

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

The Last Song is a romantic tragedy novel by American author Nicholas Sparks. *The Last Song* is Sparks' fourteenth published novel (fifteenth published book), and was written specifically as the basis for the film adaptation by the same name. It was released on September 8, 2009 in United States by Grand Central Publishing. There are 405 pages and 37 chapter in this novel.

Nicholas Sparks is an American screenwriter and novelist, born on 31st December 1965. He was the middle of three children. Sparks wrote his first novel in 1985 which never got published and another one in 1989, also not published. Sparks experimented with various careers trying to fit in but didn't succeed.

Nicholas Spark is living in North Carolina with his wife and five children. Being a religious man and firm believer in God, Sparks constantly contributes to various charities and schools. He also promotes writers by funding different scholarships, intern programs and fellowships. Sparks also started 'MFA' that is a creative writing program at the university he studied in (University of Notre Dame). He donated more than ten million dollars for the building of a Christian International School. Sparks wrote one of his best-known stories, *The Notebook*, over a period of six months at age 28. It was

published in 1996 by Warner Books. He followed with the novels *Message in a Bottle* (1998), *A Walk to Remember* (1999), *The Rescue* (2000), *A Bend in the Road* (2001), *Nights in Rodanthe* (2002), *The Guardian* (2003), *The Wedding* (2003), *True Believer* (2005) and its sequel, *At First Sight* (2005), *Dear John* (2006), *The Choice* (2007), *The Lucky One* (2008), *The Last Song* (2009), *Safe Haven* (2010), *The Best of Me* (2011), and *The Longest Ride* (2013), as well as the 2004 non-fiction memoir *Three Weeks With My Brother*, co-written with his brother Micah.

(<http://www.famousauthors.org/nicholas-sparks>)

The Last Song tells about family life with many problems. The story begins when the main character of this novel Ronnie Miller, is sent by her mother, Kim to spend the summer after graduation with her brother, Jonah, to visit her father, Steve. Ronnie Miller is seventeen years old girl that has broken home family because of the divorce between her parents. She has bad relationship with her father, Steve. Steve is a former Juilliard professor and left New York City for his childhood home, Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina because of his divorce with Kim. Ever since, Ronnie has refused to talk to him or to play their shared passion, the piano, and becomes a rebellious clubber.

Contrary with his sister, Jonah immediately bonds with Steve over a stained glass window that Steve has been recreating for the local church after the original burned down in a mysterious arson. Knowing this condition, however, Ronnie is hostile. At her request, Steve boards up his beloved piano

and instead pursues his search for God's presence. He also begins writing a piano composition using a piano owned by the church, but struggles with its ending.

The conflict in this novel is when Ronnie didn't stay with her father in the summer. Ronnie is so angry towards her father because of the divorce, and she doesn't know if she can ever forgive him for that. Steve is a great dad, he is a very positive person the opposite of his daughter. He loves and cares Ronnie so much and he wants her to go to Juilliard because she got a scholarship for being able to play the piano so well.

Day by day, the relationship between Steve and Ronnie begins well. Steve surprises Ronnie by believing her when she tells him she was framed, and she begins to soften towards him. Steve shows Ronnie, a vegetarian and animal lover, a Loggerhead Sea Turtle nest Jonah found near their home. Ronnie vows to protect the endangered creatures, bringing her back in contact with Will, an aquarium volunteer. They soon fall in love and spend several blissful weeks together. The romance between Will and Ronnie is troubled. Will's mother and his ex-girlfriend try to take part between them. It is also about the coming end of summer, who brings Will to leave for Vanderbilt University and Ronnie's shoplifting trial.

The Last Song novel has many pro and cons reader opinions. The first reader opinion comes from Jennifer Wardrip. She said that "As with all of Mr. Sparks' books, expect tears, joy, love, and ultimately redemption and forgiveness for many of the characters. The wonderful characters in the Last

Song will stay with you long after the final page is turned".  
<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6400090-the-last-song>). The second is Kristi said that "The change in narration for each chapter was something that really made this novel all the more better for me. Not only did you get inside the head of Ronnie, but her dad, and Will, and even crazy Marcus. I definitely think that helps as a reader to become more involved in the story and have a tighter bond with it's characters. Overall it was just a great book".  
<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6400090-the-last-song>).

Beside the pro reader opinion, the novel also has cons reader opinion. The cons-reader opinion is Nicole said that "This book made me mad. The main character, a spoiled 17-years-old, has been shop-lifting, staying out all night, and disrespecting her mother. Mom only knows about the last part and decides that darling daughter should spend the summer with the father that walked out on the family 3 years earlier. Upon arriving at Dad's place in NC, darling daughter takes off (not run away, but certainly coming and going as she pleases) and immediately pals around with kids she thinks are like her. I can only imagine that the book and movie end with darling daughter and father reuniting over the last song they sing together, but I didn't stick around to see that Disney moment".

<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6400090-the-last-song>)

Based on the background and history of this novel, there are some reasons why the writer chooses and analyses Nicholas Sparks's novel. First, the novel tells about the life of a family with all of the problems that make the

readers be interested to read this novel. It is because the theme of the novel is generally found in our daily life.

