Research Article

Critical Review of the Meaning of the Concept of Love

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explain how the concept of love is interpreted, love is a mystery that is always hot to discuss, and even love has existed since the first humans, namely Adam and Eve. This type of research uses descriptive qualitative, using a library research approach with documentation data collection techniques. The research results obtained are: 1) Understanding love is not only about having feelings or fighting for them, but also about having emotional readiness to face negative consequences, such as heartbreak. Practicing self-defense in love, such as through self-dichotomy and an antifanatic attitude towards falling in love, can help a person face love more calmly and wisely. 2) True love certainly exists, at least he understands self-maturation and is aware of the importance of understanding love. When they grow and develop into people full of art. That's when they understand love as eros, agape and selfssness. Love can be studied, understood, worked for and fought for even though it is without reason and full of sacrifice.

Keywords: Love, Emotional, Human



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INTRODUCTION

Humans are one of the most unique species on earth, because they are part of the universe and have a very high curiosity (Beckett, 2018; Dreyer & Pulvermüller, 2018; Moore & Sailor, 2018). As a species on earth that is thirsty for curiosity, they have the ability to seek out all that curiosity, referred to as knowledge. Knowledge is a person's ability to know information, in Suhartono Suparlan's view, knowledge is something that captures information

that has been collaborated with the potential to be understood. Of the many things that knowledge can be a great homework for humans, one of them is LOVE. These five words represent the birth of humans on earth (Cohen & Miguel, 2018; Hoffmann, Lagerkvist, Hagberg Gustavsson, & Holst, 2018; Martin, 2018). It is even known that the first humans, namely Adam and Eve, were two creatures created by God who were born to love each other. Love is a need that humans must have, in even rougher language, love can be interpreted as a feeling of affection for someone.

It could also be said that human history has had a long journey of needing each other. This feeling of caring for each other and taking care of each other has become stronger, love has emerged since humans became acquainted with the feeling of social life, just like the life of the first humans, Adam and Eve, who began to love each other from the moment they met. Basically, humans need love to live, love as the foundation of life is interpreted in terms of humans' long, eternal journey. When humans love each other, they begin to understand the social values of life, about the importance of relationships, caring, commitment, and even great concern for the meaning of love.

Love does not have a single meaning, unlike the meaning of what the number 1 is and how it is represented. Love cannot be interpreted objectively, because it is an individual emotional element that cannot be drawn into the same meaning in its definition. There are always questions in love, there is always a thirst for curiosity in the name of love. He has no master (love), he is not even friends with anyone. The meaning of love will always be in a very long order of knowledge, not limited to space and time for the reason that the meaning of love in a wide space will always be one-sided. Just say love for humans, love for nature, love for yourself, and even love for God (Chen, Lin, Peng, & Chen, 2018; Murgia, Ortu, Tourani, Adams, & Demeyer, 2018; Shiva Prasad, Kodanda Ramaiah, & Thangadurai, 2018). In the various types of love that have been described, of course there cannot be a single definition of what love is? Quoting the views of Baron and Byrne, they say that love is an emotional response that has basic human characteristics, inherent in various forms of expression such as feelings of anger, sadness, happiness or fear.

Discourse about love is something that is interesting to various groups, whether it is children who have just grown up, to parents who miss their youth with various memories of their love. However, in the interest of scientific knowledge, it could be said that research on love is not limited to discourse to be discussed, research on love can be said to be very widely carried out by scientists, one of the research on discussions about love was written by Alfian Tri Laksono in 2022 with the title " Understanding the Nature of Love in Human Relationships: Based on a Comparison of the Viewpoints of the Philosophy of Love and Psychology of Robert Sternberg" published in the journal JAQFI: a journal of Islamic faith and philosophy (Huelsnitz, Farrell, Simpson, Griskevicius, & Szepsenwol, 2018; Jareanpon, Kiatjindarat, Polhome, & Khongkraphan, 2018; Lorenzová, Bártlová, & Ratislavová, 2018). Alfian in his work explains that love is a very important part of human life, even if it is present without being present. According to him, love has existed since the creation of the first humans, namely Adam and Eve. In the research that Alfian dissected more deeply about love, which tends more towards psychological studies, the results he found explained that love as a form of trust is found by humans when they really understand what love is like, more specifically when someone understands love in a more intimate way, on the presence of love in marriage. Alfian uses psychological analysis to explain that love can be created in a stable and ideal way with self-maturation, the ability to think and make wise decisions. He cannot fail to quote the views of the Greek philosopher, namely Plato, regarding what love is like according

to the classical philosopher. Plato explains love as a synergistic force in the order of human life, the noble nature of love and its basic love cannot be erased by anyone, even with hatred, love will always grow because it is part of the needs that are inherent in humans as social creatures. Alfian agrees with the view of love according to Plati and Paul Tillich that love is a human action that unites something that is already united.

