THE MEANING OF TRUE HAPPINESS OF JOHN TYREE REFLECTED IN NICHOLAS SPARKS “DEAR JOHN” (2006): AN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

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by:

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Abstrak


Kata kunci: kebahagiaan, teori psikologi individu, dear john, Nicholas Sparks

Abstract

The major problem of this research is how John Tyree finds the meaning of true happiness in *Dear John* novel by Nicholas Sparks. The researcher uses an individual psychological approach by Alfred Adler. The objectives of the study are: 1) to describe how John Tyree find the meaning of true happiness in *Dear John* novel, 2) to describe the problems affecting the psychology of John Tyree in *Dear John* novel, and 3) to explain the definition of true happiness in *Dear John* novel. The researcher uses qualitative method. The researcher uses two data sources, namely: primary and secondary. The primary data source is *Dear John* novel by Nicholas Sparks. Then, the secondary data source is from websites, articles, biography of the author and some books that support the research. The technique of analyzing data is descriptive qualitative. Based on the analysis, the researcher found the meaning of true happiness by John Tyree in *Dear John* novel. The researcher concluded that the real happiness is giving priority to the happiness of those we love before our happiness, and willing to accept the risk of any kind has become our choices.

Keyword: happiness, an individual psychological theory, dear john, Nicholas Sparks
1. INTRODUCTION

Every human being has the meaning of life. This is because every human being has a different understanding of life. But, “Much of what human being do is done in the service of belongingness.” (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Unconsciously, humanity works everyday to find their happiness. Happiness is largely found when a subject is with other beings.

One of the earliest discussions belongingness was clarified by Sigmund Freud. He argued that the need of belongingness derives from the need of sex and filial bonds. Whereas, Alfred Adler regards the need of belongingness as a subject seeking a sense of superiority to counter a personal sense of inferiority. Carl Jung, a former Freudian, also holds the same view with Adler. He explains humanity belongingness as seeking superiority from divine interventions as an example of reaching out to a richer and more fulfilling purpose in life (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Everyone wants a happy life, but sometimes the problems come. Therefore, every people need for an understanding of the meaning of life itself. Searching for an understanding of the meaning of life someone will be tested with a variety of problems that will make someone discover the meaning of happiness is. Nicholas Sparks manages to make a very interesting novel to be researched.

Nicholas Charles Sparks (born December 31, 1965) is an American novelist, screenwriter and producer. The twelfth novel by Nicholas Sparks is Dear John. Sparks has created another popular novel and some of them have received awards and even filmed. The novel has the ability to convey complex issues. Dear John has a storyline that is favored by many people, the love story of a military member is able to suck a lot of attention.(www.nicholassparks.com)
John had some problems in his life, starting when he was left by his mother as a child, up to the time he met with a beautiful student named Savannah Lynn Curtis. Relationships that begin from the summer romance turns into eternal love. It makes Savannah be willing to wait for John to finish the job, who promised to return and marry her. But none would have thought the events of 9/11 in New York that changed the world and their love. At the time, as a soldier, John felt that it is his duty to re-enlist. Unfortunately, a long separation makes Savannah fall in love with someone else.

Happiness is how you feel, not how you do it. Actually John Tyree proved that happiness is not just when he is feeling. However, when he saw his loved ones happy, automatically he will be happy too. John gave happiness to others and be grateful for what God gave to him.

The main problem in this research is how John Tyree found the meaning of true happiness through Dear John novel. Dealing with the problem statement above, the objectives of the study are as follows: 1) to explain the definition of true happiness according to the Dear John novel, 2) to describe the problems affecting the psychology of John Tyree in the Dear John novel, and 3) to describe how John Tyree finds the meaning of true happiness in the Dear John novel.

