

MASSIMO TORRICELLI'S OBSESSION IN BLANKA LIPINSKA'S 365 DAYS

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Abstract. The research study titled "Massimo Torricelli's Obsession in Blanka Lipinska's 365 Days" was conducted to analyze the cause and the effect of the main character's obsession in the novel. The research was motivated by the psychological theory of love and obsession proposed by Robert Stenberg, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining a healthy balance in relationships. The research problem focused on understanding Massimo Torricelli's obsession with Laura Biel and its implications for their relationship. A qualitative research design was used, utilizing a psychological perspective to analyze the main character's obsession. Data was collected from the novel "365 Days" and analyzed using Stenberg's obsession theory. Findings revealed that Massimo's obsession stems from a desire to possess and control Laura, rooted in past trauma and leading to controlling and manipulative behavior. Despite his flaws, Massimo demonstrated emotional depth and willingness to connect with Laura on a deeper level. This study highlights the toxic dynamics in their relationship, and underscores the potential for growth and change. The implications of this study offer insight into the portrayal of love and relationships in literature as well as the importance of prioritizing healthy and balanced relationships.

Keywords: *Control, Love, Manipulated Behavior, Relationships, Toxic Dynamics*

INTRODUCTION

Robert Stenberg's "Triangular Theory of Love" (1986) posits that love is composed of three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Intimacy refers to emotional closeness, passion involves physical attraction, and commitment is the decision to maintain the relationship. Different types of love, such as romantic, companionate, or consummate love, arise from different combinations of these components. Stenberg's theory suggests that the quality and depth of love depend on how these components interact and develop over time.

Robert Stenberg's "Triangular Theory of Love" (1986) differentiates between healthy love and unhealthy obsession. Healthy love involves mutual respect, trust, and a balanced relationship, while unhealthy obsession involves an unhealthy fixation, often disregarding the other person's well-being and autonomy. Stenberg suggests that unhealthy obsession arises from an imbalance in love components, such as passion without intimacy and commitment. Maintaining a healthy balance in relationships is crucial for fostering genuine love and emotional well-being.

Robert Stenberg's "The Psychology of Love" (1988) defines obsession as intense feelings towards a partner, often characterized by excessive focus, need for validation, and constant thinking. This obsession can lead to high anxiety, emotional disturbances, over-dependence, and potential relationship disruption. Stenberg advocates for healthy love, balancing love components and respecting individual freedom and independence, to prevent such obsessions.

In Blanka Lipinska's novel "*365 Days*," Massimo Torricelli, a character injured in an attack, develops a strong obsession with Laura Biel. After 365 days, he attempts to make Laura fall in love, despite initially disliking him. However, the relationship is not always happy. *365 Days* is a novel by Blanka Lipinska about Laura Biel and her boyfriend, who are on a dream vacation in Sicily, Italy. Laura is kidnapped by Don Massimo Torricelli, head of powerful Sicilian crime family. Torricelli is determined to find the woman in his vision and keep her captive for 365 days. Laura develops a fascination with Torricelli, but their relationship is threatened by outside forces. The research writer explores Massimo Torricelli's obsession in Blanka Lipinska's *365 Days*, aiming to understand its cause and effects.

In this research, the researcher reviews two previous studies to find the research gap. The first research is *Franklin Obsession in Nicholas Sparks The Guardian*. This study analyzes Richard's obsession, the cause of Richards, the effect of Richard's obsession. The second research is *A Study Obsession in Sophia Kinsellas My Not So Perfect Life*. This study analyzes three points: the obsession of Kattie Brenner, the internal and external conflict, and the types of obsession in the novel.

The different between this research and the previous research is aims to deepen understanding of the phenomenon of obsession presented in the novel "*365 Days*" by Blanka Lipinska, with a special focus on the Massimo Torricelli's character. In this study, digs deeper into the causes and the effects of the obsession experienced by Massimo Torricelli by looking at it from a psychological perspective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Robert Stenberg's book "The Psychology of Love" (1988) explores obsession in relationships, describing it as an intense preoccupation with another person. While initial attraction is common, it can develop into unhealthy obsession, leading to emotional turmoil and loss of respect. Stenberg emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between healthy love and unhealthy obsession, emphasizing the need for mutual respect, trust, and support in romantic relationships.

Robert Stenberg's book "The Psychology of Love" (1988) mention that the obsession in love relationships can be caused by various factors, including the loss of balance of love components, emotional dependence, lack of emotional maturity, past experiences, lack of security, power imbalance, and excessive idealization. People with high emotional maturity, unhealthy past relationships may be more prone to obsession. Additionally, insecurity, power imbalance, and unrealistic expectations can also contribute to obsession. The causes of obsession in love relationships can vary greatly depending on individual factors and complex relationship dynamics.