If the research carried out by Alfian Tri Laksono tends to be a general study, the research on love was carried out in a more specific and specific space. Where research conducted by Debora Kesia Sanu and Joris Taneo entitled "Analysis of Sternberg's Theory of Love in Household Harmony" was published in JKKP (Journal of Family Welfare and Education) in 2020. In this research an answer was produced regarding the importance of love in building harmony family (Chung, Leung, Leung, & Loke, 2018; Harris & Jarrett, 2018; Namujju dkk., 2018). Using Sternberg's theory of love, Debora Kesia Sanu and Joris Taneo obtained the results that even households were built without understanding Sternberg's theory of love, namely the theory of love which requires intimacy, passion and commitment. People who are married already understand that these three variables go hand in hand in establishing a household. But of course, even in a household that is built with love in these three variables, it will not be possible to avoid the problems that occur in the household, so that in overcoming them all. Not forgetting the three variables of Sternberg's theory (desire, intimacy, commitment), at the same time household relationships need to be built with God's involvement, so that household problems can be overcome by trusting and surrendering to God.

In the two previous studies described previously as well as a literature review. It would certainly be interesting to continue the trail of understanding deeper lines and more complex angles about love. So in this research we will try to dissect two important things as a discussion of this research, 1) how does someone understand the meaning of love? and 2) is it possible for someone to find true love?

RESEARCH METHOD

In conducting this research, the author used a type of qualitative research, which is referred to as research that provides descriptive explanations of the data collected (Bermúdez, 2018; Meyer, Barkley, Cohn, & Salas, 2018; Rajabi & Nikpoor, 2018). The data in this qualitative research was obtained in the form of a library study approach, where the data collected is in the form of library study data from various scientific work studies, such as books, journals, website articles and other manuscripts. Using the descriptive qualitative method in this paper will explain in the form of written words, Kirk & Miller explained that the descriptive qualitative method will explain data in a more *naturalistic* or natural way, of course the writer himself will also be an observer and will concentrate more on the data in a deeper sense, explain the data obtained then interpret it with the aim of finding comprehensive and holistic data from data that has been collected through literature study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Meaning of Love

"Does someone understand about love? Of course they revolve around love like their meaning. Because love is those who are enjoying it, love does not exist in an empty pocket, but it exists in the side of the mind of humans who love each other, without understanding what love is."

Finding the meaning of love will be easy to find, once someone opens their device on the internet, then types the word "love", then they will find many sources that explain what love is (Canjuga, Železnik, Božičević, & Nekić, 2018; Fonzo, 2018; Kalka, 2018). From broad and firm definitions, to various scientific research carried out to understand what love is like. Of course there are many variants of understanding of love, anyone can define what is meant by love, from children, teenagers, adults, old people to even crazy people have their version of love. However, the general idea that is currently understood is that love belongs to the individual who realizes it. In Sternberg's view, in his book entitled " *The Psychology of love"*, he explains that love is the content in the human heart which includes at least 3 important things, namely desire, commitment and intimacy. These three things are important if someone wants to truly understand what love is like, desire means feeling more towards a particular person than another person, commitment shows consistency and responsibility for a bond, and intimacy indicates a deeper position, distinguishing deeper interactions. These three important points are the basic foundations of love in Sternberg's view (Erich Fromm, 2002).

Apart from Sternberg, one of the early researchers discussing the issue of love from a typological perspective was carried out by Rubin (1970), he provided a critique of the arena of "love" amidst the lack of human knowledge regarding unsatisfied love, the position taken by Rubin regarding love which is always in a position interpersonal interest, where this position provides a discourse about an individual's curiosity about something in depth with an understanding of one's own abilities (Pfaff & Schlarb, 2018; Sikka, Revonsuo, Sandman, Tuominen, & Valli, 2018; Swain, 2018). The implications of love in an interpersonal setting result in a shallow understanding of the concept of love, someone is too unfamiliar and quick to conclude what love is like, so they don't really understand what love is really like.

Being too quick and crude in understanding love is the same as cognitive bias, where a person makes mistakes in thinking. When someone understands love as a feeling of liking, a feeling of wanting to have or even more hyperpoly, closeness to someone makes them bloom. However, the position faced tends to be inability to understand something or there is minimal knowledge, so it is the same as lacking knowledge about love (in this position). The consequences of this cognitive bias in love, such as heartbreak, failure to make love, or being cheated on, resulting in prolonged trauma and depression are consequences of love that is not fully interpreted.

