

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Narrative Elements

A short story as narrative fiction consists of a number of narrative elements. The narrative elements in this study are applied specifically to short stories, although in general these elements are also found in the narrative of novels. Therefore, only four specific elements will be used, considering that short stories are more limited in content than other long literary works such as novels. Hence, this study focuses on the elements of character, characterization, conflict, and setting. To analyze the relationship of the main characters, Margot and Robert, this study borrows Dorothy Tennov's limerence theory.

2.1.1. Character & Characterization

In literature, character is a key element that drives the storyline and draws readers into the depth of the narrative. According to Kennedy and Gioia, a character "is presumably an imagined person who inhabits a story" (1995:67). This means that a character is a person that the author creates. In other words, a character in narrative fiction is fictional. Margolina states "character designates any entity, individual or collective – normally human or human-like – introduced in a work of narrative fiction." (2007:66). In other words, characters can be in the form of anything else other than human. The phrase "normally human or human-like" means that characters in narrative

fiction when they are non-human beings (such as animals or objects), they think, feel, or act in ways that always resemble humans.

Knowing the different types of characters helps the readers better understand how a story works and how its main ideas are shown. Usually, characters are grouped based on how much they change or grow during the story, with static and dynamic characters being two of the most common types. According to Mays, “a character that changes is dynamic; one that doesn’t is static” (2018:214). If a character experiences growth or decline as the story progresses, that means she or he is a dynamic character. Meanwhile, if there is a character that does not undergo significant changes from the beginning to the end of the story, he or she is a static character. However, usually, static and dynamic characters are paired with other types which basically show how many traits the characters have during the changes. They are flat and round characters. Moreover, “characters that act from varied, often conflicting motives, impulses, and desires, and who seem to have psychological complexity, are said to be round characters; One-dimensional characters that behave and speak in predictable or repetitive (if sometimes odd) ways are called flat” (Mays, 2018:212). In other words, round characters are characters who display complex emotions, making their actions feel more realistic, while flat characters are characters who act consistently and repetitively without much emotional depth or change.

In literary analysis, understanding a character goes beyond simply identifying who they are. It also involves examining how they are portrayed throughout the narrative. This process, known as characterization which is “the art and technique of

representing fictional personages.” (Mays, 2018:214), tells that it is a technique of the way a fictional character is introduced and presented in a story. Mays divides characterization into two types, which are direct and indirect characterization or methods of showing and telling. Indirect characterization is “showing (as opposed to direct characterization or telling)” (Mays, 2018:215). In simpler terms, direct characterization is when the narrator directly tells the readers regarding anything about the characters. While, indirect characterization is when anything about the characters is demonstrated indirectly through dialogue, internal monologue, behavior, thoughts, and the appearances of the character.

2.1.2. Setting

From a peaceful countryside to a chaotic urban landscape to a cyber-world, setting plays a key role in establishing the mood, tone, and narrative direction of a story. According to Kenney, setting is “that element of fiction which reveals to us the where and when of events we call setting” (1982:38), which means that setting is the part of a story that shows us where and when something happens. Where refers to location or place, and when refers to a period of time, such as the past, present, future, or a specific historical moment. That means the setting helps the reader understand the background in which the story takes place.

To highlight and elaborate more on the elements of setting stated before, Kennedy & Gioia explain the setting of place as “the physical environment of a story: a house, a street, a city, a landscape, a region. (Where a story takes place is sometimes called its locale.)” (2007:110). Whereas, the setting of time is “the time of the story—

hour, year, or century.” (Kennedy & Gioia, 2007:110). Both of those experts also suggest, “keep your working definition of setting simple. Call it time and place. If later you should feel that your definition needs widening and deepening, you can always widen and deepen it” (Kennedy & Gioia, 2007:111), which means that the most important things of setting are place and time. However, authors can broaden the components of setting as they please if they feel like they need that. It implies that setting is flexible, but it cannot be separated from place and time since both of them are the crucial parts. This suggestion is also supported by other experts like Kenney in his book, *How to Analyze a Fiction*. Kenney states that “setting as a point in time and space therefore needs some development.” (1982:111), which tells the readers the same meaning as the aforementioned explanation.

Kenney states that there are four elements in setting but the most dominant are “place” and “time” in elaboration points under the chapter “setting”. However, since he further suggests that setting needs some developments, he includes two other elements under the quotation below,

“(1) the actual geographical location, including topography, scenery, even the details of a room's interior; (2) the occupations and modes of day-to-day existence of the characters; (3) the time in which the action takes place, e.g., historical period, season of the year; (4) the religious, moral, intellectual, social, and emotional environment of the characters” (1982:40).