Obsession, as described by Robert Stenberg in "The Pyschology of Love," (1988) can lead to high emotional tension, disruption in personal balance, excessive dependence, disturbing thoughts and behaviors, relationship instability, decreased mental health, and loss of personality identity. Obsessed individuals often feel an urgent need to fulfill their feelings for their partner, causing anxiety and stress. This obsession can also disrupt

personal relationships, causing conflict or disharmony. Stenberg emphasises that obsession in love is not a healthy or sustainable form of love, as it requires balance, respect oneself and one's partner, and respect for individual freedom.

METHOD

In this research employs qualitative research. According to Creswell in his book entitled *Research Design* (2013) qualitative research is research method to explore and understand the meaning that some individuals or groups of people think come from social or human problem. The qualitative research is used because collected the data occurring from the main character in the novel *365 Days*. So, the method used in this research is descriptive research to explain the main character's obsession.

In this research uses a psychological perspectives to analyze Massimo Torricelli's obsession in Blanka Lipinska's *365 Days*. According to James W. Kalat in his book entitled "Introduction to Psychology," (2011), psychological perspectives refer to the concepts and theories used to understand human behavior. This psychological perspectives is used because this research uses obsession theory by Robert Stenberg in his book entitled "The Psychology of Love" (1988) which focuses on the cause and the effect of obsession of the main character in the story which is influenced by the conditions and circumstances.

The data source is a novel entitled *365 Days* which displays the obsession of the main character. The novel was published in 2018 and contains 336 pages. Supporting sources are obtained in the form of references taken from books, journals, articles and internet sources that discuss obsession.

In this research collected data through three steps, the first step is to choose the novel *365 Days* as the object of analysis. The second step is reading to understand the novel, and the final step is identifies and classifies the data by take note the words of the main character in the story which shows obsession.

In this research used two steps to analyze the data in the study. The first step is analyze the data that had been identifies and classifies by using obsession theory and the second step is make conclusions based on findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1.1 The Cause of Massimo Torricelli Obsession

a.) Past Experience

Massimo is deeply affected by the traumatic events in his past, particularly the death of his father and the attack on his family. This vulnerability have contributed to his need for control and intense emotions. As a powerful mafia boss, Massimo is used to having control over situations and people. Laura Biel's sudden presence challenges his sense of control, leading to a fixation on her. Massimo sees Laura as unique and different from other women he encounters. Her beauty, innocence, and resistance to his advances intrigue him, further fueling his obsession. Despite his outward tough persona, Massimo craves a genuine emotional connection. Laura represents this possibility, which intensifies his desire to possess her. Massimo's obsession stems from a desire to possess and control Laura completely. This is exacerbated by his background and the environment in which he operates, where power and control are central.

Massimo speaks to Laura about his past. He mentions that he was shot several times, which he refers to as an "accident". He implies that being part of his family comes with risks, and this incident was a part of that risk. This can be seen in this conversation:

¹
"A few years ago, I had... let's call it accident. I was shot. It's part of the risk you need to accept when you're part of my family. As I lay dying, I saw... (Lipinska : 2018 : 33)

The context suggest that Massimo is sharing his personal experiences with Laura to establish a connection or to gain her trust. By sharing his vulnerability, he trying to create a sense of empathy or understanding between them.

Massimo explains that he had seen Laura at the airport five years earlier, just before his father was assassinated. He shot in the chest and nearly died. The bullet that killed his father go through his body, and Laura Biel is the last person he see before he lost consciousness. Massimo have been searching for her ever since, driven by a sense of destiny and a desire to find the woman who had been with him in his final moments. This can be seen in this conversation:

¹
"What I'm about to tell you will be hard to believe. Before I saw you at the airport, I never hoped to meet you in person. Please, look up at the painting over the fireplace." (Lipinska : 2018 : 33)

This conversation is significant because it reveals Massimo's backstory and his motivations for kidnapping Laura. The painting over the fireplace is a symbol of Massimo's past and his connection to Laura. By asking Laura to look at it, Massimo is sharing his story with her and revealing the depth of his feelings. This moment marks a turning point in their relationship, as Laura begins to understand Massimo's motivations and the intensity of his emotions. This conversation also highlights the themes of fate and the power of past experiences in shaping our lives. Massimo's obsession with Laura is rooted in his past trauma, and his actions are driven by a desire to relive the moment when he saw her at the airport. This complex dynamic adds depth to the story and underscores the intense emotions that drive the characters' actions throughout the novel.

