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Jurnal The Gist adalah jurnal yang memuat karya ilmiah berupa artikel di bidang Ilmu sastra dan Bahasa. Jurnal The Gist diterbitkan 2 kali dalam setahun oleh Fakultas Sastra Universitas Alghifari sebagai media untuk menampung karya ilmiah sivitas akademika di lingkungan Fakultas Sastra Universitas Alghifari. Jurnal ini juga membuka peluang bagi penulis dari luar lembaga untuk berkontribusi dalam penulisan karya ilmiah selama masih memiliki bidang ilmu yang sama.

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THE REPRESENTATION OF LOVE IN THE TELEVISION SERIES "*WEDNESDAY*": A SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF CONTEXTUAL MEANING

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Abstract: This study explores the representation of love in the Netflix series *Wednesday* (2022) using a semantic approach with a qualitative descriptive method. The analysis focuses on contextual expressions of love conveyed through actions, tone, body language, and situational interactions rather than explicit verbal statements. By examining eight episodes and analyzing forty (40) contextual data excerpts, the study reveals that love in *Wednesday* is expressed through unconventional forms such as protective behavior, sarcasm, loyalty, and implicit care, reflecting the series' gothic atmosphere. These contextual expressions extend beyond romantic relationships to include family bonds, friendship, and mutual dependence. The findings demonstrate that semantic analysis of contextual meaning uncovers deeper emotional layers often overlooked in traditional romantic portrayals, highlighting love as a complex and situational construct embedded in narrative and character dynamics.

Key terms: *Contextual Meaning, Film, Love Representation, Semantic*

***Abstrak**: Penelitian ini mengkaji representasi cinta dalam serial Netflix Wednesday (2022) dengan menggunakan pendekatan semantik melalui metode deskriptif kualitatif. Analisis difokuskan pada ekspresi cinta secara kontekstual yang disampaikan melalui tindakan, intonasi, bahasa tubuh, dan interaksi situasional, alih-alih pernyataan verbal yang eksplisit. Dengan menelaah delapan episode dan menganalisis empat puluh (40) data kontekstual, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa cinta dalam Wednesday diekspresikan melalui bentuk-bentuk yang tidak konvensional, seperti perilaku protektif, sarkasme, loyalitas, dan kepedulian implisit yang mencerminkan atmosfer gotik serial tersebut. Ekspresi kontekstual ini tidak terbatas pada hubungan romantis, tetapi juga mencakup ikatan keluarga, persahabatan, dan ketergantungan timbal balik. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa analisis semantik terhadap makna kontekstual mampu mengungkap lapisan emosional yang lebih dalam, yang sering kali terabaikan dalam penggambaran cinta romantis konvensional, serta menegaskan cinta sebagai konstruksi yang kompleks dan situasional yang tertanam dalam narasi dan dinamika karakter.*

***Kata Kunci:** Makna Kontekstual, Film, Representasi Cinta, Semantik.*

INTRODUCTION

Film is a highly influential medium of storytelling that integrates visual, auditory, and performative elements into a cohesive narrative structure. Beyond its function as entertainment, film serves as a cultural text that reflects social values, emotional experiences, and patterns of human interaction. Among the elements that construct cinematic meaning, language occupies a central and strategic position. Dialogue, tone, pauses, silence, and stylistic linguistic choices do not merely advance the plot but actively shape character construction, emotional expression, and relational dynamics. Language in film operates as a meaning-making system through which characters reveal their inner states, negotiate relationships, and position themselves within social and cultural frameworks. The way utterances are delivered, whether through irony, restraint, sarcasm, or silence, often conveys meanings that extend beyond literal interpretation. Even the absence of speech can function as a powerful communicative act, signaling

resistance, emotional distance, or vulnerability. Therefore, language becomes a crucial vehicle for constructing contextual meaning within cinematic narratives.

The analysis of language in film can be systematically approached through semantics, particularly through the distinction between textual and contextual meaning. While textual meaning refers to the literal or dictionary meaning of words and expressions, contextual meaning emerges from situational factors such as speaker intention, emotional state, interpersonal relationships, and cultural background. In film discourse, contextual meaning frequently carries greater interpretive weight than literal meaning, as emotions and intentions are often implied rather than explicitly stated. Words such as "*home*," "*family*," or "*love*," for instance, may appear simple at the textual level, yet acquire complex emotional significance depending on who speaks them, how they are spoken, and under what circumstances. This layered nature of meaning demonstrates that semantics is not merely concerned with what is said, but with how meaning is negotiated within specific narrative contexts. Consequently, contextual semantics provides an essential framework for understanding how films communicate emotional depth and thematic complexity.

The Netflix series *Wednesday* (2022) offers a particularly relevant site for examining contextual meaning in cinematic language. The series presents a distinctive portrayal of emotional expression through its protagonist, Wednesday Addams, whose linguistic behavior is marked by sarcasm, irony, emotional restraint, and deliberate avoidance of explicit affective language. This communicative style contrasts sharply with that of her parents, Morticia and Gomez Addams, who openly articulate love through affectionate words and overt emotional displays. Wednesday's rejection of direct emotional expression, including her avoidance of the word "*love*," does not signal emotional absence but rather a reliance on contextual strategies to convey affection. Her protective actions, loyalty, and willingness to place herself at risk for others function as contextual indicators of love that are not verbally articulated. In this way, the series constructs an alternative emotional discourse in which meaning is embedded in action, tone, and situational context rather than explicit verbal declarations.