This means that the setting includes not only physical place and time, but also the characters' daily lives, work, and the wider environment around them as well as their beliefs, values, intellect, and emotions. This, therefore, indicates that those two setting

elements are also necessary if the story is to be closely related to any of the above or it also can be added up when they meet the condition.

2.1.3. Conflict

Conflict is an essential part of any story, as it pushes the plot forward and helps develop the characters. Cuddon defines conflict as “the tension in a situation between characters, or the actual opposition of characters” (2013:152). Kenney further adds that a story “may deal with a conflict within a single man (e.g., desire vs. duty), a conflict between men, a conflict between man and society, between man and nature, and so on” (1982:19). Both terms show that conflict can be understood as tension arising from conflicting pressures, whether originating from within themselves or from outside sources such as their environment or society, which can shape the direction and emotional weight of a narrative. Thus, understanding this conflict naturally leads to its classification into two main types, based on whether the source of the struggle originates from within the characters or from forces outside them which is commonly known as external and internal conflict.

Mays explains that external conflicts “arise between characters and something or someone outside themselves” (2018:76). While, internal conflicts “occur when a character struggles to reconcile two competing desires, needs, or duties, or two parts or aspects of himself: His head, for instance, might tell him to do one thing, his heart another” (Mays, 2018:77). In other words, external conflict is when the character faces problems from the outside, such as arguments with others, pressure from society, or challenges from their environment. Meanwhile, internal conflict is when a character

deals with issues within themselves, for instance, what they think is sometimes not in line with what their heart feels.

2.2. Supporting Theories

This section demonstrates supporting theories, particularly the concept of limerence proposed by Tennov, explaining its definition, components, and stages, which serve as a framework for analyzing the experiences of the main character in the short story.

2.2.1. Limerence

Etymologically, Dorothy Tennov refers to the word “limerence” as a simpler way of describing the powerful and overwhelming experience that people usually refer to with the longer phrase “falling in love” or “being in love” (1999:16). Whereas, conceptually, Tennov explains that limerence is “a barely perceptible feeling of increased interest in a particular person but one which if nurtured by appropriate conditions can grow to enormous intensity” (1999:23). She further states that “it appears that love and sex can coexist without limerence, in fact that any of the three may exist without the others” (Tennov, 1999:16). In other words, limerence is a state of being in love that can intensify if the right circumstances support it, and it can stand by itself, meaning that it is different from love or sex. Furthermore, in discussions about limerence, two key terms often emerge to refer to the person experiencing the feelings and the person who is the focus of those feelings: “Limerent” and “Limerent Object” (LO). According to Tennov, a limerent object (LO) is someone whom the limerent sees as a potential sexual partner. While, the term limerent refers to individuals who are

currently experiencing this state (1999:24-25). Both of these epithets are being used specifically to ease the readers to understand limerence through Tennov's book.

Even though the term limerence was coined by Dorothy Tennov, other scholars also discuss the term. According to Willmott and Bentley limerence is “an acute onset, unexpected, obsessive attachment to one person, the Limerent Object (LO), which is rarely reported in scientific literature. The themes primarily regard experiences of ruminative thinking, free floating anxiety and depression temporarily fixated and the disintegration of the self” (2015:2). In other words, limerence refers to an intense and often unexpected emotional attachment to another person, one that is marked by obsession. This emotional bond can be overwhelming, characterized by intrusive and repetitive thoughts about the person, alongside feelings of anxiety and sadness. It can cause individuals to feel as though they are losing their sense of self.

2.2.2. Components of Limerence

Limerence, according to Tennov, has several fundamental components. Each of them has a role in building the limerence in an individual and most of them are strongly correlated with the phenomenon of “reciprocation”. Tennov states that reciprocation “expressed through physical union creates the ecstatic and blissful condition called "the greatest happiness," and the most profound glorification of the achievement of limerent aims” (1999:20). Tennov mentions twelve components of limerence in her book as she stated after conducting research in more than 300 people. Tennov, in her book, does not explicitly name these components. However, the components can be identified through phrases that are key points of each component.

The twelve components include: intrusive thinking, acute longing for reciprocation, dependency of mood, inability to react limerently, fleeting and transient relief, fear of rejection, intensification through adversity, acute sensitivity, an aching of the heart, buoyancy, a general intensity of feeling, and crystallization.

