

**DEVOTION IN NICHOLAS SPARKS'
THE NOTEBOOK (1996):
AN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**

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Abstract

The study described the devotion of Noah Calhoun, the main character in Nicholas Sparks' The Notebook. It focused on its structural elements and the devotion of Noah to deal with inferiority feeling and compensation, striving for superiority, fictional finalism, style of life, social interest, and creative self that were explored through an individual psychological approach. This research was qualitative research with the primary data source of the novel entitled The Notebook written by Nicholas Sparks in 1996. While the secondary data were other related sources. The data were collected through library research. The results showed that based on individual psychology analysis the major character, Noah Calhoun is psychologically affected. Noah fights hard to get his true love and shows her his devotion. He dedicates all of his life for Allie.

Keywords: *Devotion, The Notebook, Individual Psychological Approach.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mendeskripsikan dedikasi Nuh Calhoun, tokoh utama dalam karya Nicholas Sparks *the Notebook*. Penelitian ini memfokuskan pada elemen struktur novel dan pengabdian Nuh untuk menangani perasaan inferioritas dan kompensasi diri, perjuangan, gaya hidup, keperdulian sosial, dan kreatifitas dengan menggunakan pendekatan psikologi individual. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif. Sumber data primer adalah novel *The Notebook* ditulis oleh Nicholas Sparks pada tahun 1996. Sedangkan sumber data sekunder adalah sumber lain terkait. Data dikumpulkan melalui kajian pustaka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa berdasarkan analisis psikologi individual karakter utama, Noah Calhoun berjuang keras secara psikologis untuk mendapatkan cinta sejati dan menunjukkan pengabdiannya kepada wanita yang dicintainya. Dia berusaha keras dan mendedikasikan seluruh hidupnya untuk Allie.

Kata kunci: dedikasi, Notebook, pendekatan psikologis Individual

1. Introduction

People have three basic needs in their live, such as cloth, food, and house. But it will more complete if there is love every day. Without love, people cannot live better, because they cannot share their feeling to the others. Love makes people happy, sad, angry, laugh, and even it can make people cry. In Islam, love has comprehensive view, that is love of Allah, love of Prophet Muhammad, and the last is human love.

The literature and psychology have close relationship. The psychology discovers the human's behavior that is influenced by their experience. From the experience of human's life, it can give inspiration for author to produce a literary work. The novel as part literary work replicates some realities that happen in the human's life. It is induce the behavior of the character in the novel.

The Notebook is a romantic novel which is made in 1996 by Nicholas Sparks. It is based on true story and it is Nicholas Sparks' first published. The novel consists of 8 chapters in it. This novel is told on two levels, the first is the story a man, Noah reads from the notebook to a woman, Allie. The notebook tells how Noah and Allie meet, fall in love, lose each other, and then meet each other again. The second is the present day when Noah and Allie have grown old and live together. The end of their love is tragically altered by Allie's Alzheimer's diagnosis, but even that has no power over their love.

The Notebook is a fascinating novel. There are three reasons why the writer is interested to study this novel. First, this novel tells about the story of first love, which turns into true love. The novel conveys about how Noah the major character can maintain his first love, though many obstacles face him, from the first time when Noah and Allie met, Allie's mom

did not agree with their relationship, then Allie was engaged to Lon, and the last Allie was suffering from Alzheimer's. Noah never turned away from Allie and kept waiting for her until she was back to him again. Second, the setting of place in *The Notebook* novel takes place in a small southern town. That is New Bern, North Carolina. The writer concerns with that town because small town feed into a nostalgia that people have for the way things used to be. Simpler, less rushed, more community oriented things like that. The last is *The Notebook* has some crucial message in its story. Noah is a hard worker. That is why his former boss, Morris Goldman gave some inheritance for him. Another important message is to remove the selfishness. Earlier, Allie's mom, Anne didn't allow her to have relation with Noah because of societal influences. However, Anne is conscious that Allie is her daughter and she loves Noah more.

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates the problem statement of the study is "How is the Noah's devotion reflected in Nicholas Sparks' *The Notebook* Novel?"

Dealing with the this problem, the objectives of the study are to analyze *The Notebook* novel based on its structural elements and to analyze *The Notebook* novel by using an individual psychological approach.

