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# Analysis of the Novel *Tenki No Ko* (天気の子) by Shinkai Makoto Through Robert J. Sternberg's Love Theory

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## Abstract

This study aims to explain the relationship that exists between the two main characters, Hodaka Morishima and Hina Amano in the novel *Tenki no Ko* by Shinkai Makoto. In this study, the author used a structural method with qualitative descriptive research methods. In addition, the author used the love theory from Robert J. Sternberg named The Triangular Theory of Love to reveal the romantic relationship between the two main characters. The results of this study show how the romantic relationship between the two main characters is tested by the various conflicts they face to maintain their relationship. In maintain the relationship, there are various components such as intimacy, passion and commitment. The three components interconnected with each other and define the perfect love relationship by Hodaka and Hina experienced

Keywords: love; character; conflict; structural

## 1. Introduction

Literary works also possess inherent distinctiveness, namely beauty, originality, and artistic expression in both content and presentation. Sayyid Quthb in Sangidu (2004: 38) defines literary works as an intertwining of emotions and social realities (all aspects of life) that are well-organized and beautifully expressed in concrete form. Etymologically, literature can be interpreted as beautiful writing. One of the types of literary works is the novel, a narrative form that contains specific conflicts in the lives of its characters. All elements that contribute to a novel, both intrinsic and extrinsic, influence the structure of a novel and shape the overall story. Interrelated and interdependent elements form a totality that makes it a literary work.

Nurgiyantoro in Nurgiyantoro (1995: 30) states that intrinsic elements are those that build the literary work itself. These elements include plot, characters, characterization, setting, and others. In examining a literary work, especially a novel, various research methods can be used, and one of them is the structural approach. According to Taum (1997: 38-39), the structural approach emphasizes the overall relationship between various text elements. The elements of the text itself consist of various aspects such as ideas, themes, settings, messages, characters, language style, and so on. Meanwhile, according to Teeuw as cited in Wiyatmi (2006: 89), structural theory views and understands literary works from the perspective of the structure of the work itself. Literary works are built from a number of structures, and each structure has its role and function. In this study, the author uses a structural approach to analyze some intrinsic elements such as characters and characterization, as well as conflicts within the novel.

Aminuddin in Prima Fajri Putra (2014: 10) defines characters as the actors who carry out events in the story, while characterization is the author's way of presenting characters in the story, and these characters depict their roles. In a novel, there is also the relationship between characters, which is an essential aspect of a novel. Relationships between characters can occur between main and supporting characters, main characters among themselves, or supporting characters with other supporting characters. These interactions influence each character's relationship and the development of each character. Thus, the interactions between characters drive the plot and introduce interesting conflicts in a story. According to Wellek & Warren as cited in Nurgiyantoro (1998: 122), conflict is something dramatic, referring to the struggle between two balanced forces and implying action and reaction. Conflict is also something unpleasant experienced by the characters in the story and arises from interaction, usually in the form of communication. Conflict is divided into internal and external conflicts. Internal conflict occurs within an individual, typically involving inner struggles that evoke feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. On the other hand, external conflict is a conflict that occurs outside an individual and involves others.

The theory used in this study is Robert J. Sternberg's theory of love. In his book "The Psychology of Love," love is described as a feeling within a person's heart that contains intimacy, commitment, and passion. These three elements form the core of an ideal and stable love relationship. This combination of elements is known as "The Triangular Theory of Love," and from this combination, various types of love are derived, such as liking, infatuation, friendship, empty love, romantic love, blind love, and

perfect love. Each of these components plays a role and is interconnected with the other components, defining the meaning of love experienced by each individual with their partner.

## 2. Method

The study method employed in this study is the qualitative descriptive method. This approach focuses on obtaining an in-depth understanding of an occurrence or a specific event through detailed descriptions. Typically applied in study, this method is utilized to unearth the meanings, values, and perceptions inherent in a given incident or event. It goes beyond data collection, encompassing the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data to achieve a deeper understanding of the phenomenon or event under investigation.

