

THE ROMANCE FORMULA IN JOHN GREEN'S

THE FAULT IN OUR STARS

Novindia Nurratnasari

Pembimbing : Ratna Asmarani

S1 Sastra Inggris Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Diponegoro

Jl. Prof. Soedarto, SH Tembalang Semarang Kode Pos 50275

ABSTRAK

Tesis ini menganalisis novel yang berjudul *The Fault in Our Star* karya John Green. Tujuan dari penulisan tesis ini adalah untuk menjabarkan formula-formula yang ada pada novel sastra populer. Dalam menganalisis tesis ini, proses pencarian data dan informasi yang mendukung penulisan, penulis menggunakan metode pencarian perpustakaan. Teori yang menjadi pedoman pengerjaan tesis ini adalah teori sastra populer (romansa) oleh John G. Cawelti.. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa novel tersebut mengandung unsur-unsur formula sastra populer yaitu karakter hero dan heroine dan alur kisah percintaan itu terbangun yang menjadi fokusnya dan karakter yang diumpamakan sebagai hero dalam kisah romansa.

Kata Kunci : Sastra populer, konflik, romansa, plot, karakter

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

In my opinion, literature can be simply defined as a creative activity, a work of art. Literature has a purpose to entertain the readers. The writer wants to analyze John Green's *The Fault in Our Star*. This novel can be classified as popular fiction. Popular fiction is a literary works that are arranged with the consideration to satisfy popular readers' tastes or market. The purpose of this study is to define

how the development of love relationship between a man and a woman is portrayed in the novel *The Fault in Our Star*.

Research problems:

1.1.1 What characterizes of *TFIOS* novel as a romance popular fiction?

1.1.2 How does the plot of *TFIOS* reflect the romance formula?

1.2 Objectives of study:

1.2.1 To analyze the characteristics of *TFIOS* as a romance popular fiction

1.2.2 To analyze the plot of *TFIOS* as a reflection of romance formula

1.4. Method of the Study

1.4.1 Method of Research

The writer used a library research to analyze *The Fault in Our Star*. The library research adopts theories not only from books, but also from other media such as, the internet by googling journals and electronic books.

2. ABOUT AUTHOR AND SUMMARY

2.1 About Author

2.2 Summary

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Intrinsic elements

3.1.1 Character

According to Perrine in his book entitled *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*, character might be either a static or dynamic character (1988: 67). “A static character is the same sort of person at the end of the story and the beginning (1988: 69). In contrast with static character, Perrine remarks “dynamic character undergoes a

permanent change in some aspect of character, personality, or outlook” (Perrine, 1988: 69).

3.1.2 Romance plot formula

The writer uses the theory proposed by Cawelti from his book *Adventure, Mystery and Romance* which explains what the formulas of popular literature are. According to Cawelti, the general plot in romance contains the development of love story itself (1977: 5-6). 1). Their first meeting: It tells the beginning of a love story itself, the meeting of the hero and heroine characters. 2). Boy wins the girl: After going through the first stage, they can make a decision whether they take it more seriously or merely stop at the stage. The woman usually allows the man to have sex with her if the man really loves her. 3). Conflict or obstacle: Usually in romance genre the conflict is about love affair or misunderstanding. These obstacles unintentionally lead them to keep their commitment. 4). The ending of the story: Every story has its ending. In every fiction there are two possibilities, happy or sad ending. In romance, it is crucial to have a happy ending.

3.1.3 Conflict

Internal conflict is a conflict between man and himself or we usually say as an inner conflict. External conflict is a struggle between a character and an outside force. “External conflict may place the protagonist in opposition to another individual, nature, or society” (Meyer, 1990: 45).

3.1.4 Setting

3.1.4.1 Setting of Place

Setting of place describes the location of events. According to Holman in his book entitled *A Handbook to Literature* setting of place means “The actual geographical

location, its topography, scenery, and such physical arrangements as the location, for example, the location of the windows and the doors in a room” (1985: 413).

3.1.4.2 Setting of time

Setting of time is a crucial element if the story focuses on the time. Setting of time describes the period of time in which the action takes place. For instances, epoch in history or season of the year (Holman, 1985: 413).

3.1.4.3 Setting of Social Environment

Holman said that setting of social is “The occupation and daily manner of living” (1985: 413). It explains the social systems that exist in that story which is parallel with the custom.