In this research, the writer limits the focus of the study and analyzes the search of the meaning of true happiness of John Tyree in Nicholas Sparks Dear John novel (2006) based on Psychological Approach. The basic of individual psychology proposed by Adler, there are six element: 1) Fictional Finalism, 2) Inferiority Feeling, 3) Striving for Superiority, 4) Style of life, 5) Social Interest, 6) Creative Power.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher analyzes Dear John novel by using descriptive qualitative research. The type of this research is descriptive qualitative
research, because it does not need statistic data to get the fact. There are two objects of the study in this research, first material object of this research is *Dear John* novel which is written by Nicholas Sparks. Second, formal object is focus on a personality of the major character called John Tyree that struggled for his happiness in *Dear John* novel. It analyzed by using An Individual Psychological Theory by Alfred Adler and it discusses the meaning of true happiness in the novel.

There are two types of data sources which are needed to conduct this research, they are primary data source and secondary data source. The primary data source of the study is *Dear John* novel by Nicholas Sparks which is published in 2006. The sources of secondary data are taken from other resources which are related to the study: websites, articles, biography of the author, and some books which dealing with the research.

The technique of data collection the writer used in this study is library research by collecting and selecting both of primary and secondary data source compatible with the problem statement and objectives of the study. The steps are as follows: reading *Dear John* novel repeatedly, browsing to the internet to get several information and articles related to the object of the study, taking notes of important information that is used for both primary and secondary data, identifying the problem and finding the data and classifying the data into same categories. In order to analyze *Dear John* novel the writer uses An Individual Psychological of Literature and applies it using descriptive analysis which concerned to make some interpretation of dealing with the novel.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Individual psychological analysis above clarified psychology of John who found the meaning of true happiness in his life. Every human being is always in pursuit of happiness in his or her life, but sometimes what we wanted was not in accordance with what we expect. For that, it’s very
appropriate to analyze the novel using the theory of Adler, namely Individual Psychological Approach because of the many conflicts that exist in the novel included fictional finalism, inferiority feeling, striving for superiority, style of life, social interest and creative power. Following the elaboration of the six basic individual psychological principles. The researcher want to divide the explanation of each basic into 3 parts which is the objectives of this study. They are: finding the meaning of true happiness by John Tyree, the problems affecting the psychology of John Tyree and the meaning of true happiness according to Dear John novel.

3.1 Finding the meaning of true happiness of John Tyree

Finding the meaning of true happiness by John Tyree is not easy. He faces a variety of step in his life. The finding of happiness is divided into six sections, namely: a) planning, b) problems, c) struggle, d) amelioration, e) relationship and f) power.

a. The first is planning that is fictional finalism.

The final goal of the novel is from the major character, namely John Tyree. He promised to see Savannah while he was out of the military and marry her. He believes that by marrying Savannah he will find the meaning of true happiness. Then, he promised to Savannah that he will soon complete his duties and returned to marry Savannah. The following dialogue is between John and Savannah. John was very happy as he could be in a relationship with Savannah and he hoped to be happy after he marries Savannah.

When she kissed me afterward, I tasted the sweetness of her breath. I reached for her hand.
“I’m going to marry you one day, you know.”
“Is that a promise?”
“If you want it to be.”
“Well, then you have to promise that you’ll come back for me when you get out of the army. I can’t marry you if you are not around.”
“It’s a deal.” (Dear John, p. 137)
From the above dialogue, it can be seen that the purpose life of John is getting married to Savannah and finding the happiness he had expected. However, Savannah gives terms when John has completed his task, John should be out of the army, because Savannah can not live with John if he was still an active member in the army. Before leaving John felt that he was not happy about having to leave Savannah. Then, John also promised to keep their long-distance relationship by way of a phone call and sent a letter.

I'll call you as much as I can, and I'll write you when I can’t, and I'll get another leave next year. Whereever you are, that’s where I’ll go”........She leaned back, trying to catch a glimpse of my face. “You will?”