Lee in 1977, conducted in-depth research into the phenomenon of love and found that the concept of love can actually be divided into several different types or sub-aspects (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986).

- a. *Eros*, this type of love is characterized by strong and passionate passion. People who experience this type of love often feel fascinated and crazy about their partner. Eros is a classic form of romantic love, in which emotions and physical desires are felt with great intensity.
- b. *Ludus*, this type of love reflects a more competitive and playful approach to relationships. People who adhere to this type of love tend to see relationships as a game to be won or as a challenge to be completed. They may enjoy love games, quests, and the challenge of teasing or conquering a partner.
- c. *Storge*, the type of love that grows from friendships and relationships that build on similar interests. This is a love that slowly grows and develops from the intimacy and mutual understanding that has existed over a long time. Storge is often found in relationships that begin as friendships and then develop into deeper ones.

- d. *Pragma*, love that is seen practically or pragmatically. People who adhere to this type of love tend to choose partners based on practical criteria, such as suitability of values, social status, or financial suitability. They see relationships as a means to achieve mutual goals or fulfill certain needs.
- e. *Mania*, a type of love that tends to be obsessive. Individuals experiencing this type of love may feel anxious or insecure in their relationships, and tend to pursue their partners with a need for constant attention and validation. Mania is often characterized by strong and unstable emotions.
- f. *Agape*, a form of love based on commitment, sacrifice and selfless care for one's partner. It is altruistic and ennobling love, in which individuals are prepared to make sacrifices for the happiness and well-being of their partner. Agape is often considered the noblest and most loving form of love.
- g. *Selflessness*, a concept that refers to a person's attitude or behavior that is not selfish or selfless. In the context of love, selflessness describes a person's ability or tendency to put the needs, happiness, and well-being of their partner or loved one above their own personal interests.

It cannot be denied that love is blind, but it is blind to people who don't understand it. They don't even understand enough to overcome blindness in love, but those who already have the capital of understanding also have a trained mental emotional experience (Duran & Costes, 2018; Starks, Pawson, Stephenson, Sullivan, & Parsons, 2018; Thijssen dkk., 2018). Because the basic meaning of love is not just having a feeling, fighting for it, getting it and having it. But also have the capital of trained abilities in the worst position in accepting the consequences of love, such as heartbreak and the like. Someone who has been emotionally trained in love is easier to accept love, because love which is defined by practicing self-defense is a way to save oneself from blind love.

One way to practice self-defense when falling in love is two things, namely self-dichotomy and anti-fanaticism towards falling in love. a) Self dichotomy can be understood as a way in which a person is able to control oneself over situations and conditions, self dichotomy positions that as a human being has the ability to control things that can be controlled and cannot be controlled (read more fully the philosophy of Stoicism), by controlling oneself when one falls love, then someone will not fall into blind love . b) The concept of anti-fanaticism towards love refers to the attitude or views of someone who strongly rejects or opposes or is fanatical about the idea of love. Anti-fanaticism in love shows that someone is already at a mature level of maturity, so they are no longer trapped in blind love.

From the previous explanation regarding the typology of love, it is clear that humans are classified according to what type of love they each have. The meaning of love as well as how individuals determine what kind of love is, so of course everyone has their own version of the answer (Lothane, 2018; Moral Jiménez, Sirvent, Ovejero, & Cuetos, 2018; Polanco-Roman, Moore, Tsypes, Jacobson, & Miranda, 2018). The dichotomy of self and anti-fanaticism towards love is the most logical way to interpret love. with the meaning of love, someone has knowledge of what kind of love they will experience, of course it will be their own responsibility to carry it out. Love not only contains happiness, but also contains sorrow, disappointment, shortcomings and evil. However, the more someone truly understands what love is like, the more they will no longer be afraid of love issues.

B. Is True Love Possible?

Love does not sound like poetry that many people sing, it (love) is a word that many people always dream of having. Even a crazy person will understand his own love. The problem of love is a problem of a person's soul, love is attached even without being invited. Born when humans are born, love is present when humans are born. Borrowing words from Erich From in his book entitled "The Art of Loving" explains that love has existed in humans from an early age, humans are born equipped with love, even from when humans were in an embryo until they grew up.

In the journey of love from unconsciousness to realizing the importance of love (Armstrong, 2018; Chang, 2018; Peled-Avron, Goldstein, Yellinek, Weissman-Fogel, & Shamay-Tsoory, 2018). Humans begin to be born with cries of love, grow up and grow up with love, even though the representation of love that is interpreted is so complex. First love at least arises from a woman who gives birth, called a mother. The mother gave love to the child who had been born, a form of expression of real love displayed for the first time at that time, pure love without any reason to be present. Then progress from babies, children, teenagers to adults.