Several studies have explored similar theories or objects to the research at hand. The first study is conducted by Reshma Fajar Ariastanti (2015), titled "Analysis of the Novel *Shiosai* by Mishima Yukio Through Robert J. Sternberg's Theory of Love." In this study, Reshma Fajar Ariastanti analyzes the novel *Shiosai* used a method that encompasses both its intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements focused on include characterization, plot, and setting. Meanwhile, the extrinsic elements are examined use the love theory by Robert J. Sternberg. The second study is conducted by Zakia Ayu Wardana (2021), titled "Phenomenon of Romantic Love in Waria Perspective through 'The Triangular Theory of Love' According to Robert J. Sternberg." In this study, Zakia Ayu Wardana discusses the forms of intimacy and passion among waria (transgender women) in their romantic relationships based on The Triangular Theory of Love. The study utilizes a qualitative method with a philosophical method to investigate or explore human experiences. The third study is conducted by Mohammad Shalahudin AL Ayyubi (2022), titled "Analysis of the Use of Women's Language Varieties in the Novel *Tenki no Ko* by Shinkai Makoto." The aim of this study is to discuss women's language varieties (*Joseigo*) and their usage in the novel. The study employs a descriptive method with a qualitative sociolinguistic method.

## 3. Result and Discussion

The novel *Tenki no Ko* tells the story of two teenagers named Hodaka Morishima and Hina Amano. The story begins when Hodaka Morishima runs away from his home on a small island and moves to Tokyo. On his way to Tokyo, the ship that Hodaka boards is hit by a rainstorm, almost causing him to fall off the ship. Fortunately, Hodaka is rescued by a man named Suga Keisuke, who gives him his business card. In Tokyo, Hodaka struggles to support himself due to his underage status, making it difficult for him to work legally. One day, Hodaka encounters a girl who gives him free food, and this girl turns out to be Hina Amano. After this meeting, Hodaka eventually finds a job as an assistant at a small company that publishes articles about legends and folklore. The company is owned by Suga, the man Hodaka met on the ship. Later, Hodaka reunites with Hina and discovers that she has ability to change the weather to clear skies. Together with Hina's younger brother Nagi, the three of them start a business using Hina's ability to provide clear skies for specific events. As they spend their days together, Hodaka begins to fall in love with Hina. However, Hina's ability holds a tragic secret if used, her body gradually transforms into water, leading to her disappearance.

### 3.1. The relationship between the main characters in the novel *Tenki no Ko*

In this study, the author will elaborate on how the relationship between the two main characters is portrayed. To understand this, the author needs to delve into the characters and characterization, as well as the conflicts that unfold between the two main characters. Therefore, the author employs a structural method that encompasses characters, characterization, and conflicts. The aim is to explain how the characters and characterization, as well as the conflicts, contribute to building the relationship between the two main characters.

#### 3.1.1. Characters and Characterization

In a novel, characters are a crucial intrinsic element. Each character plays a unique role and possesses distinct traits that set them apart from other characters. As for the two main characters in the novel *Tenki no Ko*, they are as follows:

##### 1. Hodaka Morishima

Hodaka is a 16 years old teenager facing family issues who decides to leave his birthplace and go to Tokyo. Despite being just a teenage boy, Hodaka gradually overcomes all the challenges he faces in Tokyo and transforms into someone with a brave and optimistic demeanor. His encounter with Hina also reveals Hodaka's compassionate and hardworking side, evident in the close bond he forms with Hina over time.

##### 2. Hina Amano

Hina is an orphaned girl who struggles to provide for herself and her younger brother, Nagi Amano. The challenging circumstances force Hina to be self-reliant, managing everything from work, cooking, housekeeping, to taking care of her sibling. Fortunately, Hina is a highly creative girl, utilizing various means to meet her daily needs. Hodaka's presence provides Hina with a friend to share all the challenges she has been facing, allowing her to momentarily forget the burdens she carries alone. This contributes to Hina regaining her cheerful demeanor. The closeness between Hina and Hodaka makes her more attentive and

patient when dealing with Hodaka. Initially just friends, Hodaka gradually awakens emotional feelings within Hina, bringing them closer together.

### 3.1.2. Conflict

Conflict is one of the essential elements found in a literary work. Conflict arises due to interactions, both internal and external. It is not only expressed verbally but can also manifest non-verbally through body language, facial expressions, or actions that convey contradiction. The conflict in this novel begins with the meeting of the two main characters. Subsequently, the encounters they experience lead to closeness and emotional bonds between the two main characters and culminate in how they struggle to maintain their relationship.

#### 1. The beginning of Hodaka and Hina's closeness

The relationship between the two main characters begins when Hodaka visits a fast-food restaurant where Hina works. During those visits, Hodaka only orders a cup of cream soup for three consecutive days as he needs to save money. Hina, observing Hodaka from a distance, is touched by this and decides to give him a box of burgers. This marks the inception of their relationship. As in the following quote below:

少女が立っていた。マクドナルドの制服姿だ。

「あの、これ……………」頼んでませんけど、という意味で、僕は言う。

「あげる、内緒ね」小さな花の香りみたいにかすかな声で、そう言った。

「え?でもなんで……………」

「君、三日連続でそれが夕食じゃん」少女は僕のポタージュを見てから責めるようにそう言って、小走りで去って行く。

(新海誠, 2019:32)

Someone has placed a Big Mac box in front of me. She was wearing a McDonald's uniform.