I squeezed her. “Of course I mean, I’m not happy about leaving you, and I wish more than anything that I was stationed nearby, but that’s all I can promise right now. I can request a transfer as soon as I get back, and I will, but you never know how those things go.” (Dear John, p. 138)

b. The second is problem that is inferiority feeling

The inferiority feeling of John when he was terminated by Savannah. The events of September 11 changed their love. Savannah decided to end their relationship after she knew that John turned out to extend the contract of his work into 2 more years.

She was in love with someone else. I knew that even before I finished reading the letter, and all at once the world seemed to slow down. My first instinct was to ram my fist into a wall, but instead I crumpled up the letter and threw it aside. I was incredibly angry then, more than feeling betrayed, I felt as if she’d crushed everything that had any meaning in the world. I hated her, and I hated the nameless, faceless man who’d stolen her from me. I fantasized what I would do to him if he ever crossed my path, and the picture wasn’t pretty. (Dear John, p. 189)
The breakup made big changes on John and his life. The purpose of his life was to be happy together Savannah once he envisioned, was destroyed. There was not only that, he got the sorrow news that is the death of a person who is very meaningful in his life, that is his father.

My dad died seven week later, and I was granted an emergency leave to attend the funeral. The flight back to the States was a blur. All I could do was stare out the window at the formless gray of the ocean thousands of feet below me, wishing I could have been with him in his final moment. I hadn’t shaved or showered or even changed my clothes since I’d heard the news, as if going about my daily life meant that I fully accepted the idea that he was gone. (Dear John, p. 203)

Feeling distressed over the death of his father made him aware that his father is the only one parent that always there for John and try to give love to him, although he did not know how to do it, this causes lack of his communication.

c. The third is struggle that is striving for superiority

All human being have a purpose in life to be happy. Sometimes hard efforts are still not enough to reach the happiness. John also has a way to achieve the happiness that he had hoped for, that is in harmony with Savannah.

I was head over heels crazy about Savannah. I would have done anything to be with her, and I requested a transfer to the States. My hard-bitten commanding officer appeared to give it serious consideration. When he asked why, I told him about my dad instead of Savannah. He listened for a while, then leaned back in his seat and said, “The odds aren’t good unless your dad’s health is an issue.” (Dear John, p. 145)
John asked his commanders to move the task in States. He gave the reason that he wants more care for his father. But, the possibility of being able to move was very small, except related to the health of his father. Before he departs, he told at Savannah for maintaining communication when they split up.

From the very beginning, the calls and letters between us were regular. We e-mailed as well, but I soon learned that Savannah preferred to write, and she wanted me to do the same. “I know it’s not as immediate as e-mail, but that’s what I like about it,” she wrote me. (Dear John, p. 145)

Since the beginning of the departure of John, they actively were sending a letter and calling Savannah. Therefore, they can still uphold their relationship. However, sometimes life issues, thus, becomes a barrier to achieve the main objectives of them. Everyone definitely has a problem in his life, as experienced by John Tyree. John broke up with Savannah. The problem makes his psychology shaken. However, he did not run away from the problem, but he tried to overcome them by his way. He tried to rise up into better person. Eventually, he became one of the exemplary soldier.

Over the next few weeks, I became the consummate soldier, escaping into the only world that still seemed real to me. I volunteered for any mission regarded as dangerous...... (Dear John, p. 189)

John tried to forget the good memories together with Savannah. Although it took time and effort. Sometimes John feels that the relationship can be maintained. But, as time went on, John managed to forget Savannah though only for a moment, that is when John confronted his death.
d. The fourth is amelioration that is style of life

Adler’s concept of style of life that is encompasses the unique patterns of traits, behaviors and habits when taken together, defines the flavor of a person’s existence (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992:153).

John is the main character in the novel Dear John, before entering the military John’s lifestyle was liked Street kids who only think about his interest, but after joining a military member John becomes more disciplined. Moreover, as he was on the other problem that was endless. After the problem John can more control his attitude. John included on The Rulling Type which he did not need anyone’s help to resolve his problem. He believed that it is only him who can control all his life.