Despite the popularity of *Wednesday*, existing discussions of the series have largely focused on its gothic aesthetics, visual symbolism, or narrative elements, while the linguistic mechanisms that construct emotional meaning remain underexplored. This lack of attention to semantic analysis represents a significant gap, particularly regarding how contextual meaning shapes the representation of love and relational identity. The series challenges conventional cinematic depictions of love by presenting emotional bonds that are communicated indirectly through sarcasm, silence, and dark humor. By foregrounding contextual meaning, this study aims to demonstrate that emotional expression in *Wednesday* is not diminished by the absence of overt verbal affection, but rather intensified through implicit and situational cues. This research therefore positions contextual semantics as a critical analytical lens for understanding how contemporary film and television narratives negotiate themes of love, identity, and individuality, especially within non-traditional and gothic-teen genres.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Previous Research

Previous studies provide an essential theoretical and methodological foundation for the present research, particularly those closely aligned with semantic and contextual meaning analysis. A comparative discussion of these studies helps illuminate both similarities and differences in research focus, data sources,

methods, and findings, while also identifying research gaps that this study seeks to address.

The first related study is a thesis entitled "*An Analysis of Contextual Meaning of Songs by Shane Filan*" by Maya Dewi Lestari (Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2016). This study aims to analyze the contextual meanings embedded in Shane Filan's song lyrics taken from two albums, *You and Me* (2013) and *Right Here* (2015). Employing a qualitative descriptive method and Mansoer Pateda's semantic theory, the researcher classifies contextual meaning into eleven types. Ten selected songs were analyzed, focusing on lyric segments containing contextual meanings and relating them to specific contexts such as time, mood, situation, purpose, and the singer's intent. The findings reveal that only six contextual types were identified: personal context, situational context, purpose context, mood context, time context, and object context. For instance, the word *white* in the song "*Beautiful in White*" does not merely denote a color but contextually refers to a wedding dress.

Both the Shane Filan study and the present research adopt a qualitative descriptive approach and rely on Pateda's semantic framework to uncover non-literal meanings. However, they differ significantly in terms of media and analytical scope. While Lestari's study focuses solely on song lyrics as textual data, the present study examines a television series, incorporating dialogues, subtitles, visual cues, character actions, and narrative context. Consequently, the analysis of *Wednesday* broadens the scope to include cultural and narrative dimensions that are absent in the song-based study. Additionally, differences are evident in data size and modality, with ten songs compared to multiple television episodes. Both studies, however, share limitations in that they prioritize producer-intended meanings and do not consider audience reception or interpretation. Furthermore, Lestari's research does not deeply explore cultural contexts, while the *Wednesday* study could be strengthened by a more systematic inclusion of multimodal cues. These limitations indicate the need for a more integrated and comprehensive semantic analysis.

The second related study is a research paper titled "*Representation of 'Men' in Mass Media (Case Study on Men's Health Magazine): A Semantic Study*" by Nova Risky PP (Universitas Diponegoro, 2013). This study investigates how masculinity is represented in *Men's Health* magazine through textual and visual elements such as articles, images, advertisements, and themes. Using a semantic approach, the study analyzes how language and imagery contribute to the social construction of male identity.

Both this study and the present research employ qualitative semantic analysis to examine how meaning is constructed through language. They also reveal how semantic choices reflect broader social values, such as masculinity in print media and love in television narratives. However, the primary differences lie in the media type, thematic focus, and language. The *Men's Health* study concentrates on printed Indonesian texts and lexical categories related to physical appearance and masculine traits, while the present study analyzes English audiovisual content and focuses on representations of love. Neither study explores how meanings might shift across media platforms, nor do they examine audience interpretations or responses. Additionally, the *Wednesday* study does not engage with gender-specific representations as deeply as the *Men's Health* analysis, while the latter overlooks multimodal elements such as sound and narrative flow.

The third related study is Dian Pratiwi's thesis titled "*Analisis Semantik Dialog Film Surat Cinta untuk Kartini Karya Azhar Kinoi Lubis*" (Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, 2018). This research analyzes the semantic meanings of dialogues in the film *Surat*

Cinta untuk Kartini, focusing on how words, phrases, and contextual interactions construct meaning. The study highlights the social and cultural identity of Kartini as a symbol of women's emancipation through denotative and connotative meanings found in 45 dialogue excerpts.

Both studies share a qualitative semantic approach and analyze dialogue-based data. However, they differ in medium, scope, and analytical depth. Pratiwi's study treats film dialogue primarily as written text and does not incorporate visual or auditory elements, whereas the present study examines a television series across multiple episodes and integrates narrative, cultural, and situational contexts. Moreover, the Kartini study does not focus on a specific thematic concept such as love, nor does it consider audience reception. These differences reveal gaps in cross-media comparison, multimodal analysis, and interpretative perspectives.

The fourth related study is "*Contextual Meaning in Avril Lavigne's Selected Songs*" by Anna Maria Hulu (Nias Raya University, 2023). This study explores contextual meanings in Avril Lavigne's song lyrics using a semantic approach. It examines how social, emotional, and cultural contexts influence meaning and how listeners' personal experiences may shape interpretation. The findings suggest that themes such as teenage rebellion, freedom, and emotional expression are interpreted differently depending on contextual and situational factors.

