted by him at the time. But Maggie invited Bryce to have a mature relationship, where both of them focused on living their own lives and pursuing what they wanted. Even though Bryce had sent a letter for the first time after they lost contact to remind them of their promise to Maggie, this never materialized. Maggie did not give up, she continued to live well until in the end. When she died, she asked for her ashes to be scattered in Ocracoke.

These ashes represent what’s left of my heart. Symbolically, anyway. For reasons I don’t have to explain to you, I want them spread in Ocracoke. My heart, after all, has always remained there. And, I’ve come to believe, Ocracoke is an enchanted place, where the impossible sometimes becomes real. (Sparks, 2021: 453)

The quotation above is a letter that Maggie wrote to give to her son Mark before she died. In the letter, Maggie asked Mark to spread her ashes in Ocracoke. Maggie did not provide an explanation in the letter. However, it can be concluded that Maggie wants to keep her promise to Bryce to meet on the beach in Ocracoke. Considering that they both have the same place. Even though they did not meet at the place they promised, it was the promise that made two of them finally communicate with each other. Until the end of her life, Maggie still remembered and kept it even though it was too late and she wasn't present herself.



4. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, the first component of love formed is intimacy, which makes them close to each other. The eight elements of intimacy including the desire to increase the well-being of loved ones, experience happiness with loved ones, high respect for loved ones, intimate communication with loved ones, receiving and providing emotional support with loved ones, and sharing self and property with loved ones.

The second component is passion that makes their relationship clearer apart from being comfortable because of the intimacy factor. They are aware of their sexual attraction. Finally, the commitment component, they don't give a name to the relationship that is being undertaken. They commit to create a long-term relationship and remain loyal to each other even though the distance separates them.

The fulfillment of the three components of love that make up Maggie and Bryce's relationship makes them enter into the type of consummate love. Intimacy, passion and commitment are incorporated and then create strength in a relationship. The power of love can be influenced by several factors, each one differs according to how they live it. The factors that make Maggie and Bryce's relationship strong is their own love. The memories they create, and the promises they make.

It can be concluded that the love story of Maggie and Bryce in *The Wish* is one proof of true love. No matter how difficult in her life, she sticks with Bryce's love. Their love is a picture that nothing is impossible in a relationship of love. Maggie, who was exiled by her family because she was pregnant, was able to meet a man who truly loved her. They prove that no matter how much fear you have to be in a relationship with someone you love, it will never be compared to the power of love that is formed. Their relationship teaches that not giving news does not mean it's will. Being away does not mean not loving, and death isn't a goodbye because the power of love comes from the heart and is embedded in the heart.



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