At the same time, I longed to talk to her. I wanted to fly home immediately, or at least call her. Part of me didn’t want to believe it, couldn’t believe it. Not now, not after everything we’d been through. We had only nine more month left-after almost three years, was that so impossible? But I didn’t go home, and I didn’t call. I didn’t write her back, nor did I hear from her again, my only action was to retriive the letter I’d crumpled. I straightened it as best I could, Stuffed it back inthe envelope, and decided to carry it with me like a wound I’d received in battle. (Dear John,p. 189)

In the monologue, it seems that John would have loved to talk to Savannah and eager to go home soon to discuss with Savannah. But, he did not do it, even he did not call Savannah to simply clarify what he has read. That time psychology John deeply shaken, the happiness he had dreamed so long was destroyed. He believed that his happiness was gone. But, this problem is able to make John changed.

John was a guy who was very rude and naughty when he was a teenagey. He did not know how to appreciate people. Then, when he
sign in the military his life become more disciplined. But, after he broke up with Savannah, his lifestyle be changed again.

I learned this through the local lawyer I hired on my last visit to Lenoir. I’d entered his office with a cashier’s check and asked him to deposit it in the account that had been set up for Tim’s treatment. I knew he would say nothing to anyone in town. It was important not to let Savannah know what I’d done, in any marriage, there’s room for only two people. (Dear John, p. 273)

He became a person who is very caring and forgiving. It is proven when John met with the man who had captured Savannah from him that is Tim. John was forgiving him. The hatred that he buried for Tim turned into a very big concern.

e. The fifth is relationship that is social interest

John did to another person any change after he broke up with Savannah. He became more reticent and introvert people to his friends, but actually he cares and is more forgiving than before. The evidence he more concerned with his father. Even, John felt that they got along better on those two visit than they ever had. Not only that, when he met with Tim, they look closer.

“I’ll bet she was glad to see you. I know she’s always felt bed that it ended the way it did, and so did I. I owe you an apology.”

“Don’t.” I raised my hands. “It’s okay.”

“I know you might not believe it, but feel bad about what happened. I know you two relly cared about each other.”

I leaned forward, propping myself on my elbows. “Water under the bridge,” I said. (Dear John, p. 240-241)
When Tim apologized and discuss the past, thus, John refused to discuss their past again. John had forgotten all that Savannah and Tim have been doing to him. He has a bad erase memories of it. John just wanted to be better than ever without having to regret his past.

**f. The sixth is fervency that is creative power or cretive self**

Creative power implies what we each create our own personality that we actively construct it out of our experiences and heredities (Ryckman, 1985:98). To achieving a happy life that expect by John it was not easy, many of the obstancles that come his way. But, over time he began seeking his own happiness. Although he felt that he was still caught up in the romance of the past along with Savannah, but he attempted to continue to search the meaning of true happiness.

**3.2 The problem affecting the psychology of John Tyree**

There are some problem affecting the psychology of John Tyree. The first is when John broke up with Savannah. 9/11 event has changes then world and the story of their love. He was expecting his honorable discharge in December and had been counting the days until he could meet to Savannah then marry her, but he was reenlisting to be a soldier again. John is reenlisting for additional 2-years term of employment. Savannah that can not be too long away from John ever felt that she was not able to continue her relationship with John.

She was in love with someone else. I knew that even before I finished reading the letter, and all at once the world seemed to slow down. My first instinct was to ram my fist into a wall, but instead I crumpled up the letter and threw it aside. I was incredibly angry then, more than feeling betrayed, I felt as if she’d crushed everything that had any meaning in the world. I hated her, and I hated the nameless, faceless man who’d stolen her from me. I fantasized what i would do to him if he ever
crossed my path, and the picture wasn’t pretty.
(Dear John, p. 189)

Second, when John’s father was death. Feeling distressed over the death of his father made him aware that his father is the only one parent that always cares for John. John regretted the last time of his father, he is not on his side. Feeling sad is normally felt by everyone when losing a parent, included John.

