

THE REFLECTION OF SOCIAL CLASS CONFLICT IN “THE NOTEBOOK” NOVEL BY SPARKS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analysis of the novel entitled "The Notebook" by Nicholas Sparks. This novel talks about social class conflicts that occur in the United States. Where two suitors from different classes compete for the one woman they love. This thesis uses a sociological approach and analyzes the distribution of social class in this novel and the social class conflicts that occur in this novel. In this thesis, the writer uses sociology of literature theory and social class theory to analyze the novel. The method used in writing this thesis is a qualitative descriptive method. This class difference is created because of the existence of social class groups, where they classify their social class, namely the upper class and the middle class. Where the upper class does not want to accept the middle class into their class. Differences in social class are measured by power or wealth, privileges and prestige that affect the position, lifestyle, habits and behavior between the upper and middle classes so that the gap between the two classes is so striking. The conflict that occurs is the gap in social status in life or family relationships. This gap affects the thinking of upper families who cannot accept any class group lower than them to enter their family. The theory used is the theory of sociology with experts Max Weber and Karl Max.

Keywords: Sociology Approach, Social Class, Social Class Conflict

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a source or reference or reference for researchers of scientific work, so it cannot be taken for granted. In other words, through literature, a person or researcher can obtain valid and accountable information and data which is then used as a reference for writing scientific papers. Literature is often used as a reference or reference in making scientific writings, so that literature is very difficult to be separated from the world of education. Therefore, literature is often used by students to complete their final project or thesis. In fact, literature is also needed by lecturers who are conducting research or making journals. One of the studies related to literature is the novel. Novel is a long prose essay, containing the story of a

person's life with the people around him by highlighting the character and nature of each actor. In novels, generally, it starts from an important event experienced by the character of the story that later changes the fate of his life. Through the novel, the author can explore the behavior, attitudes, appearance, and human characters that can be observed from the joys, sorrows, struggles, successes, failures, and conditions of social class.

In daily life cannot be separated from various kinds of problems and in this universe one of the problems that exist usually find in around us is poverty. Talking about poverty is not a strange thing to hear and it is taboo in the modern era until now. This economic factor are the problems that most allow the occurrence of social

class disparities in society. In fact, in some parts of this world social class is still the benchmark for the standard of life of a certain person or group and social class is not only talk about materialism but it's also about identity of someone of family.

According to Weber (1864), Social class can be divided into three parts, they are Upper Class, Middle Class, and Lower Class and it is affecting the way a person or group of people perceives others. The differences like this that often lead to conflict between fellow humans. The conflict that causes by social class is still happen until this modern era and that's the reason that makes researcher attracted to analyze about social class and the conflict of social class itself. The researcher used the sociological approach as the shape of this research and needs an approach to analyze this novel. According to Weber (1964), this sociological approach arrived as a casual explanation of its course and effect.

Novel "The Notebook" (1996) by Nicholas Sparks is chosen as the data source of this research. Researcher found that there are many phenomena indicate of the problem of social class in this novel. The setting of the novel is in New Bern, North Carolina of United State and it was a novel that adapted into a popular film with the same name, in 2004. This was Nicholas Sparks' first published novel in October 1996 with Warner Books and Grand Central Publishing and Time Warner Group Book as a publisher. Many people are interesting with this novel, this novel was on The New York Times Best Seller list as a hardcover best seller for more than a year and in its first week of release. This novel has also managed to get various prestigious nominations such as Teen Choice Award, Golden Tailer Award, Golden Satellite Award and

Apoleon Dynamite Award. Even the adaptation of the novel into a film was nominated for the best-selling box office in that era. Other things that make this novel very interesting to read is Nicholas Sparks as a writer of The Notebook Novel said he was inspired to write this novel cause it by true story of his wife's grandparents. He tries to express the long romantic love of the couple who had been married for over 60 years when he met them (Wikipedia, 2021).

The Notebook novel was telling dramatically in 239 pages that talks about love and romance story that two suitors to get one woman. The two suitors come from a different status or class each other. Related to the difference in social status between them also causes conflicts that also involve the people around them.