Both studies adopt a qualitative semantic framework and analyze textual data to uncover contextual meanings. However, they differ in data sources and analytical focus. Hulu's study analyzes five songs with a lexical-contextual emphasis, while the present study analyzes 77 dialogue excerpts from eight episodes of a television series, incorporating visual and narrative dimensions. Although Hulu's study acknowledges listener interpretation, it does not systematically examine audience reception, similar to the limitation found in the present research. Additionally, both studies miss opportunities for cross-media comparison and deeper multimodal analysis.

The fifth related study is "*An Analysis of Lexical and Contextual Meaning in Maher Zain's Songs*" by Eva Yuliana (Universitas Madura, 2024). This research investigates both lexical and contextual meanings in Maher Zain's song lyrics, emphasizing how religious, social, and spiritual contexts enrich meaning. Using semantic theory proposed by Chaer and Pateda, the study finds that contextual meaning significantly enhances moral and religious messages conveyed in the songs.

Both studies share a semantic focus and employ qualitative descriptive methods to distinguish literal and contextual meanings. However, they differ in thematic emphasis and media form. While the Maher Zain study examines song lyrics across various themes, the present study specifically focuses on the representation of love in an audiovisual narrative. The *Wednesday* study also incorporates genre-specific elements, such as gothic teen drama, which are absent in the analysis of Maher Zain's religious music. A notable research gap lies in the lack of comparative analysis between audiovisual media and music lyrics in representing love, as well as limited exploration of how genre influences meaning construction.

Overall, these previous studies demonstrate the relevance of semantic and contextual meaning analysis across various media forms. However, they also reveal persistent gaps, particularly in cross-media comparison, multimodal analysis, thematic specialization, and audience reception. Addressing these gaps, the present study seeks to contribute a more comprehensive understanding of contextual meaning by examining the representation of love in the television series *Wednesday* through a semantic and multimodal perspective.

Theoritical

Chomsky (Ginting & Ginting, 2019) argues that semantics constitutes the core of linguistics, within which other components such as phonology and syntax operate. According to Chomsky, the semantic component is responsible for determining sentence meaning. His view emphasizes the centrality of semantics in linguistic analysis and encourages linguists to regard meaning as a fundamental element in understanding language.

The term *semantics* originates from the Greek noun *sēma*, meaning 'sign', and the verb *sēmainō*, meaning 'to mark'. Historically, the term has been used since the seventeenth century, notably in expressions such as *semantics philosophy*. It was later reintroduced by the American Philological Association in 1894 through a publication entitled *Reflected Meanings: A Point in Semantics*. Compared to other branches of linguistics, such as phonology, morphology, and syntax, semantics is often regarded as less systematically developed, largely due to the complexity involved in analyzing meaning, which encompasses abstract, cognitive, social, and contextual dimensions.

Chaer (Chaer, 2014, p. 31) defines semantics as a branch of linguistics that examines the relationship between linguistic signs and the entities they represent, whether concrete or abstract. In simpler terms, semantics studies the meaning of utterances in a language. Similarly, Kridalaksana (Sartika, 2016, p. 2) defines semantics as (1) the component of language structure that deals with meaning and the organization of meaning in speech, and (2) the system and study of meaning and significance in one or more languages. Kreidler (Kreidler, 2013, p. 3) further states that semantics is the systematic study of meaning, while linguistic semantics specifically focuses on how language organizes and expresses meaning. Meaning in language emerges from words, phrases, and sentences, whose interpretation depends not only on lexical meaning but also on grammatical structure.

Semantics plays a crucial role not only in effective communication but also in understanding language use within society. Moreover, semantic analysis can be applied to literary and audiovisual works, such as films and songs, to uncover meanings that are not immediately apparent on the surface level. From these perspectives, semantics can be understood as a linguistic discipline that investigates meaning in texts, encompassing both literal and non-literal interpretations.

Meaning itself is a multidimensional concept. It ranges from literal meanings of words and phrases to implied meanings shaped by context, cultural background, social interaction, and cognitive processes. To understand meaning comprehensively, it is necessary to consider various dimensions, including literal meaning, implied meaning, and contextual meaning. Consequently, the study of meaning in language is a complex endeavor that requires careful and systematic analysis.

From a referential or correspondence perspective, meaning is viewed as the relationship between linguistic symbols and their referents. Contextual explanation of meaning may also involve collocation, namely words that frequently occur together. For example, the word *soldier* is commonly associated with words such as *war*, *front line*, *commander*, and *weapon*. Field theory further explains meaning as a network of relations among elements within the same semantic field. Componential analysis, on the other hand, examines how words are composed of smaller semantic features, such as *uncle*, which may be analyzed through components like *male* and *relative*. Through combinatorial semantics or semotactics, speakers classify objects and relate semantic components using vocabulary that is structured syntactically within sentences.

Based on these explanations, textual meaning refers to the literal meaning conveyed by words, phrases, and

sentences as they stand independently. In contrast, contextual meaning involves interpretation that arises from the relationship between linguistic elements and the situational, social, or cultural context in which language is used. Together, textual and contextual meanings demonstrate that meaning is constructed not only through linguistic forms but also through their use in specific contexts.