3.2 Extrinsic Elements

3.2.1 Theory of Myth

Northrop Frye in his book *Anatomy of Criticism Four Essays* remarks about the myths concerning seasons. Summer fits to a romance genre; spring is for comedy, autumn for tragedy and winter for irony and satire. He believes that every season has its myth. Season is like a life cycle “The fundamental form of process is cyclical movement, the alteration of success and decline, effort and repose, life and death which is the rhythm of process” (1971: 158).

3.2.3 Archetype of Romance Character

In romance there are hero (man) and heroine (women) characters as the stereotype characters. Hero helps and protects the heroine and eventually wins the heroine.

Tami D. Cowden states in her website tamicowden.com titled *The Eight Hero Archetypes* based on her book *The Hero and Heroine Archetypes* that there are eight

hero and heroine archetypes. The eight archetypes of hero are 1). The Chief: This hero character is workaholic, he is a good leader, goal-oriented, and he seriously strives upon his goal. 2).The Bad Boy: This hero represents a rebel one who easily gets angry. He is brave, wild and strong, usually comes from broken family, street guy and tough life. 3).The Best Friend: He is a Mr. nice guy who always helps people around him. This hero will be very determined because he is responsible for the heroine. 4). The Charmer: He is a fun person but not too responsible and dependable. There is a tendency for him to become a playboy because he does not commit to a woman easily. 5). The Lost Soul: He is a loner because he is an outcast from the society. Tortured or cursed, mysterious and introvert but he is also a vulnerable person. 6). The Professor: The first impression is beyond smart and inflexible guy, but in the other side he is sincere about his feelings. He is also honest and faithful. 7). The Swashbuckler: A person who takes the flamboyant part in daring adventures. He enjoys doing dangerous things. In romance he is a perfect pirate. 8).The Warrior: This hero is a protector. His focus is getting out from conflict. The Warrior will hunt the villain to the ends of the earth.

In the same thought, Cowden also remarks the eight heroine stereotypes are 1). The Boss: The important thing of this heroine is reaching goal is the most important thing in her life. She is independent, smart and workaholic. 2). The Seductress: This is a heroine who can draw attention from the society. Sometimes she looks mysterious and manipulative. 3). The Spunky Kid: This heroine is a loyal person. She is a favorite of many writers for good reason. She is not an ambitious woman like a boss but she is a good player in team. 4). The Free Spirit: This heroine loves to travel a lot and such a great adventurer. Smelling a scent of sea or admiring the beauty of sunset is a must for her. 5). The Waif: A miserable damsel. Her childhood is far from happiness. 6). The Librarian: Well-organized and clever yet shy heroine. Being prim and proper is a must for her, but underneath that tight bun lurks a passionate woman. 7). The Crusader: The

commitment of this heroine is to become a loyal fighter. She is dauntless and stubborn. 8). The Nurturer: She is a favorable listener who merges in society. This heroine is capable to take care of everyone and often spread a good vibes around her.

Radway in her book *Reading the Romance* says that there are nine ideal characteristics of hero; intelligent, tender, protective, strong, brave, humorist, independent, attractive and athletic (1984: 82). As for the ideal heroine are; extraordinary beauty, intelligent, spunky, independent woman who has a few contacts with men, usually compassionate, kind, and understanding person (1984: 124-127).

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Intrinsic Elements

4.1.1 Character

4.1.1.1 Hazel Grace Lancaster

Hazel Grace is classified as the dynamic character because there are some factors that change her. The changing of her character can be influenced by people around them, on how they treat her. For example, before meeting August, Hazel seems depressed, bored, and flat. Soon after she meets August, gradually and naturally she turns into a funny, pleasant and spunky person. But after August passed away, she really loses him; she changes from a cheerful, funny and lovely girl into a desperate, lonely girl, and she often cries.

4.1.1.2 Augustus Waters

Psychologically, he is the static character because from his first appearance until his funeral he is still the same person though having ordeal.

4.1.2 Romance Plot

4.1.2.1 First meeting

August meets Hazel in a support group in an unexpected yet not so romantic place. August keeps staring at her, Hazel realizes it and she stares at him back until they introduce themselves in front of the group. This first meeting means that both of Hazel and August have the same feeling toward each other. However, Hazel still doubts about her feeling.

4.1.2.2 Boy wins over Girl

In this stage, the core development of love story is growing. Hazel and August often hang out together, share stories of their life, share their hobbies even their favorite things. *An Imperial Affliction* is Hazel's favorite novel so far, and she is obsessed for it. Actually, the book is like the ticket to win Hazel's heart. August strives upon Hazel's dream to meet Peter Van Houten in person. Hazel and August have many romantic moments in Amsterdam. Moreover just like any other romance novel, sex is the crucial part. Many of romance fictions stress the tension of the story by inserting sex scene.