Research Question

After the writer reads the novel carefully, the writer found some interest problem. The problem which are going to be investigated in this study are types of Social Classes that are found in "The Notebook" by Nicholas Spark, the influence Social Class Conflict to marriage as reflected in "The Notebook" novel by Nicholas Sparks at that era, the condition women in that era as found in "The Notebook" novel by Nicholas Sparks, the types of Social Classes Conflict that are found in "The Notebook" novel by Nicholas Sparks.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature and sociology are reflections of the relationship between humans and the environment. There is a way to interact with the environment, it is related to real life. Sociology can be studied as a literary fact and its impact on the social environment. Sociologists such as Alan Swingwood, Karl Marks, Max Weber and others

agree that sociology is an institution and sociology. Sociology is related to literature unlike any other social science. Sociology is interested in almost all aspects of human social life. Sociology can also be defined as a theme-focused social science which means that Humans are attached to their interactions and actions in certain social contexts (Weber, 1997).

Related to the topic, the researcher used the theory by Max Weber to describe the types of Social Classes and the theory by Karl Max to explain about the Social Class Conflict. Social class is the division of classes in society based on certain criteria, both according to religion, education, economic status, descent and others. Every society always has certain awards in the society concerned and every society must have or have something that it values. Something that is appreciated is actually an embryo or seed that grows a multi-layered system in that society. Higher respect for certain things, will place them in a higher position than other things. However, the term class also does not always have the same meaning, although in essence it embodies a system of basic positions in society. The sum of the classes in society is called the class system. This means that all people and families who are aware of their position are known and recognized by the general public. Social class can be defined as a stratum (layer) of people who are the same in the continuum (series of units) of social status.

According to Weber (1978) The resulting type of social class is the 'dominant group of entrepreneurs and property owners'; (Upscale) bourgeois patty; 'workers with formal credentials'; (middle class) and 'those who lack them and whose only aid is their labor'; (lower class or working class). In England, the upper classes

were aristocracy and royalty, with wealth playing a less important role in class status.

The differences that occur often lead to conflicts between classes. According to Weber (1978), Social Class divided into 3 types, Upper Class, Middle Class, and Lower Class. Each social class has characteristics that limit the social class space. the upper class is characterized by social status characteristics related to financial, family background, and land ownership in the concept of feudalism. The middle social class becomes the bridge over the three social classes. while the lowest social class is at the bottom class point. the presence of these social classes triggers conflicts between each class. Conflicts between social classes, namely conflicts that occur because of differences in interests between social classes. Social conflict arises when differences between individuals or groups in society are not neutralized or ignored. Social conflict does not happen by itself. although the main cause of social conflict is differences in society such as conflicts of economic interest. According to Susan (2009, p 22) that explained in the book of *Sosiologi Konflik*, Karl Marx's theory sees society as an arena of inequality that can trigger conflict and social change and class conflicts that occur in society related to the existence of groups in power and control. Conflicts or conflicts between social classes, namely conflicts that occur due to differences in interests between social classes. According to Marxism, there are four factors that raised the Conflict of Social Class in society, they are:

2.1 Class Structure in Society

Social structure is a level in society. One type of concrete example of social structure is the caste system. Social structure can be interpreted as a

social order that exists in society which is also a network of basic social elements.

2.2. Conflicting Economic Interest Between Different Classes

According to Marxism because of the belief that society is based on social class relations and that those from different class groups have opposing interests. Economic class is one of the few parts of the social dynamics that are common in the social order of everyday society. Conflict can trigger the process towards creating social balance.

2.3 Classes are naturally antagonistic by Virtue of Their Interests.

According to Marxists, this conflict is implicit in every interaction and conflict does not exist only when it openly manifests itself in action. the weaker party in class conflict may be powerless or too afraid to openly disclose the conflict. Rowthorn (1980).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research design is qualitative research. Qualitative research can be understood as a research procedure that utilizes descriptive data, in the form of written or spoken words from observable people and actors. Qualitative research is conducted to explain and analyze phenomena, events, social dynamics, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of a person or group of something. In other words, this type of research cannot use quantitative methods. In this research, the researchers found problem data that can be obtained from theory, facts, and data taken from a literary work, namely novels. Object of the Research was Social Class Conflict in “The Notebook” novel by Nicholas Sparks. This research related to the Social Class and Social Class Conflict. The

researcher used the theory of Max Weber and Karl Marx. There are two methods of collecting data, The primary data of this research is the one of Novel by Nicholas Sparks which are taken from his book entitled “The Notebook” published in October 1996. To enrich the material and complete the research, the researcher uses secondary data. Consistent with Lofland and Lofland (1984:47) in (Lexy Meleong, 2007.p.15) stated that secondary data is additional information and sources that support research. Secondary data from this research are all written works that support research to improve information and understanding, including the Indonesian version of “The Notebook”, applied theory books, qualitative research methodology books, and several internet sources.