Machali (in Suprapto, 2010) emphasizes that contextual meaning is shaped by relationships within the text (textual meaning) as well as by extratextual factors, such as situational context. Every text functions as an act of communication, produced with a particular intention and directed toward a specific audience. Meaning, therefore, fulfills communicative purposes such as informing, persuading, narrating, or entertaining, depending on the intent of the text producer and the characteristics of the audience.

Contextual meaning can be defined as the interpretation of words or sentences that depends on the situation in which they are used. Meaning may vary according to factors such as the speaker, location, time, and communicative setting. For instance, the word *bank* may refer to a financial institution or the side of a river, depending on context. Within semantic studies, several theories address contextual meaning, including polysemy, deixis, and inference. Polysemy explains how a single word can have multiple meanings across different contexts, while deixis highlights expressions whose meanings depend on the speaker's position, such as *I*, *here*, or *now*. Inference theory shows that meaning can often be derived from implied information rather than explicit statements.

Hurford (2007, p. 194) asserts that words cannot be fully understood in isolation, emphasizing that meaning is heavily dependent on context. Similarly, Pateda (as cited in Juniarti, 2019) proposes that contextual meaning arises from various situational factors, including personal context, situational context, purpose context, formal context, place context, object context, and language choice. These contextual elements collectively shape how meaning is produced and interpreted in communication. In summary, contextual meaning highlights the dynamic nature of language, demonstrating that words may convey different meanings depending on their usage. Understanding context is therefore essential for accurate interpretation and effective communication.

Beyond linguistic meaning, this study also draws upon theoretical perspectives on love as a fundamental human experience. Fromm (1956, p. 9) argues that human beings experience existential separation and loneliness, which generate anxiety and a need for connection. Love, therefore, functions as an active force that overcomes isolation while preserving individual integrity. Mature love involves unity without the loss of individuality, enabling emotional and existential connection between individuals.

To provide a systematic framework for understanding love, Sternberg's (1986) Triangular Theory of Love is employed. According to this theory, love consists of three interrelated components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Intimacy refers to emotional closeness and trust; passion involves physical attraction and desire; and commitment represents the decision to maintain a relationship over time. Different combinations of these components result in different types of love, such as intimate friendship (intimacy only) or infatuation (passion only). Ideal or consummate love occurs when all three components are present in balance. As Sternberg (1986) states, true love emerges from the appropriate integration of intimacy, passion, and commitment. This theory offers a clear and accessible framework for defining love and is particularly relevant for analyzing representations of love in narrative texts.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the contextual meaning of love as represented in the television series *Wednesday*. Qualitative research is intended to explore and understand meanings constructed by individuals or groups in relation to social or human phenomena (Creswell, 2014, p. 16). In qualitative inquiry, the research process involves formulating research questions, collecting relevant data, analyzing the data inductively to identify patterns and themes, and interpreting meanings derived from the data (Creswell, 2014).

The theoretical foundation of qualitative research is rooted in approaches such as phenomenology and symbolic interactionism (Moleong, as cited in Syamsuddin, 2023, p. 11). Phenomenology seeks to understand phenomena from the subject's perspective, while symbolic interactionism emphasizes that meaning is not inherent in objects or language but is constructed through human interaction and interpretation. This perspective is particularly relevant to this study, as the meaning of love in *Wednesday* is not always expressed explicitly but is constructed through dialogue, actions, and situational context.

Accordingly, the data in this study consist of words, images, and non-verbal actions rather than numerical data. All data collected are treated as meaningful units that contribute to understanding how love is contextually represented within the narrative.

The primary data source of this research is the first season of the Netflix television series *Wednesday* (2022), which consists of eight episodes. The analysis focuses on scenes, dialogues, and character interactions that depict expressions of love in various forms, including family bonds, platonic, and romantic relationships. Particular attention is given to Wednesday Addams' interactions with her family members, such as Pugsley, her parents, Uncle Fester, and Thing, as well as her relationships with friends and romantic interests, including Enid Sinclair, Eugene Ottinger, Xavier Thorpe, and Tyler Galpin.

Sampling in this study applies a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling. According to Sugiyono (2013, p. 215), purposive sampling involves selecting data based on the researcher's judgment of their relevance to the research objectives. Scenes and dialogues are selected because they clearly represent expressions of love or emotional attachment, whether conveyed directly or implicitly. An example of the selected data appears in Episode 1, when Wednesday states, "*The only person who gets to torture my brother is me*". This utterance occurs in a scene where Pugsley is being bullied by other students, and Wednesday intervenes in her own unconventional manner. Although the statement appears harsh, its contextual meaning reveals a form of protective familial love expressed through dark humor and action rather than verbal affection. Such scenes are chosen because they illustrate how love is communicated contextually rather than literally.

This study employs semantic analysis with a focus on contextual meaning, drawing upon the semantic theory proposed by Mansoer Pateda and representation theory by Stuart Hall. According to Hall (1997, p. 19), meaning is produced and exchanged through language within specific cultural and social contexts. Therefore, this research examines how language, actions, and situational cues in *Wednesday* construct representations of love that both conform to and challenge conventional notions of affection and emotional expression.