To help the researcher arranges this paper, she uses two literature reviews as her references. They are *An Analysis Of the Main Characters in Nicholas Sparks Novel The Notebook by Psychological Approach (2006)* by Evvyvania Shinta Natalina B., and in Andina Dwi Kanti study entitled *Book Review of The Notebook written by Nicholas Sparks (2011)*.

2. Research Method

From the object of the study, the researcher takes Nicholas Sparks' *The Notebook* as the object of the study. She tries to analyze the major character's personality. The type of the study is library research. The data used on the research have been collected with the library research. It purposes to analyze the novel using individual psychological approach. Then, the type of the data and the data source are divided into two. Firstly, Primary data source that is called as the main data obtained from all the words, phrases and sentences in the novel itself, Sparks' *The Notebook* novel. Secondly, secondary Data Source, it is the supporting data taken from literary books, criticism, essays, articles, and journal and also taken from the internet or the other sources related to the novel. And the technique of collecting data in this research are as follows: 1) reading the novel repeatedly and understanding the content, 2) reading some other resources related to the novel, 3) giving marks to particular parts in the novel, which are considered important for the analysis, 4) taking notes for essential parts both in primary and secondary data sources, 5) classifying the data into categories and developing them into a good unity. The last is technique of the data analysis is descriptive analysis technique. The researcher will describe the structural elements of the novel using individual psychology theory by Alfred Adler. The collected data will be interpreted and analyzed in detail through individual psychology theory of literature in this case by showing the influence of *Noah Calhoun's* devotion in *The Notebook* novel: an individual psychological approach. Then drawing conclusion based on the analysis.

3. Findings and Discussion

The Notebook is a novel written by Nicholas Sparks. The novel tells us about

Noah's devotion for his love, Allie. No matter how many setbacks they faced, their love always carried them together again. From the first, Allie's parents disagree with their relationship because of social effect. Allie comes from an important family, while Noah is only a laborer. But, Noah works hard all day and shows them that his love is unpretending. The second is they face fourteen years of separation, but lastly they meet each other again. When Allie reads the newspaper and she sees Noah with his plantation home in the newspaper, Allie decides to find Noah in New Bern. They meet each other and remind their past together. Third, Noah should realize that Allie was engaged with Lon who comes from influential family. Lastly, Allie's diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease is the final setback. Conversely, not even it can separate the two of them as Allie's promise that she will return to Noah comes true.

From the character in his novel, Sparks concerns with the major character 'Noah Calhoun' who is a romantic person. Noah is a good and kind man. He is faithful, idealistic, strong, and good looking. He is the most appealing character who is unimpressed with striving for success no matter the charge. He is a hard worker too. He loves music, poetry, everything about literature. Moreover, he can play guitar well. He has a strong relationship with family and friends and he is respectful to both nature and authority. All these wonderful traits are ultimately that make Allie reject Lon for one spiritual love and adventure with Noah. Allie is a beautiful woman who comes from an honor family. She is tallented woman. She has engaged with a man who comes from an important family. He is Lon, a lawyer. But, Allie rejects life with Lon because she is not sure with him. Finally, she decides to choose Noah as her soulmate.

The novel takes place in a New Bern, North Carolina. It is a small southern town.

Sparks chooses that place because he feels that life there is different than in a big city. Small towns give a nostalgia that people have for the way things used to be. Simple, less hurried, and more community oriented. Sparks uses the fascinating places to make the novel more interesting. He applies more natural places, like Fort Totten Park, Croatan forest, river, etc. The structure of the novel is unique, it begins and ends in the present day, spends the majority of the story in 1946, and flashes back to 1932 and the years between.

Sparks uses a flash back story in the novel, but to make it easy to analyze, the plot will organize according to the traditional plot. Traditional plot is divided into three parts named the beginning, the middle and the end of the story. The story begins with Noah Calhoun as the major character reads the notebook that Allie writes about her life. The notebook tells about her life with Noah from the first time they meet until they can live together. In the middle of the story, Noah begins to have stroke. He is lifeless on and off for days. Two weeks later, he leaves the hospital. Reading Allie's promise in her final letter, it makes Noah rise. The end of the story is when Noah tries to meet Allie in her room. He sits on her bed then touches her face and strokes her hair. He kisses her lips, her cheeks, and then listens as she takes a breath. Allie remembers Noah. For at that moment, Noah feels her fingers reach for the buttons on his shirt and slowly, Allie begins to undo them one by one. Sparks arranged the plot into beautiful and nice way. Characters reveal these framed stories through their shared and private memories. He makes the movement of the story become systematically and respectively increasing moment-by-moment, which makes the story of the novel understandable for the readers.