4. RESEACH ANALYSIS AND FINDING

In this study, the researcher divided into two parts. The first part, the researcher analyzes the intrinsic elements, and the second part is the extrinsic elements. According to Moleong (2005:6), qualitative research is research that intends to understand the phenomena of what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, etc. holistically, and by means of descriptions in the form of words and language. a special context that is natural and by utilizing various natural methods. In the book "Theory of Literature", Welleck and Warren classify two types of elements, namely intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements are the building blocks of the short story. The intrinsic element is an important element that should not be missed in literary works. The components consist of themes, characters or characterizations, storyline, setting,

language style, point of view, and mandate. While extrinsic elements are elements that are outside the short story, including norms that apply in society to fulfill their lives. Extrinsic elements become an important part for the author, in making a story. In analyzing this research, the researcher uses intrinsic elements, namely analyzing the elements of literary works as described Welleck R and Warren A (1977) who states that study of literature departed from a reasonable interpretation and literary analysis itself.

4.1 Preliminary Analysis

In this section, the researcher discusses the analysis of fictional elements in the novel "The Notebook" by Nicholas Sparks. The elements of fiction include characters, plot, setting, point of view, and theme. The building blocks of prose fiction can basically be divided into three parts, namely the facts of the story, the means of the story, and the theme. Facts are things that will be told in a work of fiction. Facts of the story include plot, characters, and setting. Next, the researcher explains the initial analysis of each novel in the section below.

4.1.1 Character

Characters are people who play a role in the story. Meanwhile, the notion of characterization is the technique or way the author describes and develops the characters in the story. The characterization of the characters in the story is usually divided into three characters, namely the protagonist, the antagonist, and the tritagonist.

1. Noah Calhoun

The narrator and initial protagonist and as the main character, Noah is a kind and kind man who falls in love with Allie fourteen years before the

novel opens. He has never forgotten his first love and is overwhelmed with how much he still loves her even he knows she came back just to say goodbye because he is engaged now. they love each other very much, but almost lose each other due to social influence.

2. Allison Nelson

She is a young woman who comes from a rich and respectable family, she spent a beautiful summer with Noah when they were young but was forced to leave when her parents disagreed. He meets Lon and gets engaged to him, but something in him makes him return to Noah to make sure he doesn't do anything wrong. Allie is also the protagonist in this novel. he loved Noah very much. because of his love for Noah. she decided to overcome the fear in her mind and decided to choose her own life partner

3. Lon Hamilton

He was Allie's fiancé, who fought for him in the end, but it was too late. He had let his career interfere with any hopes he might have of winning it for himself and in the end, he let it go to find what his heart really wanted.

4. Anne Nelson

Anne is one of the antagonists in this novel. She is Allie's mother and so disapproves of her being with Noah that she never gives the letter Noah sends to her daughter. She comes to warn them that Lon is on his way to confront them both, and he ends up giving Allie the letters. As he left, he whispered to Allie that he had to follow his heart.

5. John Nelson

Anne's Husband, which mean a father of Allie Nelson. He is a very rich and respected man in the city. that's why he wants his daughter to get

married with the same level as their family. He is also the antagonist person in this novel.

6. Fin & Sarah

Noah's best friends from High School, they introduced Noah and Allie on the summer after Noah graduates from high school.

7. Morris Goldman

Noah's old boss from up north, that gave him a job in a scrap yard that want to offer a part of his to Noah, but he died before it. However, his lawyers gave Noah a big check to buy and fix the house.

8. Gus

Noah's best friend and his neighbor. She loves Noah secretly, until she knows the fact that Noah never stops misses and waiting for his first love Allie.