Data collection is conducted through documentation, as proposed by Sugiyono (2013, p. 240), who states that documentation involves collecting data from written or recorded sources such as videos, films, transcripts, and subtitles. The data collection process begins with repeatedly watching all eight episodes of

Wednesday to gain a comprehensive understanding of the plot, characters, and narrative structure. During this process, relevant scenes, dialogues, and interactions related to expressions of love are carefully noted, including episode numbers, time codes, characters involved, and situational context. Selected dialogues are then transcribed to facilitate detailed semantic analysis. Supporting materials, such as subtitle files, available scripts, and reputable reviews, are also consulted to strengthen contextual understanding and ensure accuracy in interpretation.

The data analysis procedure follows the qualitative analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification. In the data reduction stage, only scenes and dialogues relevant to the representation of love are selected, while unrelated data are excluded. The remaining data are categorized into contextual meaning to enable systematic analysis. In the data display stage, the reduced data are organized into tables and descriptive explanations. An appendix table is used to present the data clearly, with a numbering system based on episode and sequence (e.g., Data 2.5 refers to the fifth data entry in Episode 2), allowing ease of reference. In the final stage, conclusions are drawn by interpreting patterns and meanings found in the data. These conclusions are continuously verified by re-examining the data to ensure consistency, accuracy, and credibility.

Through this methodological framework, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive semantic analysis of how love is represented in *Wednesday*, emphasizing the importance of contextual meaning in understanding language, actions, and emotional expression within audiovisual narratives.

ANALYSIS

In this part of the study, the researcher conducts a focused and detailed analysis of selected scenes from each episode of the television series *Wednesday* that clearly illustrate the role of emotions and relationships within the narrative. The purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate how these key moments shape the representation of love and contribute to the characters' personal development and emotional complexity. Rather than addressing abstract or generalized concepts, this section examines concrete examples that depict various forms of relationships, including familial bonds, friendships, and other interpersonal connections. Particular attention is given not only to the dialogue itself but also to the situational context surrounding each interaction, as these elements collectively add depth to character development and actively advance the storyline. The analysis is based on carefully selected data from all eight episodes, with each example offering insight into the emotional and narrative significance of relational exchanges over time.

Data 1

Figure 1. Data 1

"Pugsley, you're soft and weak. You'll never survive without me. I give you two months tops." – Wednesday

This dialogue occurs in Data 1, when Wednesday is preparing to leave for Nevermore Academy, marking a significant transition that will separate her from her brother, Pugsley. The scene takes place in a relatively private setting within the Nevermore area, allowing the siblings to communicate directly and honestly. The atmosphere is tense, as Wednesday's

departure represents a major change in their relationship and daily lives. On a literal level, Wednesday's statement appears blunt and harsh, as she openly labels Pugsley as "*soft and weak*" and predicts his inability to survive without her presence.

Contextually, however, the utterance reflects a complex expression of familial love conveyed through protective harshness. Wednesday's assessment of Pugsley's weakness indicates her awareness of his vulnerability and dependence on her guidance and protection. The phrase *"I give you two months tops"* suggests a sense of urgency and concern, implying that she believes his struggles will become apparent shortly after her absence. Rather than functioning solely as an insult, the statement operates as a form of tough love, intended to confront Pugsley with the reality of her departure and the challenges he will face alone.

Although the language lacks tenderness, it conveys an underlying sense of responsibility and emotional attachment. Love in this context is not expressed through affectionate words but through realism, confrontation, and a desire to prepare the other person for hardship. This moment foreshadows Pugsley's emotional difficulty in adjusting to life without Wednesday and highlights the anxiety associated with change and separation within sibling relationships. As such, the dialogue illustrates how love can be communicated implicitly through harsh honesty and protective concern, challenging conventional notions of emotional expression.

Data 2

Figure 2. Data 2

"Breathe a word of this to anyone and I will end you." – Wednesday

This utterance appears in Data 2, during a scene in the dormitory room shared by Wednesday and Enid at Nevermore Academy. Although the setting is a shared space, it functions as Wednesday's personal environment, where she maintains strict control over her privacy. In this scene, Thing, her loyal companion, gestures in a way that prompts Wednesday to briefly acknowledge her inner discomfort. For a character who typically suppresses emotional expression, this moment represents a rare instance of vulnerability.

Immediately following this emotional exposure, Wednesday delivers the threatening statement as a means of reasserting control. The phrase *"Breathe a word of this"* emphasizes the demand for absolute secrecy, suggesting that even the smallest disclosure would constitute a serious violation. While the expression *"I will end you"* appears extreme in its literal meaning, the contextual relationship between Wednesday and Thing indicates that the statement is not intended as a genuine threat. Instead, it functions as an exaggerated assertion of seriousness and a clear boundary regarding trust and confidentiality.

Contextually, this dialogue reveals Wednesday's conflicted approach to intimacy and emotional openness. Her willingness to share a personal feeling with Thing reflects trust and emotional reliance, yet her immediate retreat into aggressive language underscores her discomfort with vulnerability. The threatening tone serves as a defensive mechanism, allowing her to protect herself emotionally after momentarily lowering her guard. This interaction demonstrates that, for Wednesday, expressions of attachment are closely tied to control, secrecy, and emotional restraint.

Through this dialogue, love and trust are represented indirectly rather than through explicit emotional affirmation. The bond between Wednesday and Thing

is constructed through loyalty, protection, and mutual understanding, reinforced by strict boundaries. Consequently, the scene highlights the complexity of emotional relationships in *Wednesday*, where care and attachment coexist with defensiveness and a fear of emotional exposure.