"Um, this..." I uttered, intending to convey that I didn't order it.

"I gave it to you. It's a secret, okay," she said, with a voice as soft as the scent of small flowers.

"Huh? But, why..."

"You've been eating just that for your dinner for three days, right?" she said as if protesting, glancing at my cream soup. Then, she ran off playfully.

(Shinkai, 2021:36)

After that, Hodaka and Hina cross paths again when Hodaka sees a girl in distress, who turns out to be Hina, dealing with a man. Without hesitation, Hodaka bravely intervenes to help Hina. After rescuing her, they get acquainted and Hina shows her ability to brighten up a situation. Discovering that Hina has the power to change the weather to clear skies, the three of them—Hodaka, Hina, and Hina's younger brother Nagi—start a business, using Hina's ability to provide clear skies for specific events. As they spend their days together, Hodaka begins to fall in love with Hina.

#### 2. Hodaka and Hina escape from the police.

After experiencing so much together, their relationship grew closer. However, it didn't last long. Hodaka's departure from his home island worried his parents, leading them to initiate a search for him. One day, while Hodaka and Hina were resting in the apartment where Hina lived, they were suddenly startled by the arrival of the police, causing fear. At that moment, Hodaka was reported missing, and Hina's identity as an orphan became known to the police. Consequently, feelings of worry and fear arose in both Hodaka and Hina. They were concerned that their relationship might come to an end. This conflict became a significant challenge that tested the bond of their relationship. As in the following quote below:

「すこし訊きたいことがありますね」男が不機嫌そうな声で言う。「それに彼は家出少年で、ご両親から行方不明者届が出ています」僕の際は、別の生き物みたいに勝手に震えている。

「それから天野さん、」と女性警官の声。「あなた、小学生の弟さんと二人暮らしよね?」

「はい」

「それもね、本当はちょっと問題なの。保護者のいない児童だけの生活は—」

(新海誠, 2019:151)

"We just want to ask a few questions." The man sounded tense. "Besides, he ran away from home, and both of his parents filed a missing person report." My knees tremble, as if my legs are separate living entities from me.

"So, Amano-san," the policewoman said. "You live alone with your younger brother, who is still in elementary school, right?"

"Yes."

"That's also a bit problematic. The life of children without parents..."

(Shinkai, 2021:179)

After the police arrived, Hina tried to understand the predicament Hodaka would face if he continued to stay with her and requested that Hodaka return to his hometown. Hearing this, Hodaka became aware of everything they had been through together and recalled what he needed to do for Hina and Nagi. Therefore, Hodaka decided to run away together. Hodaka's decision strengthened the bond between them even more because their choice was based on trust, mutual understanding, and the desire to always be together with their loved ones.

### 3. The secret of Hina's abilities

Throughout the journey they went through together, there was a secret that Hina always kept hidden, and it was the consequence she would face when using her ability. Hina never disclosed this secret; she only shared how she became a "Sunshine Girl" with Hodaka. However, one day, the secret of her ability began to manifest in certain parts of her body, transforming into water, and Hina could no longer conceal it. As in the following quote below:

「最初はなんともなかったの。でもある時気づいたの。晴れを願うほどね、体が透明になってくの」  
なぜ気づかなかったのか。手のひらを透かして空を見る時の、彼女の表情の哀しさに。

(新海誠, 2019:178)

"At first, there was nothing. But, one day, I realized. The more I prayed for clear weather, the more transparent my body became."

Why didn't I notice it? Her hands, seemingly transparent as she gazed through the sky, sadness on her face.

(Shinkai, 2021:206)

Their escape came to a halt at a Love Hotel, where the three of them spent time and rested while hiding from the police pursuit. It was the night when the secret of Hina's ability was revealed. On that night, Hina realized that her body would soon merge with the sky. Therefore, Hina finally expressed her feelings to Hodaka and revealed the secret she had kept hidden. The secret being that her body would transform into droplets of water every time she used her ability, ultimately merging with the sky. Upon hearing this, Hodaka felt a profound sadness as he faced the disappearance of Hina, someone incredibly precious in his life. Hodaka, unable to do anything, could only blame himself for realizing Hina's secret too late.