4.1.2 Setting

The setting or setting in the short story includes place, time, and events. Setting is used to strengthen the reader's belief in the course of a story. The setting in a story can be factual or imaginative. The setting of this novel is on New Bern, North Carolina, 1932, 1946, and the present day at Creekside Extended Care Facility.

4.1.3 Point of View

Point of view is a characteristic or strategy used by the author in telling the story. The point of view consists of first, second, and third person. It is also possible that the author uses the point of view of the person in the story. The point of view based on this novel is the first-person point of view.

4.1.4 Theme

The theme is the basis or meaning of a story, the theme is a certain view of life or certain feelings that form or

build the basis of the main idea of a literary work, and all fiction must have a basis or theme that is the target goal. An author presents the themes in a literary work in several ways. A writer can express a theme through his main character's feelings about the subject he has chosen to write about. Similarly, themes are presented through the thoughts and conversations of various characters. In addition, the experience of the main character in the journey of a literary work gives us an idea about the theme. Finally, the actions and events that occur in the narrative are the consequences in determining the theme.

4.2 Research Finding

In this study, the researcher divided into two parts. The first part, the researcher of the literary work analyzes the intrinsic elements and the second part is the extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements are the building blocks of the short story. The intrinsic element is an important element that should not be missed in literary works. The components consist of themes, characters or characterizations, storyline, setting, language style, point of view, and mandate. While extrinsic elements are elements that are outside the short story, including norms that apply in society to fulfill their lives. Extrinsic elements become an important part for the author, in making a story and in analyzing this research, the researcher uses intrinsic elements

4.2.1 The types of Social Classes found in "The Notebook" Novel by Nicholas Sparks

1. Upper Class

The term upper class refers to a group of individuals who occupy the highest place and status in society. These people are considered the richest, being above the middle and

lower classes in the social hierarchy. This class lives at the highest level of the social ladder above the middle class and lower class, they generally have the highest status in society and have a lot of wealth. Because of this, they also carry considerable power politically, economically, and financially. According to Weber (1978) The resulting types of social classes are the 'dominant entrepreneurial and propertied groups'; (Upper Class) the petty bourgeoisie; 'workers with formal credentials'; (the middle class) and 'those who lack them and whose only asset is their labor power'; (the lower class or the working class). The first class that the researcher found in the novel of "The Notebook" by Nicholas Sparks is Lon Hammonds. The background of his family (his father) was the most powerful and influential in the state and have a business clearly shows that he comes from Upper Class.

2. Middle Class

The middle class is a class of people who are in the middle of a social hierarchy such as between the Upper Class and Lower Class. According to Max Weber (1978: p.302), The middle-class is defined as consisting of professional owners who share a culture of domesticity and sub-urbanity and a lot of relative security against social critics. Based on the analysis that the author did, there was no middle class in this novel.

3. Lower Class

The group of people below the middle class, who has the lowest level or social position due to low income, lack of skills or education, and others such as the working class. Lower class in the United States refers to individuals who are at, or near, the lower end of the socioeconomic hierarchy. The third types of classes

that the researcher found in the novel of "The Notebook" by Nicholas Sparks is Noah Calhoun. The main character of this novel, Noah Calhoun is in the Lower-Class status. He must work really hard every day to his life, and it is shown that he came from the Lower class where this social class is discriminated against from various parties. Noah Calhoun comes from Lower Class according to his old and his new job as a laborer. The last quotation above more convincing the statement of Noah Calhoun comes from Lower Class.

4.2.2 The Social Class Conflict that are found in "The Notebook" Novel by Nicholas Sparks

Social conflict arises when differences between individuals or groups in society are not neutralized or neglected. Social conflict does not happen by itself. although the main cause of social conflict is differences in society such as conflicts of economic interest. Social conflict is a conflict between community members that is comprehensive in life. Conflict comes from the Latin verb "configere". Conflicts often turn violent, especially when efforts to manage conflict are not carried out seriously by the parties involved. Because conflict has always been a social and political part of human life as well as a driving force in socio-political dynamics and changes. In the general Indonesian dictionary compiled by Poerwadarminta (1976), conflict means disagreement or strife. The contradiction itself can appear in the form of a conflict of ideas or physicality between two opposing parties. According to Karl Marx (1818), Conflict theories emphasize looking at the historical and events in a society in terms of structural power divisions, such as social class. There are four elements in Marx's view of the Social Class Conflict:

4.2.2.1 Class Structure in society

Social structure is a level in society. One type of concrete example of social structure is the caste system. In this novel, the researcher found and indicated the conflict that related to the Class Structure in society from the quotations below:

“Like them, he'd been raised the way, and in the caste system of the south, family name and accomplishments were often the most important consideration in marriage.” (Chapter 3 p.11)

From those quotations above, can be concluded that the Upper Class tend to group the people around them according to social caste. This is the causes that Allie's parent forced her daughter to end off her relationship with Noah who is from a different social class with them and more agreed with Allie's relationship with Lon who is from the upper class like them. It can be concluded that there is a social circle that formed structure of society in this novel. Circle that separated the social classes.

4.2.2.2 Conflicting Economic Interest between Different Classes

It is undeniable that social and social conflicts are closely related to one's status, both in terms of economic conditions, family background etc. According to Weber (1864 – 1920) He argued that class referred to economic interests. It was a quantifiable economic position – group that share a common set of life – chances and circumstances. According to Marxism because of the belief that society is based on social class relations and that those from different class groups have opposing interests. In this novel, the researcher finds and shows conflicts related to the Conflicts of Economic

Interests Between Different Classes in society, it can be seen from the quotations below:

“She had to make excuses to her parents whenever they wanted to see each other. It wasn't they didn't like him; it was that he was from different classes, too poor, and they would never approve if their daughter became serious with some on like him.” (Chapter 3 p.15)

From the quotation above, conflicting of Economic Interest between Different Classes was happened in this novel. According to Wells (1979), all societies have structural power sharing and resource inequalities that lead to groups with conflicting interests. It can be concluded that the Economic Interest between social classes is important for Upper Class. Allie's parents know Noah is kind and they like him, but the only think that makes them didn't like Noah is because the different classes between them.

4.2.2.3 The Classes are Naturally Antagonist by Virtue of Their Interests

According to Marxists, this conflict is implicit in every interaction and conflict does not exist only when it openly manifests itself in action. the weaker party in class conflict may be powerless or too afraid to openly disclose the conflict. Rowthorn (1980). Weaknesses in the lower classes are often exploited by the upper classes. so often the upper class acts antagonistic. researcher finds and demonstrates conflicts related to Classes who are Naturally Antagonistic based on Their Interests in society from the quotations below:

“She said to me, ‘I'm sure you think that I don't understand what you're going through, but I do. It's

just that sometimes, our future id decided by what we are, as opposed to what we want.' I remember being really hurt when she said that." (Chapter 4 p.35)

From the quotation above, it can be concluded that Noah feels hurt with what Allie's mother said to him. to separate them, even his mother had the heart to hurt Noah's heart with her words. besides Noah, Allie is someone who also feels hurt because her parents' view of her relationship with Noah must be based on the same class. It tells that that situation between them also hurt Allie. She was faced with doubts that made him unsure of her decision. She hesitated with what she really wants in her heart because she won't hurt everyone. She realizes that her parents were very happy with her relationship with Lon. Allie's parents weren't just like that with Noah. they even apply this principle of life to their daughter. Allie's hobby is painting, it can make her express the beauty of the natural surroundings. But she had to stopped paint because her parents assumed that the things that she did with it are useless for her life.

5. CONCLUSION

After analyzing this thesis, the writer comes to the part which consists of conclusions. Its conclusions are drawn based on the research problem and the results of the analysis. The main conflict in this novel is raised because of differences of social class. The upper class rejects the presence of other classes in their environment. one of the reasons was because they thought that the other classes under them just wanted to take advantage of the situation to extort and spend all the money and treasures of the upper class. Based on the conclusion above, the result of the research can direct suggestions for some following parties.

After the researcher finished this research, the researcher would like to convey some suggestions to the readers. First, the researcher hopes that the reader will know the basics of a literary work, be it short stories or novels. The readers also gain an understanding of sociological theory and can relate literature to sociology.

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