Data 3

Figure 3. Data 3

"If he breaks your heart, I'll nail-gun his." – Wednesday

The dialogue in Data 3 occurs when Enid expresses her nervousness about her upcoming date with Ajax. Wednesday responds with a bold and threatening statement that immediately reflects her fierce protective attitude toward Enid. The phrase *"If he breaks your heart"* refers to potential emotional harm, while *"I'll nail-gun his"* conveys an extreme and violent image, emphasizing Wednesday's unwillingness to tolerate any mistreatment directed at her friend. The use of such vivid imagery underscores the seriousness of her warning and highlights the intensity of her concern.

The scene takes place in their shared room, a private and intimate space where Enid feels safe enough to voice her anxiety. Within this context, Wednesday's response functions as reassurance, albeit expressed through her characteristically dark and blunt manner. Rather than offering comfort through gentle or sympathetic language, Wednesday chooses a threatening and aggressive form of reassurance that aligns with her fearless personality. The tone is simultaneously menacing and caring, illustrating how loyalty and concern are conveyed through unconventional means.

Contextually, this dialogue represents a form of love rooted in fierce protection and emotional solidarity. Wednesday's readiness to defend Enid's emotional well-being reflects a deep commitment to their friendship. This expression of love departs from traditional representations of affection that emphasize softness or warmth. Instead, it presents love as uncompromising loyalty and a willingness to confront any perceived threat. The reference to a nail gun, an object associated with force and finality, further intensifies the seriousness of Wednesday's protective stance.

Beyond its literal meaning, the statement also reflects the dynamics of Wednesday and Enid's relationship. Wednesday's dark humor, bluntness, and emotional restraint are transformed into a declaration of care that is both humorous and intimidating. The dialogue reassures Enid that she is not alone in facing emotional risk and reinforces the idea of friendship as a form of chosen family, where protection and support are central. As such, the sentence illustrates love as a multifaceted emotion encompassing loyalty, protection, emotional commitment, and unconventional expressions of care.

Data 4

Figure 4. Data 4

"I feel I'll only slow you down. You're a gazelle. I'm a wounded fawn. Cut me loose and go run with the pack." – Wednesday

The dialogue in Data 4 is spoken by Wednesday to Enid outside a clothing store that Enid enthusiastically recommends. This moment follows Enid's excitement upon learning that Wednesday plans to attend the Rave'N dance, a major social event at Nevermore Academy. While Enid suggests they go outfit shopping together, Wednesday declines the invitation in a

poetic and emotionally detached manner rather than offering a direct refusal.

Understanding the situational context is crucial to interpreting the meaning of this dialogue. When Wednesday says, *"I feel I'll only slow you down,"* she is not referring to physical movement but to social compatibility and emotional energy. The statement reveals her perception of herself as incompatible with Enid's lively and socially engaged world. By describing Enid as *"a gazelle"* and herself as *"a wounded fawn,"* Wednesday constructs a metaphor that contrasts Enid's confidence and vitality with her own sense of fragility and alienation. Although expressed softly and poetically, the metaphor conveys a strong emotional message about difference and self-perceived inadequacy.

The final phrase, "*Cut me loose and go run with the pack,"* reinforces Wednesday's belief that she is holding Enid back. The metaphor of the "pack" represents Enid's friends and her place within the social community, a space where Wednesday feels she does not belong. Rather than confronting this difference directly, Wednesday chooses to withdraw, framing her absence as an act of consideration rather than rejection. This moment reveals a quiet form of care, as Wednesday attempts to protect Enid from discomfort while simultaneously shielding herself from emotional exposure.

Contextually, the dialogue reflects Wednesday's internal struggle with closeness, belonging, and self-worth. Despite her outward emotional distance, her words convey admiration for Enid and an awareness of the gap between them. The gentle yet heavy tone of the exchange exposes feelings of isolation, caution, and restrained affection. This scene demonstrates how love and care can be expressed through withdrawal and self-sacrifice, rather than overt emotional warmth.

Data 5

Figure 5. Data 5

"This reminds me of when you got your first grave-digging kit. You were so happy, you nearly smiled." – Morticia

The dialogue in Data 5 is spoken by Morticia during a scene in which she observes Wednesday helping her dig a grave in a cemetery. The line evokes a moment of dark humor and nostalgia, as Morticia recalls a childhood memory associated with Wednesday's fascination with macabre activities. The phrase *"your first grave-digging kit"* highlights the consistency of Wednesday's unusual interests, while the remark *"you nearly smiled"* offers a rare and subtle glimpse into her emotional expression.

Although the setting is somber, Morticia's comment introduces a gentle and affectionate tone that contrasts with the grim activity. This juxtaposition creates an atmosphere that blends darkness with warmth, reflecting the Addams family's unique worldview. Morticia's words demonstrate her deep understanding of Wednesday's personality and her acceptance of what others might perceive as unsettling. Rather than expressing concern or disapproval, she frames the memory with fondness, indicating pride and emotional closeness.

Contextually, this dialogue represents a form of parental love grounded in acceptance and recognition of individuality. Morticia's recollection emphasizes that love does not require change or correction but can exist through acknowledgment of a loved one's true nature. By recalling a moment of subtle happiness, Morticia reveals that love is found in small, understated expressions of joy. This interaction illustrates a familial

bond built on understanding, shared memories, and emotional respect.