The process of presenting love is of course different, what is meant in this case is that during childhood, a child's sense of love is still at a low level, so they love only for their own sake, satisfaction and for the purpose of personal enjoyment. Then, even when they are children, the same feelings of love about satisfaction and subjective happiness begin to emerge, even though that is also when they begin to understand the wider scope of love, such as friendship and the environment. Then during adolescence, where the process of love that is present is love that begins to be realized from a not narrow perspective, love felt by children begins to appear in the form of liking, even the desire to own by fighting for it will become part of the process of the emergence of love in the teenage phase.

Adult and old age phase, in this teenage and old age phase, a person has begun to mature/even understand their version of love, about implementing and various risks of the love they have and maintain. In this final phase, ego love is no longer the main thing like the phase from childhood to adolescence, but what is prioritized is love that matures oneself with a sense of comfort, commitment, fighting together, and even being willing to make sacrifices.

In the phases of human growth from infancy to old age, the process of love is of course also different, important points can be found which are the same as the theory put forward by Rubin (Rubin, 1970). in *ludus* love (love that grows from a feeling of love that must be won or is competitive), *stronge* (love that arises from friendship), *mania* (love that arises from obsession) *and pragma* (feelings of love that arise from personal interests/taking advantage. Then, in the typology of love in the adult and old phase is more about *eros* (a feeling of love that arises from passionate belief and the reason for love is just a formality), *agape* (a feeling of love based on commitment) and *selfness* (a feeling of love that is full of care / prioritizing a relationship).

In the several typologies of love that have the coherence above, of course the fundamental question regarding this second issue is, is there such a thing as true love? The answer will emerge from the emergence of the process of understanding what love itself is. In the process of human maturation in the name of love itself, at the same time they understand the turning point of what love is in the space of life's journey, the more mature a person thinks, the more they realize what love is, and how they should express it. Great love is a love that is full of question marks, but does not doubt each other's loyalty and commitment. Full of question marks can be interpreted as a relationship that continually maintains communication, even though they never meet face to face. Maintaining communication in relationships, as well

as loyalty and commitment are interpreted in a broader meaning as respecting each other's time, *eros and Agape* are representations of love that mature humans, as well as *self-confidence* is a step in love to not doubt the love that has been believed in, because it begins from a relationship that is trusted by prioritizing each other.

True love is like completing the characteristics of *eros*, *agape and selfssness*. Grow up and really understand how to understand existing relationships, love is not just a matter of lust, let alone a game of personal curiosity, but it is a necessity of human life that is strongly attached to loyalty, commitment, no reason and even willing to make sacrifices. True love is love. who activate themselves towards someone, not doubting each other with a sense of trust that the relationship that has been established was born from the same frequency and promise. Borrowing Muhammad Walidin's view, he explains that someone understands love with several elements that must be fulfilled, including (Muhammad Walidin, 2020).

- a. Love is giving, not receiving. True love involves genuine concern for a partner's happiness and well-being, even if that means sacrificing personal interests.
- b. Love is about the importance of attention and a sense of responsibility. Love is not just a flowing romantic feeling, but also about an active commitment to care for, support and understand your partner. Attention paid to a partner's needs, desires, and feelings creates a strong emotional bond and mutual trust.
- c. Love is appreciation. This appreciation involves recognizing the uniqueness and specialness of a partner, as well as gratitude for their presence in your life.
- d. Love is understanding. Understanding is an important aspect of deep and sustainable love. When loving someone, strive to understand them deeply, including their feelings, needs, and life experiences. This involves empathy, a willingness to see their perspective, and honest and open communication.

From these four elements, the main point can be understood, that true love is about respecting your partner, trusting each other, understanding the importance of commitment and honesty, even for a bond you have to care for each other and be responsible for the feelings that have been deeply imprinted. True love is true, it is inherent in human maturation through the introduction of the love typology of *eros*, *agape and selfssness*. Love is interesting and unique, the more someone understands love, the greater their feeling of love, so it is not wrong for from to say that love is art. Art as a way to learn, understand, strive for and fight for.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion presented previously, of course, it contains important conclusions that must be summarized to simplify the results of this research, including:

- 1) Understanding love is not just about having feelings or fighting for them, but also about having the emotional readiness to face negative consequences, such as heartbreak. Practicing self-defense in love, such as through self-dichotomy and an antifanatic attitude towards falling in love, can help a person face love more calmly and wisely.
- 2) True love certainly exists, he at least understands self-maturation and is aware of the importance of understanding love. When they grow and develop into people full of art. That's when they understand love as *eros*, *agape and selfssness*. Love can be studied, understood, worked for and fought for even though it is without reason and full of sacrifice.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

- Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing review and editing.
- Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.
- Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest

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