Massimo, who has been in a coma, regains consciousness and begins to recover. As he regains his strength, he starts to recall the image of a woman he saw in his dreams while he was unconscious. This image has been etched in his mind, and he becomes determined to find this woman. Massimo calls an artist to paint the woman he saw in his dreams, and the artist creates a portrait based on his description. When the painting is complete, Massimo is overjoyed to see that it is Laura, the woman he has been searching for. This moment marks the beginning of their romantic relationship. This can be seen in this conversation:

²
"When my heart stopped, I saw... you. After weeks in a coma, I regained consciousness, and my fitness came back sometime later. As soon as I was able to communicate the image I had before my eyes the whole time, I called an artist to paint the woman I saw in my dreams. He painted you." (Lipinska : 2018 : 33)

The conversation highlights the depth of Massimo's love for Laura and the intensity of his desire to find her. It also underscores the power of love to transcend even

the most challenging circumstances, such as a conflict. The scene is a testament to the enduring nature of love and the human spirit's ability to persevere in the face of adversity.

Massimo explains to Laura how he finds her and how their paths keep crossing. Massimo initially searches for Laura everywhere, but it is not an exhaustive search. He knows she would eventually show up. Massimo sees Laura at the airport, but he doesn't approach her immediately. He wants to avoid drawing attention to himself and risking her recognition. After the airport, Massimo's associates keep an eye on Laura, monitoring her movements. This allows him to track her without being too obvious. Laura ends up at Tortuga, a restaurant owned by Massimo. He sees this as fate, implying that it was meant to be. Massimo can't resist talking to Laura when he sees her at the restaurant. He has to intervene, which led to their initial confrontation. Laura stays at a hotel that is partially owned by Massimo. He sees this as another instance of fate intervening, bringing them together again. This can be seen in this conversation:

"I looked for you everywhere. Well, that might be a bit of an overstatement. Deep down, I knew someday you'd show up. And here you are. I saw you at the airport, leaving the terminal. At first I wanted to grab you then and there and never let you go again, but that was just too much of a risk. But since then, my people have been keeping an eye on you. Tortuga, the restaurant you ended up in, is my property. But it wasn't my doing that you went there. It was fate. When you were inside, I just couldn't resist. I had to talk to you. And then fate intervened again, and you went through that door you shouldn't have. Providence seems to favor me. The hotel you stayed in is also mine... In part." (Lipinska : 2018 : 34)

Massimo's words convey a sense of control and destiny, suggesting that he believes their encounters are not coincidental but rather orchestrated by fate. He presents himself as a powerful figure who can manipulate events to bring Laura into his life.

1.2 The Effect of Massimo Torricelli Obsession

a.) Disturbance Personal Balance

Massimo expresses his commitment to respecting Laura's autonomy and consent in their relationship. He is saying that he will not force himself on her or do anything that she does not want to do willingly. He is willing to wait for her to come to him and want him, rather than trying to manipulate or coerce her into being with him. This can be seen in this conversation:

"I will not do anything without your consent and willingness. Even if I think I already have it, I'll wait for you to want me, to need me, and to come to me out of your own will. Which doesn't mean that I don't want to enter you, deep, and stifle your screams with my tongue." (Lipinska : 2018 : 35)

The quote specifically highlights Massimo's desire to enter Laura deeply and stifle her screams with his tongue, which can be interpreted as a desire for intense intimacy and passion. However, the context of the conversation emphasizes that this desire is rooted in his respect for Laura's autonomy and his willingness to wait for her to want him. In essence, Massimo is saying that he values Laura's consent and will not engage in any sexual activity with her without her explicit willingness.

b.) Excessive Dependence

Massimo is expressing a deep sense of longing and affection that he has never experienced before. The fact that he has been thinking about her all day and is relieved that she is finally there suggests that he has developed strong feelings for her. This can be seen in this conversations :

"I missed you," (Blanka Lipinska : 2018 : 49)

"I've never said that to anybody. I never felt this way. I've been thinking about you the whole day. That you're finally here." (Blanka Lipinska : 2018 : 49)

Massimo's words also convey a sense of vulnerability, as he is sharing his true emotions with Laura for the first time. This vulnerability is a departure from his typical tough and controlling demeanor, which is characteristic of his role as a mob boss. His admission of missing her and feeling a deep emotional connection with her humanizes him and creates a sense of intimacy between the two characters. For Laura, this conversation is a significant moment of realization. She has been struggling to reconcile her feelings for Massimo, who kidnapped her and imposed his will upon her. However, as she hears Massimo's words, she begins to see him in a different light. She starts to understand that his actions were motivated by a deep emotional need, rather than just a desire for control. This conversation sets the stage for the rest of the novel, as Laura and Massimo continue to navigate their complex and often tumultuous relationship.