The point of view is first person point of view in the first and the last chapters. The

narrator of *The Notebook* in the opening and closing chapters is Noah, but the narrator of the middle chapters provide limited, third person omniscient point of view. This technique is important because it allows to flow seamlessly from past to present and back again.

Sparks also supports his main idea in the novel using his own style in telling the story. He uses standard grammatical structure in his novel in order to make the reader easy to understand. He also uses the combination of sentence construction. Sometimes he applies long sentences to give more details and applies short sentences in the dialogue. The character of the words that he chooses are different from the other authors. He uses many literary words in his novel. He tells the story in a simple figurative language in order to make the reader easy to understand the story of the novel. In the figurative language, we can find symbols and metaphors. The symbols are the use of some unrelated idea to represent something else., for example: It is powerful, a symbol, a circle; this is a symbol of Noah's wedding ring. The metaphors are direct comparisons made between characters and ideas, for example: Noah can't hold back the night, and he can't keep the thief away; this metaphor describes the damage of Alzheimer's. We can find some words which are seldom used by another writer but the metaphors make the sentences of the story more beautiful. All parts of the novel are arranged systematically well.

Each parts of the novel support the main idea or theme; it is the basic idea of story in which the author portrays through conflicts of characters with other character or with life events. It happens because the writer ideas are constructed well and all of part of the novel supports each other. In *The Notebook* novel, the theme is "only the true love conquers all". If something is meant to be, it will happen. No

matter how many obstacles Noah and Allie face, their love always bring them together again.

The Notebook novel is a romantic novel. Nicholas Sparks depicts the devotion of the major and his striving for his love. By using the novel, he wants to take the reader to enter into the world of his novel. So, they can understand what the story is. He writes it systematically, it makes the readers easy to grasp the content. In *The Notebook* novel, Sparks also shows the great of faithfulness in love. It gives more inspirations for people, especially for teens.

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that individual psychological aspects give big effect to the major character, Noah. He as the major character shows his devotion and hard effort to get his love. The individual psychology aspects consist of the *inferiority feeling and compensation, striving for superiority, fictional finalism, style of life, social interest, and creative self*. Noah really loves her, and he never gives up to get his love, Allie.

Noah Calhoun is the major character of *The Notebook* novel. As the major character, he also has inferiority feeling. His inferiority feeling begins when he loves a woman but her parents dislike their relationship. They reject Noah because of the difference of social class and they hesitate that Noah will not give her a proper life. Noah is only a labor who works in lumberyard. Then, he knows that Allie engaged with Lon who is a lawyer. Lon comes from famous family in the state. The last is when Noah begins to get sick. He afraid he cannot read the notebook for Allie again and he confuses he cannot make Allie happy. He feels inferior about it and covers up his sense of inferiority by focusing on his status, wealth, and power.

In order to get a better life, Noah fights more. He strives for his life and love. He

makes a decision to leave his state and seeks for a new job to Norfolk and then to New Jersey. After that, Noah works in scrap yard which focuses in gathers scrap metals from the war. Noah's boss is a kind man. He is always fine to Noah. After eight years he works for him, Noah decides to quit. Noah interests to join the army in the World War. He spends his three years with the army and then come back to New Bern. Noah works hard all day in the hope he will get a good life and he can live with Allie forever. From the hard work, Noah gets legacy from his old boss. He begins to organize his life to be better.

Noah has two fictional finalisms. The first is he wants to have Allie and make her happy live with him. Although they have separated for fourteen years, but both of them still have the feeling of love. Noah never has relationship with the other women. He keeps his feeling to Allie. Although Noah knows that Allie has been engaged, he tries to make her believe Noah's true love. He has no reason to leave Allie. He will always wait for Allie although she has engaged. The second is to make Allie recover from her disease and then make her remember about him, her family, and her past. Noah tries hard every day to make her recall her memory. Noah never hopes more, but he always waits the miracle to come to him. He hopes he will live happily with Allie and his children.