My dad died seven week later, and I was granted an emergency leave to attend the funeral. The flight back to the States was a blur. All I could do was stare out the window at the formless gray of the ocean thousands of feet below me, wishing I could have been with him in his final moment. I hadn’t shaved or showered or even changed my clothes since I’d heard the news, as if going about my daily life meant that I fully accepted the idea that he was gone. (Dear John, p. 203)

3.3 The meaning of true happiness in the novel

Earlier, John still has feeling in the hearts, but John was conscious the meaning of true happiness after he met Tim. The true happiness is giving priority to the happiness of people that we love.

I sold the collection because I finally understood what true love really meant. Tim had told me and shown me that love meant that you care for another person’s happiness more than your own, no matter how painful the choices you face might be. I know that my feeling about Savannah will never change, and I know I will always wonder about the choice I made. (Dear John, p. 274-275)

John loved Savannah, even, after Savannah was married to Tim. But, John felt that Tim was people who deserve Savannah’s love. Tim also has the right to be happy together with Savannah. For the reasons that John selling his father’s coins for Tim’s treatment. He would also
like to see the happiness of person that he loves although not happy with him.

The level of happiness that is described by Plato and Aristotle on chapter 2, happiness is divided into four, namely: desire happiness, ego-comparative desires, contributive-an empathic desires, transcendental awareness. In accordance with the discussion above, researchers concluded that the perceived happiness of John included on the third type of happiness, namely contributive-an empathic desires. It’s caused the happiness felt by John is the happiness inflicted because of sympathy at someone, in this case is Tim and Savannah. John felt happy when he saw them join the happy life.

4. CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data related in Dear John novel by Nicholas Sparks. The researcher comes to the conclusion that psychology of human that had some problems in life can change their personality. In this issue, the researcher gives the one sample that is John Tyree.

Happiness is the main purpose of human life. There are four kinds of happiness according to Aristotle and Plato, they are: desire happiness, ego-contributive desires, contributive-empathic desires, transcendental awarenesss. To get the happiness is not easy, he or she has to fight for his or her own happiness. John is a major character in the novel "Dear John". He struggles his happiness, but his fight as if no results because of the problems he got. Those problems make psychology of John shaken, even to change the personality of John. Originally he was the one who was rude. After he got in trouble, he became introvert to those around him, but he was more concerned with his father. John's personality changed when he meets again with Tim. After he met with Tim, John become more caring. John also managed to find the meaning of true happiness that he was looking for.
In the novel, John Tyree felt the third happiness that is contributive-an empathic desires. John was happy when he can help Tim. John is not thinking about who is Tim that used to be and what has Tim did to him. He just realized that the happiness he feels as long as it has not been lost entirely. John realized that it actually happiness that he could create his own happiness how to help others. Even he felt that helping Tim is another way to see the happiness of Savannah. Although Savannah has become Tim’s wife, but John was not angry even he already is happy when looking at the woman that he loved happy with her husband.

Based on the issue which is about the meaning of true happiness for John Tyree in the novel, the researcher concluded that the definition of happiness for everyone turns out to be different from other people. In this novel there is a definition of happiness that is felt by John Tyree. As in the previous chapter on a novel analysis, mentioned that "the real happiness is giving priority to the happiness of those we love before our happiness, and willing to accept the risk of any kind has become our choices".

In the novel, it is also explained that happiness is not definitely comes when we have planned and fought for it, but all of that is need for sincere sense of what we've done as well as the feeling of being grateful for what we have received so far. John has proven that to be happy that he expected not as easy. The key got a happy life for John was not to be immersed in a deep grief to the problem he faced was being. He managed to get up and prove that he also deserves to feel happiness.

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