The first component is intrusive thinking. Tennov states that “during limerent's height of intensity, thoughts of LO are both persistent and intrusive” (1999:38). She then quotes a statement from Stendhal that says, intrusive thinking is “the violence of the change that takes place in [the] mind and a person in this state is unremittingly and uninterruptedly occupied with the image of [the] beloved” (Tennov, 1999:33). In other words, when limerence is at its height, a limerent cannot stop thinking about the person they are infatuated with in the sense that the thoughts are usually intrusive and difficult to get rid of. Through this component, a character's thoughts that lead to “violence” will be seen. To support those statements, a researcher named Rachman (1981, as cited in Kuhn et al.) defines intrusive thinking “as unwelcome repetitive thoughts, images or impulses” (2013:688), meaning that intrusive thinking is unexpected and unwanted ideas or mental images that enter a person’s mind without control. Although people may try to ignore them, these thoughts often return and can cause feelings of discomfort, anxiety, or distraction.

As the second component, Tennov mentions “...acute longing for reciprocation” (1999:23), which means that people who are in a state of limerence crave for returning feelings from their loved ones so badly. This is in line with Tennov’s statement that says, “limerence is a desire for more than sex, and a desire in which the sexual act may

represent the symbol of its highest achievement: reciprocation” (1999:20), which tells that wanting reciprocation is a staple in limerence.

The third component Tennov mentions “dependency of mood on LO's actions or, more accurately, your interpretation of LO's actions with respect to the probability of reciprocation” (1999:24). In other words, a person's mood often shifts based on how they read the actions of someone they are emotionally drawn to, especially in terms of how likely they believe those feelings might be returned.

The fourth component, Tennov states “inability to react limerently to more than one person at a time (exceptions occur only when limerence is at low ebb-early on or in the last fading)” (1999:24). Put simply, an individual who is in a state of limerence is generally emotionally focused on only one person at a time. Exceptions to this pattern may occur during the initial stage, when the feelings are still developing, or in the final phase, when the emotional intensity has begun to decline.

This fifth component, Tennov explains “some fleeting and transient relief from unrequited limerent passion through vivid imagination of action by LO that means reciprocation” (1999:24). Meaning that, an individual experiencing limerence may sometimes find short-lived emotional comfort by imagining that the person they long for has taken an action that implies mutual interest. Although the scenario exists only in their imagination, it can momentarily ease the emotional discomfort caused by the lack of real reciprocation.

The sixth component Tennov mentioned in the book is “fear of rejection”. Tennov herself elaborates “it is sometimes incapacitating but always unsettling shyness

in LO's presence, especially in the beginning and whenever uncertainty strikes intensification through adversity (at least, up to a point)” (1999:24). She then explains that fear of rejection is a deep-seated emotional anxiety - especially among women - that their romantic partner might stop loving them. As a key feature of limerence, this fear is often expressed through statements like “I'm so afraid they'll stop loving me,” and can be used to gauge how common limerence is (Tennov, 1999:209-210). These tell that a person experiencing limerence often feels fear of rejection, especially in the beginning or during times of uncertainty, and these emotions may intensify slightly in response to challenges or setbacks.

The seventh component, Tennov only mentions a sentence which says, “intensification through adversity (at least, up to a point)” (1999:24). This sentence suggests that emotional barriers or uncertainty can make limerence feelings stronger, because difficulties make it hard for someone to stay emotionally involved and hopeful. However, this intensification has limits. If the challenges become too extreme, the limerence bond may begin to fade.

The eighth component is “acute sensitivity”. Tennov explains that “acute sensitivity” happens “to any act or thought or condition that can be interpreted favorably, and an extraordinary ability to devise or invent "reasonable" explanations for why the neutrality that the disinterested observer might see is in fact a sign of hidden passion in the LO” (1999:24). Simply put, a person experiencing limerence tends to carefully (sensitively) analyze the words and actions of others for signs of reciprocation, often interpreting neutral behavior as hidden attraction and justifying it

hopefully, though sometimes unrealistically. This happens when a limerent feels the uncertainty is getting so strong that he or she acts in such a way to ease the unclarity. This can be connected to the ninth component.

The ninth component is “an aching of the heart”. When it comes to uncertainty, there will always be something to do with intuition or instinct that commonly comes from the heart. This feeling is mentioned in Tennov’s book which says, “an aching of the "heart" (a region in the center front of the chest) when uncertainty is strong” (1999:24), meaning that When in doubt as to whether or not their feelings will be reciprocated, one may feel a heavy pain in the chest that worsens with intense uncertainty, or, sensing that something is not quite right, they may choose to distance themselves as the hesitation takes over.