The scene portrays love as a quiet yet profound connection that thrives even in dark or unconventional circumstances. Morticia's words affirm Wednesday's identity and reinforce a family dynamic in which individuality is embraced rather than restrained. As such, the dialogue highlights love as acceptance, continuity, and emotional intimacy within the family relationship.

Data 6

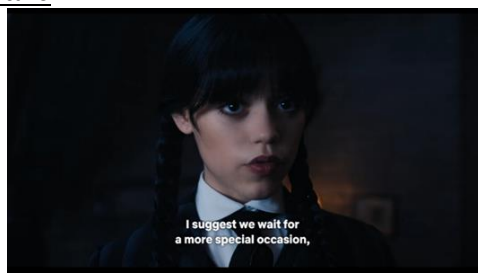

Figure 6. Data 6

"*Oh, Enid, this is far too unique to wear to something like class. I suggest we wait for a more special occasion, like a funeral.*" – Wednesday

The dialogue in Data 6 is taken from a scene in which Wednesday comments on Enid's birthday gift by stating that it is "far too unique" to be worn to an ordinary school day. This remark suggests that the clothing item is too striking or unconventional for a regular class setting. By proposing that the outfit be saved for "*a more special occasion, like a funeral*," Wednesday employs dark humor to emphasize how inappropriate the item feels to her for everyday use. The reference to a funeral introduces a morbid twist that is consistent with Wednesday's habitual blending of seriousness and macabre wit.

The scene takes place in their shared dorm room before they leave for school, a casual and familiar setting in which Enid enthusiastically encourages Wednesday to wear the gift. Wednesday's response is delivered in a dry, blunt, and slightly mocking tone, though it is not overtly malicious. Instead, it reflects her straightforward and sardonic manner of expressing opinions, as well as her unconventional perception of what constitutes a "*special occasion*." This dialogue highlights Wednesday's tendency to reinterpret social norms through dark references, offering sharp observations about ordinary situations in a way that is both humorous and unsettling.

Contextually, this dialogue reflects an unconventional expression of care that aligns with Wednesday's character. Rather than responding with enthusiasm or affectionate praise, Wednesday expresses her appreciation by emphasizing the gift's uniqueness and suggesting that it deserves a moment of particular significance. Her desire to reserve the gift for an event she personally considers meaningful indicates that she values Enid's effort and the sentiment behind the present. Love in this context is conveyed through respect for what is special and meaningful, even if that meaning is framed through dark humor.

This interaction also illustrates the nature of Wednesday and Enid's bond, which is built on mutual understanding and acceptance of each other's differences. Wednesday's comment suggests that she takes the gift seriously and does not want to trivialize it by wearing it casually. As such, the dialogue presents love as thoughtfulness and respect, expressed through honesty rather than sweetness. It reinforces the idea that affection within friendship does not always manifest through gentle language but can be conveyed through sincerity, humor, and an appreciation of individuality.

Data 7

Figure 7. Data 7

"*Thing, if you can hear me… if you die, I will kill you.*" – Wednesday

The dialogue in Data 7 occurs during a critical moment when Thing appears to

be severely injured or close to death. Wednesday's statement combines dark humor with an apparent threat, creating a paradoxical expression since it is logically impossible to kill someone who has already died. This contradiction introduces morbid irony that is characteristic of Wednesday's speech style and emotional expression.

The scene takes place in Eugene's tool shed, a setting marked by tension, urgency, and seriousness. Within this dramatic atmosphere, Wednesday's remark cuts through the intensity with a sharp and sardonic edge. Her tone is firm and direct, yet beneath the harsh wording lies a strong emotional weight. The statement reflects her refusal to accept the possibility of losing Thing and reveals her dependence on him as a constant companion and source of support.

Contextually, this dialogue expresses a deep and protective form of love. Although the words sound aggressive, they function as an expression of fear, attachment, and determination. Wednesday's choice of language demonstrates that her concern is genuine, even if it is communicated in a confrontational way. Her anger and threat operate as emotional defenses, masking vulnerability and distress over the potential loss.

This moment illustrates how love in *Wednesday* is often conveyed through intensity rather than tenderness. Wednesday's loyalty to Thing is shown through urgency, protectiveness, and emotional honesty. The dialogue highlights that love does not always appear as softness or reassurance; instead, it can be fierce, desperate, and driven by the fear of losing someone deeply valued. The bond between Wednesday and Thing is thus revealed as strong, intimate, and emotionally significant.

Data 8

Figure 8. Data 8

"Enid… the mark you have left on me is indelible. Anytime I grow nauseous at the sight of a rainbow or hear a pop song that makes my ears bleed, I'll think of you." – Wednesday

The dialogue in Data 8 is delivered during a farewell moment between Wednesday and Enid in their dorm room. The statement is rich in dark humor and irony, reflecting Wednesday's distinctive way of articulating emotional attachment. The term "*indelible*" signifies something permanent and impossible to erase, indicating that Enid has made a lasting impact on Wednesday's life. However, instead of framing this impact in traditionally sentimental terms, Wednesday associates it with sensory discomfort, such as nausea at the sight of rainbows and irritation at pop music.