### 4. Hodaka and Hina's final decision

After Hina's disappearance that night, Hodaka was subsequently arrested and taken to the police station. However, a ring slowly fell from the sky and landed in front of him. Hodaka briefly observed the ring and realized that it was the birthday gift he had given to Hina. In that moment, a conviction arose within him that Hina hadn't completely vanished but had been carried up into the sky, in line with the legend of the Sunshine Girl. As in the following quote below:

全身がぞくりと巣立った。それは指輪だった。いま空から落ちてきたものは、僕が陽菜さんの薬指にはめたはずの、小さな銀色の翼だった。陽菜さんが、人柱に?

「陽菜さん、嘘だろ?」

僕は思わず立ち上がる。おい! と制服警官が肩を掴む。僕は構わず駆け出す。両腕を警官に羽交い締められる。もがきながら、空に向かって全身で叫ぶ。

「陽菜さん、戻ってきて! 陽菜さん、陽菜さんっ!」

(新海誠, 2019:188)

I shuddered. The ring that had fallen from the sky turned out to be a small silver wing that should have adorned Hina-san's ring finger. Has Hina-san been made a sacrifice?

"Hina-san. This is a lie, right?!"

Without thinking, I rose to my feet. "Hey!" A uniformed police officer grabbed my shoulder. Ignoring him, I began to run. The officer locked my arms behind my back. I struggled, screaming with my entire body facing the sky.

"Hina-san, come back! Hina-san! Hina-san!"

(Shinkai, 2021:219)

According to the legend, if the Sunshine Girl doesn't merge with the sky, the sky will never be clear again. Therefore, Hodaka had to make a choice between Hina and the people of Tokyo. If he chose Hina, the citizens of Tokyo would forever face extreme weather, never experiencing clear skies again. Conversely, if he chose the people of Tokyo, Hina would disappear entirely, and they would never meet again. However, the weather would return to being clear, and the citizens would be able to live normal lives once more.

With full awareness, Hodaka decided to go to a torii gate at a shrine to bring Hina back. After a long struggle to avoid police pursuit, Hodaka finally reached the top of the torii gate. There, he prayed and fervently pleaded to be reunited with Hina. Just after stepping through the torii gate, Hodaka opened his eyes and realized that he was above the blue sky. Following that, Hodaka was then reunited with Hina, and he loudly declared his decision to choose Hina over the blue sky.

### 3.2. The main character's relationship through Robert J. Sternberg's love theory

In Robert J. Sternberg's love theory, he explained that there are three elements that constitute love: intimacy, commitment, and passion. These three factors, according to Sternberg, collectively form the core of an ideal and stable romantic relationship.

#### 3.2.1. Intimacy

Intimacy is the emotional element that connects feelings between partners. These feelings create closeness and emotional attachment to the partner, such as the desire to experience happiness together, mutual respect for each other's shortcomings, reliance on one another, understanding each other, providing emotional support, and maintaining communication with each other. As in the following quote below:

その時、私の目には映る。願いそのものが私の願いと、彼の願いが、重なったその姿が。

「陽菜!」

目の前の空で叫ぶのは、私に必死に手を伸ばしているのは帆高だ。

「帆高っ!」

唐突に夢から覚めたかのように、私は立ち上がる。胸が熱い。全身が熱い。込み上げてくるものは、私を全力で走らせるこの気持ちは、喜びと愛おしさだ。

(新海誠, 2019:229)

At that moment, the embodiment of a plea was reflected in my eyes. My plea, their plea, and the figure representing both.

"Hina!"

Shouting in the sky in front of me, reaching out desperately towards me was Hodaka.

"Hodaka!"

I rose to my feet as if suddenly thrown from a dream. My chest was warm. My entire body was warm. An overwhelming feeling surged through me, propelling me to run with all my might; it was joy and affection.

(Shinkai, 2021:263)

Hodaka felt a sense of despair after losing Hina. However, a silver ring with wings offered a glimmer of hope to Hodaka, leading him to decide to go to the torii gate to find Hina. After overcoming various obstacles to reach the torii gate, Hodaka finally managed to ascend into the sky and reunite with Hina. Hodaka's plea in front of the torii gate prevented Hina's body from merging with the sky. In the above excerpt, it is explained how Hina felt joy and affection upon reuniting with Hodaka. An overwhelming feeling surged within Hina, compelling her to run with all her might. This emotion is rooted in love, making someone feel happy and joyful when meeting and being with their loved one. This is a manifestation of intimacy, a form of emotional connection present in the relationship between Hodaka and Hina.