4.1.2.3 Conflict

Actually it is hard to find the conflict between this lovely love birds. One conflict that happens between them is when August tells his real condition that his health is getting worse.

4.1.2.4 Ending

The medical condition of August is getting worse day by day, Hazel says "A week after our dinner, Gus ended up in the ER with chest pain, and they admitted him overnight, so I drove over to Memorial the next morning and visited him on the fourth floor" (Green, 2012: 231). However, one thing that has to be remembered although one of them has gone first is at least their love is eternal. That is the important point of romance. It is always a happy ending.

4.1.3 Conflicts

4.1.3.1 Internal Conflicts

The internal conflicts in this story are more experienced by Hazel and August. The first one is the conflict between Hazel with herself. Just like any other romance story, every girl likes to get more attention and she is wondering why August never kisses her. Actually it is not a big deal for her, but as a young girl, she is still curious and dreaming about kissing with the charming guy of her crush, August Waters

In this novel, the hero's internal conflict is also found. August's internal conflict happens when he feels so sick and tired of being unhealthy person. This is the climax condition of August's disgust.

4.1.3.2 External Conflicts

Hazel and August's external conflict happens when both Augustus and Hazel are upset with Van Houten, the author of their favorite novel entitled *An Imperial of Affliction*. Actually he is a good writer, but an arrogant person. He refuses to tell the ending of his novel to them which make them upset and disappointed because he already promises to tell it if they can meet in person with him.

4.1.4 Setting

4.1.4.1 Setting of Place

There are two major settings of place in this novel. The first one is Indianapolis, America, the city where they live, and Amsterdam, Holland, where the romantic moments happen. The first one is the Support Group. Support Group. The second place is Hazel and August's home. The last place is the hospital. Meanwhile in Amsterdam, the lovely place for the lovely couple, there are three places that are described in this novel. The first one is a romantic yet luxurious restaurant named Oranje, The second place is of course Van Houten's house. The last one is Anna Frank Museum, Peter's assistant; Lidewij brings them to this place. Anne Frank Museum is a famous museum in Amsterdam.

4.1.4.2 Setting of Time

Hazel, August, and Hazel's mother, Mrs. Lancaster, finally can go to Amsterdam after getting permission from the doctors. Genies, the foundation that makes that dream come true says "Amsterdam is lovely in the beginning of May. They proposed leaving May third and returning May seventh" (Green, 2012: 89). The fall of hero or the moment when the main character dies is the important time to be noticed. Augustus Water dies at the age of seventeen.

4.1.4.3 Setting of Social Environment

Lancaster family comes from upper-middle class. It is proven by how much and how far they can afford the cost of medical treatment for Hazel. Cancer treatment is very expensive. Meanwhile, August family can also be considered as an upper class family. Just like Lancaster's, Waters' family can afford his cancer treatment. He has two older sister and both of them are married to a rich man.

4.2 External Elements

4.2.1 Myth of Season

It is the first chapter, in winter, when Hazel's mother thinks that Hazel is depressed. Hazel says "Late in the winter of my seventeenth year, my mother decided I was depressed" (Green, 2012: 1). The second one is spring. It happens in Amsterdam. Based on the myth, spring describes happiness, and much of laughter happens during this season. In spring, the scene is lovely, the atmosphere is mild, the flowers are blooming, and the bird is singing. Summer myth is a romance. Summer is the perfect season for romantic story when the sky is clear, warm and bright.

4.2.2 Characteristics of Romance Character

4.2.2.1 Hero character

August Waters is the hero character in this novel. He likes to read a book about heroism and save the world. He has a goal in life, which is he wants to leave a mark upon the world so that everyone will remember him. Based on his personality he is categorized as having the characteristics of a Best Friend and a Charmer hero based on Tami Cowden's theory about hero archetypes. The more depth analysis of his character will be explained below.

4.2.2.1.1 August Waters is Intelligent:

. Intelligence of someone is not only measured by how high their IQ or how high their education but it also measured by how they can be charismatic when they speak in front of people.

4.2.2.1.2 August Waters is Tender:

August likes to tease and admire Hazel. He really knows how to treat a girl and make her comfortable. He says to Hazel "August half smile, because you're beautiful. I enjoy looking at beautiful people" (Green, 2012: 30).