The tenth component which can be named “buoyancy” is interesting because it is commonly used in linguistic terms to demonstrate the coping mechanism of students who learn language who are currently dealing with highs and lows or challenges in the study. That is why, the only suitable explanation can be found is by Tennov herself, which she states that “buoyancy (a feeling of walking on air) when reciprocation seems evident” (1999:24), meaning that when someone thinks the person they like feels the same way, they might feel really happy, so happy that it feels like they are floating or walking on air. As for the eleventh component, Tennov states “a general intensity of feeling that leaves other concerns in the background” (1999:24), simply put as when limerence occurs in someone in the sense that that person has lots of emotions towards

his or her LO, those emotions can take over so much that other things, like daily tasks or worries, feel less important or are barely noticed.

The last component is “a remarkable ability to emphasize what is truly admirable in LO and to avoid dwelling on the negative, even to respond with a compassion for the negative and render it, emotionally if not perceptually, into another positive attribute” (1999:24), which sounds a lot like the concept of crystallization. Crystallization is one of the key elements leading to the limerence that happens to Margot in the story. According to Tennov, crystallization occurs when “the actual and existing features of LO merely undergo enhancement” (1999:31). Basically, both terms refer to the meaning that crystallization occurs when the LO's true characteristics, which actually look like flaws, are mentally interpreted in a positive or sympathetic way, by the limerent, so that they appear more remarkable than they actually are.

2.2.3. Courses of Limerence

The course of limerence can also be said as the stages of limerence which elaborate the detailed progression of limerence phenomenon in LO explained by Dorothy Tennov in her book. Tennov states the first stage being when a “limerent reaction begins, usually at a point discernible at the time and later recalled. The initial “admiration” may be, or seem to be, primarily physical attraction” (1999:45), which continues by the second stage which says, that can also happen at the same time, “you find yourself thinking about LO and receiving considerable pleasure from the process. There is an initial phase in which you feel buoyant, elated, and, ironically, for this appears to be the beginning of an essentially involuntary process” (Tennov, 1999:45).

Simply put, both of these stages can happen at the same time, usually starting with initial attraction and a limerent will pay attention to someone they find attractive through their physical appearances. Later it continues with an early elation evidenced by constantly thinking about that person they like. This is usually characterized by the presence of “buoyancy”, one of the components of limerence, or it could be said as a euphoria when seeing people they find attractive.

The next stage, as Tennov states, “reciprocation from LO, in which a person enjoys a state of extreme pleasure, even euphoria. A person becomes deeply preoccupied with thinking about what they like in the person they desire, replaying past interactions, and imagining that their own qualities might have attracted that person’s interest” (1999:46). Basically, in this stage, a limerent is usually in the sphere of happiness because they are still confident that the LO will return the same feelings to them, one of which is shown by recalling past interactions they had before.

The fourth stage is when “the degree of involvement increases if obstacles are externally imposed or if a limerent doubts LO's feelings for them. This is what Stendhal called crystallization” (Tennov, 1999:46). At this stage, the uncertainty felt by a limerent begins to grow, which sometimes results in them trying to “acquire new clothes, change their hairstyles, and are receptive to any suggestion by which they might increase their own desirability in LO's eyes” (Tennov, 1999:46). Essentially, a limerent is “inordinately fearful of rejection” (Tennov, 1999:46), that is why they are willing to change themselves to get more attention from the LO.

In this fifth stage, uncertainty is getting stronger as “with increases in doubt interspersed with reason to hope that reciprocation may indeed occur, everything becomes intensified, especially their preoccupation percentage. At 100 percent a limerent is mooning about, in either a joyful or a despairing state, preferring fantasies to Virtually any other activity” (Tennov, 1999:46), which basically tells that the combination of hope and doubt makes a person's obsession stronger. Likewise, a limerent will spend more time contemplating and fantasizing.

The last stage is when a limerent “perceives reciprocation”, their degree of involvement ceases to rise-until, of course, become uncertain again. Usually, however, what might be an obvious sign of interest to an observer is not so obvious to them. Also, the inevitable differences between their interests, prevent full reciprocation in each other's eyes and allow the intensity to continue to increase. And in the end, they began to transfer their limerence to a new person” (Tennov, 1999:46-47). Simply put, this stage happens once a person believes that their feelings are reciprocated, their emotional intensity stops increasing-unless doubt creeps back in; however, because a full reciprocation feels out of reach, keeping their doubt alive and growing, until eventually they stop hoping in that LO and start repeating the limerence phase again but with a different person.