c.) Disturbing Thoughts and Behaviors

Massimo, a mob boss, has kidnapped Laura and is holding her captive for 365 days to force her to fall in love with him. Massimo is addressing Laura's emotional distress. He notices that she is panicking and suggests that her heart might "burst" if she continues to be so agitated. He then offers to calm her down by giving her medication, implying that he has the power to control her emotions and actions. This can be seen in this conversations :

"Your heart is going to burst if it continues like that. Try to calm down. Otherwise I will be forced to give you your medication, and that would only make you go to sleep again." (Lipinska : 2018 : 50)

This line is significant because it underscores the coercive nature of their relationship, where Massimo wields significant influence over Laura's well-being and emotions. Massimo's words demonstrate his ability to manipulate Laura's emotions and actions. He is aware of her distress and uses this knowledge to exert control over her, further emphasizing the imbalance in their relationship. By threatening to give her medication, Massimo is essentially using emotional blackmail to keep Laura in line. This tactic is a classic example of how abusers can use fear and manipulation to maintain power over their victims. The conversation also hints at the psychological games Massimo plays with Laura. By acknowledging her distress and offering a solution, he is, in effect, acknowledging her emotions and attempting to manage them. This dynamic is characteristic of abusive relationships, where the abuser seeks to dominate and control the victim's emotions. Overall, this conversation in the novel highlights the complex and problematic nature of Massimo and Laura's relationship, which is marked by coercion, manipulation, and emotional blackmail.

d.) Relationship Instability

Massimo tells Laura that he does not tolerate defiance and insubordination. He emphasizes the importance of loyalty, implying that he expects absolute obedience from her. Laura is likely intimidated by Massimo's words, which reinforce his controlling and abusive nature. This statement further solidifies the power imbalance in their relationship. Massimo's statement serves as a warning to Laura, making it clear that he will not tolerate any form of resistance or disobedience. This reinforces his authoritarian and possessive behavior, which is a hallmark of his character. The emphasis on loyalty also underscores his expectation that Laura will prioritize their relationship above all else. This can be seen in this conversation :

“I told you, but apparently you thought I was joking. I do not tolerate defiance and insubordination, Laura. There is nothing as important as loyalty. You are not yet ready for all this, and you can’t ever be ready for what you saw yesterday.” (Lipinska : 2018 : 43)

In summary, this conversation highlights the toxic dynamics between Massimo and Laura, where Massimo's aggressive behavior and Laura's vulnerability create a power imbalance that perpetuates abuse and control.

e.) Loss of Personal Identity

Massimo, the powerful and controlling Sicilian Mafia boss, is expressing his desires to Laura, who is his captive and the object of his obsession. This can be seen in this conversation :

“When you’re so fragile and helpless... I want you even more. I want to fuck you like nobody ever did before. I want you to feel pain and rapture. I want to be your last lover...” (Lipinska : 2018 : 44)

Massimo's statement can be interpreted asserting his dominance over Laura, emphasizing his desire to control and manipulate her. He wants to be her last lover, implying that he intends to exhaust her emotionally and physically, leaving her with no other options. The phrase "I want to fuck you like nobody ever did before" suggests that Massimo is drawn to the idea of inflicting pain and pleasure on Laura. This could be seen as a form of sadomasochism, where he derives pleasure from the power dynamic and the intensity of their interactions. Massimo's words can also be seen as a declaration of his intense passion for Laura. He wants to experience the full range of emotions with her, from pain to rapture, implying that he is willing to push the boundaries of their relationship to achieve a deeper connection. Massimo's statement is also a form of psychological manipulation. By expressing his desires in such a graphic and intense manner, he is attempting to break down Laura's defenses and make her more susceptible to his advances. In the context of the novel, this conversation highlights the toxic and abusive nature of Massimo's relationship with Laura. He is using his power and control to manipulate her into submission.

CONCLUSION

Massimo Torricelli, an Italian mobster, becomes obsessed with Laura Biel, a woman who challenges his sense of control. His obsession stems from his past trauma, having seen Laura at the airport 5 years ago. His actions are often controlling and

manipulative, and he struggles to maintain control over his desires and respect Laura's boundaries. The obsession affects their relationships, making it difficult for him to separate his feelings from his actions. Massimo becomes emotionally dependent on Laura, leading to attempts to control her and the situations around her. His anxiety about Laura's safety disrupts his psychological balance. Despite his controlling behavior, Massimo expresses a desire to respect Laura's autonomy and consent, marking a turning point in their relationship. However, his actions are not always consistent with his words, and he can be manipulative, coercive, and physically violent. Massimo's obsession with Laura is rooted in his past trauma, and despite his flaws, he is a complex character with deep emotional depth.

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