The second is all of the characters in the novel have unique personality and felt real based on the interaction between another character and situation. It makes the reader want to know the story until the last chapter. The author of this novel tells a story from many points of view and also gives background information on the events in the novel and the characters that important to the development of the plot.

The third is the setting of the novel taken place in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina during the present. It is a small beach town that is very close with the sea where the main character's dad (Steve) lives. The main character (Ronnie) and her younger brother (Jonah) also use this place to stay for the summer.

The last reason is the story of the novel teaches to forgive ourself, learn from our mistakes, and grow as a human being. Beside that, we also learn about love and affection.

From the reasons above, the writer is interested to analyses defense mechanism based on the novel by using psychoanalytic approach. So, the writer decides to carry out a study entitled: **Ego Defense Mechanism Reflected In Nicholas Spark's *The Last Song* (2009): A Psychoanalytic Perspective.**

## B. Literature Reviews

In this research, the writer describes the previous study that relevant with this study. There is literature review concerning with *The Last Song Novel* by Nicholas Sparks, written by Mahfudho (UMS, 2013) with her research paper entitled *Growth of Veronica Miller's Personality in Julie Anne Robinson's The Last Song Movie (2010)*. In her research, she concluded that the power of love changes hatred, misunderstanding causes hatred, and hatred ends in regret along with the growth of Veronica Miller's personality. While in this research, the researcher focuses on ego defense mechanism used by the major character, Ronnie to solve her problem. This research is analyzed by using psychoanalytic perspective according to Sigmund Freud theory of ego defense mechanism.

The issue of this research is defense mechanism used by major character of the novel to cover up her feeling as the way to solve her problem. It is analyzed by using psychoanalytic perspective. So, the writer is interested to analyse defense mechanism based on the novel by using psychoanalytic approach. So, the writer decides to carry out a study entitled: **Ego Defense Mechanism Reflected In Nicholas Sparks' *The Last Song* (2009): A Psychoanalytic Perspective.**

## C. Problem Statement

The problem statement of the study is "how Ego Defense Mechanism is reflected in Nicholas Sparks' *The Last Song* (2009)".

#### **D. Limitation of the Study**

The researcher focuses in analyzing the ego defense mechanism reflected in Nicholas Spark's *The Last Song* Novel by using a psychoanalytic perspective.

#### **E. Objectives of the Study**

In this research, the objectives of the study are:

- a. To describe *The Last Song* (2009) based on structural elements of the novel.
- b. To analyze Ego Defense Mechanism reflected in Nicholas Sparks' *The Last Song* (2009) based on *Psychoanalytic Perspective*.

#### **F. The Benefit of the Study**

The study is expected to give benefits as follow:

##### **1. Theoretical Benefits**

The result of the study is arranged to give positive contribution to the development of the large of knowledge, particularly the literary study of Defense Mechanism reflected on Nicholas Sparks' *The Last Song*, especially a psychoanalytic perspective.

##### **2. Practical Benefits**

The study is expected to enrich the knowledge of literary study, particularly, among the writer and the students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta that are interested with literary study on the novel in psychoanalytic perspective.

## **G. Research Method**

### **1. Type of the study**

The writer uses qualitative research in this study. It purposes to analyze the Ego Defense Mechanism reflected in Nicholas Sparks' *The Last Song* using psychoanalytic perspective.

### **2. Object of the study**

The object of the study is Ego Defense Mechanism reflected in Nicholas Sparks' *The Last Song* (2009). It is analyzed using psychoanalytic perspective.

### **3. Type of the Data and Data Source**

There are two types of data sources that are needed to do this study; they are primary data sources and secondary data sources.

#### **a. Primary data sources**

The primary data source is *The Last Song* (2009) by Nicholas Sparks.

#### **b. Secondary data sources**

The secondary data sources are the other sources related with this study such as books, website and other source that support this study.

### **4. Technique of Data Collection**

In this study, the writer uses some steps of collecting the data:

- a. Reading the novel frequently.
- b. Determining the main point of the novel that will be analyzed.



- c. Taking some notes of the important part from primary and the secondary data source.
- d. Selecting the data, by eliminating the information that are not relevant and search the information that relevant support the topic of the research.

### **5. Technique of the Data Analysis**

The technique that writer used in analyzing the data is descriptive qualitative analysis of content. The analysis concerns with the structural elements and analysis of the novel on Ego Defense Mechanism reflected in Nicholas Sparks' *The Last Song* (2009) by psychoanalytic perspective.

### **H. Paper Organization**

Research paper organization is conducted to give a clear guidance in reading and understanding the content of the study. The research paper will be divided into five chapters. Chapter I is introduction which consists of background of the study, literature review, problem statement, objective of the study, limitation of the study, benefit of the study, and research method. Chapter II is underlying theory. It covers the notion of Psychoanalytic, the notion of Defense Mechanism, the Elements of Personality, and Theoretical Approach. Chapter III is structural analysis which includes the character and characterization, plot, setting, point of view, theme and style. Chapter IV will be the psychoanalytic analysis and the ego defense mechanism according in the novel. Chapter V is Conclusion and Suggestion.