#### 3.2.2. Commitment

Commitment is the decision of a couple to love and endure without regard for time. With commitment, individuals enter into a relationship with a more serious intent, often with the goal of marriage. Consequently, someone committed to a relationship is willing to do whatever it takes to maintain and improve it when it is facing challenges. As in the following quote below:

「陽菜、一緒に帰ろう!」

ふいになにかを思い出したかのように、陽菜の顔が曇る。迷うような表情になる。 問いかけるように僕に叫ぶ。

「でも、私が戻ったら、また天気が.....!」

「もういい!」僕は怒鳴る。陽菜が驚いた顔をする。僕は決めている。他のことなんてどうだっていい。神さまにだって僕は逆らう。言うべきことはもう分かっている。

「もういいよ! 陽菜はもう、晴れ女なんかじゃない!」

「もう二度と晴れなくなってもいい!」陽菜の瞳に涙が湧きあがる。

「青空よりも、俺は陽菜がいい!」

(新海誠, 2019:231)

"Hina, let's go home together!"

As if suddenly remembering something, Hina's face appeared overcast. Her expression overwhelmed. She shouted to me and said,

"But, if I go back, the weather"

"That's enough!" I exclaimed. Hina looked surprised. My decision was firm. I didn't care about anything else. I would defy even the gods. I already knew what I had to say.

"That's enough! Hina is no longer the Sunshine Girl!"

"I don't care even if the sky won't be bright again!" Tears overflowed from Hina's eyes.

"I choose Hina over the blue sky!"

(Shinkai, 2021:266)

Hodaka, who finally succeeded meet Hina, invited her to come back, even though he understood the consequences that would occur if Hina returned. However, Hodaka's decision was resolute to stay with Hina, even if the weather in Tokyo would never be clear again. One form of commitment demonstrated by Hodaka is evident in the magnitude of the decision he made to repair and sustain his relationship with Hina. With unwavering determination, Hodaka chose Hina even though the result would be perpetual extreme weather and the absence of clear skies. Hodaka's decision is a manifestation of commitment to love and endure with the person he loves.

### 3.2.3. Passion

Passion is the expression of intimate needs that involve physiological elements. It makes an individual want to be physically close to their partner, enjoy or experience physical touch, and engage in sexual relations with them. Additionally, the desire to always be close to a partner, constantly think about them, willingly make sacrifices, and experience delightful feelings that elevate the heartbeat are components of passion itself. As in the following quote below:

「-帆高!」

陽菜さんが叫び、僕は傘を投げ捨てる。僕たちは同時に駆け出す。彼女の顔が、はずみながら近づいてくる。そして僕の目の前で、陽菜さんはジャンプして僕に抱きつく。その勢いに僕は驚いて、なんとか転ばないように陽菜さんを抱えたままぐるりと回る。そうやって、僕たちは向かい合って立つ。僕たちは笑ったまま息を整える。陽菜さんが大きな瞳で僕を見上げる。

(新海誠, 2019:254)

"Hodaka!"

Hina-san screamed; I threw the umbrella, and we both ran. Her face approached, soaring. Hina-san leaped in front of me and hugged me. Her strength surprised me, and I caught her, swinging her around so she wouldn't fall. After that, we stood facing each other. Smiling, we caught our breath. Hina-san's large eyes looked up at me.

(Shinkai, 2021:293)

The separation occurred right after Hodaka and Hina successfully returned from the sky, and they were both subsequently apprehended by the authorities. Following this, Hodaka was sent back to his hometown to undergo mandatory reporting for his escape and resistance, while Hina was taken to a child protection institution. Their actions upon reuniting illustrate the beautiful emotions experienced by Hodaka and Hina. Despite being separated for two and a half years, the desire to be close to their partner and feel their physical touch remained intact. This indicates the presence of the passion component in the relationship between Hodaka and Hina.

#### 4. Conclusions

The analysis of the novel *Tenki no Ko* employs a structural approach and explores the romantic relationship between the two main characters, Hodaka and Hina, using Robert J. Sternberg's love theory, known as the Triangular Theory of Love. In this theory, intimacy, passion, and commitment are the three interconnected components that define the meaning of love in a relationship.

The romantic relationship between Hodaka and Hina in the novel begins with intimacy, initially establishing a friendship. Over time, their closeness deepens, accompanied by the emergence of passion. This passion brings them closer, fostering feelings of constantly thinking about each other, a willingness to sacrifice for their loved one, and experiencing both joy and hardship when together. Subsequently, from the established closeness in their relationship, a commitment arises. This commitment represents their mutual decision to love each other and endure various situations, regardless of time, with the goal of preserving and sustaining their connection until the end.

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