4.2.2.1.3 August Waters is Protective:

August is always beside Hazel whenever she needs him. Even when he is not beside her, he will always help her if needed. Although Hazel keeps a distance from him, he will always find and wait for her to come.

4.2.2.1.4 August Waters is Strong:

Technically August is a cancer survivor but he never complains or shows his pain. One day he checked up to the doctor, and they got PET scan in his body, which meant that he was actually dying, but he managed to be strong in front of Hazel, because he had to protect and accompany her dream trip to Amsterdam.

4.2.2.1.5 August Waters is Brave:

He is brave not because he is unafraid of someone or something. He is brave because he dares to face the truth of being a cancer survivor.

4.2.2.1.6 August Waters is humorist:

He often makes Hazel laugh because of his light-joke and his personality. He never tells a joke that can hurt people such as physical jokes. He is funny because of his warm personality.

4.2.2.1.7 August Waters is Independent:

He can drive although it is terrible because he cannot feel his leg. One day, he lost his packs of cigarette, he wanted to buy a cigarette and drove to Speedway but unfortunately he got a little accident and then Hazel came.

4.2.2.1.8 August Waters is Well-Built:

He used to be a basketball player so that he gets athletic, tall, and muscular body.

4.2.2.2 Heroine character

In this novel Hazel Grace is the heroine character. In general she is a Spunky-kid and a Nurturer heroine based on the characteristics of heroine archetypes by Cowden. The more depth analysis of her personality will be explained below:

4.2.2.2.1 Hazel Grace is Beautiful:

Although she is a cancer survivor and she looks boyish, her natural beauty is undeniable. In August's eyes Hazel is extremely beautiful because of the reflection of her heart. The first time they meet, he says that Hazel is like his favorite actress Natalie Portman.

4.2.2.2.2 Hazel Grace is Intelligent:

Although suffering from cancer, sixteen years old Hazel still pursues her education by taking some classes so that she can increase her knowledge.

4.2.2.2.3 Hazel Grace is Spunky:

The spunky Hazel is maybe the right title for her. She is diagnosed of stage IV thyroid cancer in a very young age, at thirteen. She is spunky because she is not afraid of her death. She is always ready to undergo surgeries.

4.2.2.2.4 Hazel Grace is Independent:

Her Oxygen-tank and medicines are the things that she depends on. Although having cancer, Hazel still can do the things that may be impossible to do.

4.2.2.2.5 Hazel Grace is Introvert with a Man:

August is her first love but once she falls in love, it will be eternal.

4.2.2.2.6 Hazel Grace is Compassionate:

Hazel understands that being a cancer survivor is a disaster but she thinks about her mother's feeling of having a child like her.

4.2.2.2.7 Hazel Grace is Kind:

Hazel likes to help people around her. When Isaac or August needs her help she conveniently always listens and helps them.

4.2.2.2.8 Hazel Grace is Understanding:

Hazel is craving for her dream to go to Amsterdam in order to meet her favorite author named Peter Van Houten, but her parents cannot afford it. Hazel is sad but she understands it.

1. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis on intrinsic and extrinsic elements in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*, it can be concluded that August is the static character meanwhile Hazel is the dynamic one. There are two kinds of conflicts in this novel. The internal conflict of Hazel is when she doubts about her feeling toward August. Then,

August's internal conflict is when he is tired of being sick and dying. Hazel and August's external conflict happens when both Augustus and Hazel are upset with Van Houten because he refuses to tell the ending of his novel. The settings of place are taken in Indianapolis, America, and Amsterdam. Summer, spring and winter are described in this novel. Waters family comes from upper class family meanwhile Lancaster is considered as an upper-middle class. August Waters is the best friend and charmer type of hero. He is an ideal hero who is well-build, humorist, protective, intelligent, brave, strong, independent, tender, and attractive. Meanwhile, Hazel, the heroine is the nurturer and spunky type of heroine. She is introvert with a man, an extraordinary beauty, intelligent, spunky, independent, compassionate, kind, and understanding. There are four-stage plot of this novel. The first one is their first meeting in the Support Group, the second one is when August and Hazel confess their feeling and have sex. The third one is conflict between Hazel and August because August is hiding the truth that his condition is getting worse. The last one is the ending of the novel when August dies and leaves Hazel. At the end, although the hero character dies, at least they already loved each other and that is the point of romance fiction. It is always a happy ending.

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