These images contrast sharply with the conventional associations of rainbows and pop songs, which are typically linked to joy and positivity. The contrast reinforces the fundamental differences between Wednesday's dark worldview and Enid's bright, cheerful personality. The tone of the dialogue is dry, witty, and slightly mocking, yet it carries a strong emotional undercurrent. Beneath the sarcasm lies an acknowledgment of emotional closeness and the significance of their shared experiences.

Contextually, this dialogue represents a complex expression of love that combines honesty, irony, and emotional depth. Wednesday openly admits that Enid has left a permanent mark on her, suggesting admiration, attachment, and emotional influence. The unconventional imagery does not diminish the sincerity of the sentiment; rather, it reflects the authenticity of Wednesday's

feelings and her refusal to express affection in conventional terms.

This moment highlights a form of love rooted in mutual impact and acceptance. The relationship between Wednesday and Enid is portrayed as meaningful precisely because it is shaped by contrast and difference. Love, in this sense, is not defined by sweetness or overt warmth but by permanence, shared experience, and emotional resonance. The dialogue emphasizes that love can be expressed through humor, sharp language, and realism, while still remaining deeply genuine and significant.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study affirms that love in *Wednesday* is predominantly constructed through contextual meaning rather than explicit verbal expression. The findings clearly indicate that emotional bonds in the series are communicated mainly through situational cues, character actions, tone, and relational dynamics, emphasizing that meaning emerges from context rather than from literal language alone. Through a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in semantic theory, this research analyzed all eight episodes of *Wednesday* and identified 77 dialogue excerpts, with 40 data representing contextual meaning, thereby demonstrating the central role of implicit communication in the portrayal of love.

The analysis confirms that love in *Wednesday* extends beyond romantic relationships to include familial attachment, friendship, loyalty, protection, and emotional interdependence. These forms of love are consistently expressed through indirect strategies such as protective threats, restrained emotional responses, symbolic actions, and behavior shaped by specific narrative situations. This challenges dominant media representations that equate love solely with overt romantic discourse, and instead positions love as a socially and contextually negotiated meaning.

Furthermore, the character of Wednesday Addams functions as a key representation of contextualized love. Her emotional expressions are rarely articulated directly; rather, they are conveyed through dark humor, controlled language, loyalty-driven actions, and situational reactions that reveal underlying care and attachment. This demonstrates that harsh or ironic language can carry affectionate intent when interpreted within the appropriate context, reinforcing the necessity of contextual semantic analysis.

In conclusion, this study provides a significant contribution to semantic and media discourse by demonstrating that contextual meaning is essential in understanding emotional representation in contemporary visual narratives. By foregrounding implicit meaning and situational interpretation, this research offers a more nuanced framework for analyzing love in film and television, particularly within non-traditional and gothic storytelling contexts. The findings underline the importance of incorporating contextual semantic analysis in linguistic and cultural studies to achieve a comprehensive understanding of meaning construction in modern audiovisual texts.

Suggestion

This study provides an initial foundation for a more comprehensive investigation into the representation of love in Wednesday as well as in contemporary gothic-teen television narratives more broadly. Future researchers are encouraged to extend the scope of analysis beyond the eight episodes examined in this study in order to strengthen the validity and depth of the findings. The inclusion of subsequent seasons of Wednesday, if available, would enable a more sustained and longitudinal analysis of how love is constructed and negotiated as the narrative and characters develop. In addition, comparative studies may be conducted by examining earlier Addams Family adaptations, other Netflix teen dramas, or

gothic-teen series from non-Western contexts. Such comparative approaches would allow researchers to assess whether the love-related elements identified in this study are specific to Wednesday or representative of broader genre conventions within gothic-teen media.

To further support the development of this line of inquiry, several directions can be pursued from a linguistic perspective. One important step is the expansion of the current dataset of 77 dialogue excerpts into a more comprehensive collection of spoken language drawn from the entire series. By compiling official subtitle files, closed-caption transcripts, and, where possible, original scripts, future researchers can construct a detailed textual database. This expanded corpus would allow for more systematic analysis, including the generation of frequency lists, collocation patterns, and keyword-in-context (KWIC) searches. Such analyses would make it possible to observe how lexical items associated with love, such as care, protect, cherish, and adore, co-occur with other linguistic elements and how these patterns shift across episodes, characters, and narrative contexts.

Beyond quantitative or frequency-based observations, future studies should also incorporate more in-depth interactional and discourse-oriented analyses. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be employed to examine how power relations, gender ideologies, and family roles are embedded in love-related interactions, particularly within hierarchical relationships such as those between parents and children or between authority figures and peers. At the same time, Conversation Analysis (CA) offers a valuable framework for examining turn-taking practices, repair mechanisms, and speech acts such as promises, compliments, sarcasm, and threats, which function as indirect or contextual expressions of affection and attachment. Through such close analysis, researchers can better understand how dark humor and gothic sensibilities shape the implicit rules governing emotional expression in the series.

Viewing Wednesday as a site for examining the contextual construction of love in gothic-teen narratives opens significant opportunities for further academic exploration. The series presents a complex interplay of emotion, social identity, and genre-specific conventions that extends beyond surface-level storytelling. Future research that broadens the dataset and applies rigorous linguistic and discourse-based methodologies can contribute to a deeper understanding of how language functions to shape emotional experience in fictional worlds. Such studies will not only enrich interpretations of Wednesday itself but also offer valuable insights into wider cultural and media trends that influence how love is conceptualized and communicated in contemporary television.

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