Noah in the style of life is not excessive. Noah is an ordinary man, his life is so simple. Physically, he is tall, handsome, and he has light brown hair. He considers his life as a common man, nothing special in him. He dresses perfunctory; it is far from the luxury. He likes to wear jeans, shirt, jacket and boots. He looks like an artist. He has a harmonious voice. He likes music, he sings a song, and he plays guitar to remind him about his father. He reads poetry, and he also likes painting. He reads poetry for Allie. He is a romantic

person. In his live, he has a great love story but occasionally it looks like a tragedy story. It is because he must fight hard to face it.

In social interaction, Noah is sociable. He loves his family, his friends, and his neighbors. In his plantation house, he has two close neighbors, Martha and Gus. He regards them like his family. He likes to assist them and offers them a help. When he lives in the hospital, he also has many friends. He makes friends with the doctors, the official employees, and the other patients. He interacts with other people and likes to help others. He is a humble and easy to make new friends. He never discriminates others. That is why his friends always care and love him.

In order to get his goal of life, he has personal creativity. He has many strategies to achieve it. It comes from simple way to complicated way. He tries to meet Allie in her state, but he does not meet her because she has moved from there. He sends many letters for her, but actually her mother hides all of his letters, and there is no answer from her. And in the end after they meet again, Allie gets Alzheimers' disease. Noah tries hard to remind her about him by the way he reads the diary written by Allie every day.

Based on the facts above, Noah has a great devotion for his love, Allie. His devotion deals with his passion, intimacy, and dedication. Although he has many inferiority feelings, but he never gives up to fight his love. With his inferiority feelings, he tries hard to get his superiority. From that reason, it will conjure a sense to strive his superiority. Noah fights hard to cover his weaknesses to be perfect. Although he knows that he is only an ordinary man.

4. Conclusions and Implications

Based on the analysis, the writer would like to draw the following conclusion: *The Notebook* novel is a novel written by

Nicholas Sparks in 1996. He is one of the most celebrated writers in America. The novel sets in 1932, 1946, and the years between. It locates in a small town, New Bern, North Carolina. From the characters, Nicholas Sparks concerns with Noah Calhoun. The plot of the novel tells about the journey of Noah in a form of exposition story. Based on individual psychological approach, *The Notebook* novel represents Noah Calhoun who loves Allie devotedly. Noah's individual psychology is divided into six, namely *inferiority feeling and compensation, striving for superiority, fictional finalism, style of life, social interest, and creative self*. Noah's inferiors when Allie's parents disapprove of their relationship because of difference social class. Then he strives to be better and shows to her parents that he will make her daughter happy with him. Noah has goal of life; he wants to live with Allie and makes her day full of pleasure. Although Noah is an ordinary person, but in different way, he is a romantic person. He is a kind man, he loves and cares about his family, his friends, and others. He will fight hard to get his dream comes true. Finally, through the explanation above, it can be concluded that his feeling to Allie is too deep. He shows her his devotion. And their love will not destroy by the time.

The Notebook is a great novel to be read. The character and the theme are very attracting. The structural element of the novel is also offered in a good relation of work in building the story. The researcher realizes that this research is far from perfect because of her limited knowledge and understanding on the literature, but she attempts to build it as well as possible based on credible sources. The whole analysis stands for the researcher understanding of the novel based on an individual psychological approach. It's suggested to the other researchers who

use this novel to apply different approaches such as Maslow's humanism theory. The theory explains about the personal needs, want and strive. With humanism theory, the other researcher can study the five elements of personality such as: physiological needs, safety and security needs, belongingness and love needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. The personality of Noah in the novel is never far from the humanism, so it will give different results better than the study analyzed by the researcher.

There are several pedagogical implications that can be taken from this research : 1) this research can be used as a material.

The cultural aspect in this novel contains information and explanation about culture of America. It can be used as a teaching material about culture of America. 2) this research can be used to improve vocabulary. Every word in the novel can improve English skill and vocabulary of the student in understanding novel terminology. 3) the moral value in the cultural aspect of this research can be taken and applied as character education. This novel contains many moral values such as spirit, fight, and respect, the researcher can take this moral value and teach it to the student.

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