CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Divorce is referred as “the legal separation of spouses, effected by the judgment or decree of a court, either totally dissolving the marriage relation or suspending its effects so far as concerns the cohabitation of the parties” (Solis & Gasteazoro, 1992: 112). Solis & Gasteazoro argue that divorce makes ending of marriage officially. During of divorce, the doer can wait to decide the separating or waiting to cohabite each other. In another opinion, Ethics and Values (1999: 25) believe that “getting divorced, usually refers to the legal act of officially ending a marriage. Today, more than half of first time marriages in the United States end in divorce”.

Based on Hawkins et al., (2012: 7) in Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, that there are 9 causes of divorce followed by the percentage. The most commonly cited reason for seeking a divorce was growing apart (55%). This was followed by not talking together (53%), money problems (40%), personal problems of spouse (37%), infidelity (37%), and not getting enough attention (34%). The three least common are advice spouse’s friends (11%), spouse working too much (9%), and religious differences (9%).

In the layer of society, hurly burly the phenomena of divorce are like mushrooms which grow and spread rapidly becomes commonplace thing. Kitanović (2011: 114-131) believes that divorce is legal phenomena customarily by people. As a legal knotty problem of society, divorce related to individual and group. Divorce becomes the prevalent thing which done by all the layer of society that exist with great number in the last six decades. It means that divorce has impact toward the doer, children and people related. The misery of divorce becomes the decree absolute exists that disregarded by the doer.

Divorce is like a thunderbolt for every child in the day of rain, ruin the beauty of rainbow which made by togetherness between mom and dad. It means that the
parent is not to be one again, separate each other. In other opinion, Fagan and Churchill (2012:1) convey that divorce became a culture that evolves in from the time to time in the society.

Berns supports for children particularly who have experienced parental separation, parental divorce is not a single event but rather it represents a series of stressful experiences for the entire family that begins with marital conflict before the actual separation and includes many adjustments afterward (Berns, 2007: 91). From Berns’s opinion, it can be concluded that divorce not only gives effects toward the doer self, but also toward their children, family and other people related. Toward children, divorce is like a thunderbolt for every child in the day of rain. It ruins the beauty of rainbow which made by togetherness between their father and mother. It means that the parent is not to be one again, separate each other. The parents who do divorce do not know how hurt for their children.

According to Härkönen (2013:16-22) and Chavez (2010:19-24), there are eight effect of divorce that consist of toward parent and children. The effect toward parents is parental instability. While there are eight effects of divorce toward children as follows; 1) sadness, angry and hurt, 2) need more love and caring, 3) weaken contact, 4) depression and anxiety disorders, 5) hating the parent, 6) being disappointed the parents' decisions and actions, 7) unconsciously believe that love cannot be trusted and 8) strong.

Divorce is a part of science in law, religion, sociology and psychology. Divorce is not only delivered in many sciences, but also interesting in many author caring. One of them is Nicholas Sparks who carries divorce as an issue in hs novel. While, it is mixed by love story and family within novel.

Nicholas Sparks is an American author who was born on December 31th 2016 in Omaha, Nebraska, America. North Carolina is place where he lives with his married woman Cathy Sparks and his 5 daughters. Nicholas Sparks is amazing grades in writing world. Over 105 million copies sold worldwide in over 50 languages, including over 75 million copies in the United State and all of his books are crowned be bestseller.

In this research paper, the researcher choose *The Last Song* (2009) novel as the object to analyze. Novel that fourteenth published and was adapted to the film version is a good novel which divorce dazzled appears. The researcher invite the reader to the real atmosphere of issue that appointed. It means that the main character is made by the same character with the children who in that position.

Based on the researcher opinion, phenomenon of divorce appears strongly in *The Last Song* novel by Nicholas Spark. The changes of atmosphere happen after divorce of Steve and Kim’s family in the story of *The Last Song* novel. It can be caught easily by the reader. Due to Sparks depicts strong character each figure within the novel.

Seventeen year-old Veronica “Ronnie” Miller’s life was turned upside-down when her parents divorced and her father moved from New York City to Wilmington, North Carolina. Three years later, she remains angry and alienated from her parents, especially her father...until her mother decides it would be in everyone’s best interest if she spent the summer in Wilmington with him. Ronnie’s father, a former concert pianist and teacher, is living a quiet life in the beach town, immersed in creating a work of art that will become the centerpiece of a local church. The tale that unfolds is an unforgettable story about love in its myriad forms – first love, the love between parents and children – that demonstrates, as only a Nicholas Sparks novel can, the many ways that deeply felt relationship can break our hearts and heal them.
Based on reader respond, there are good and bad response. In the good response, they state that *The Last Song* novel is amazing and very cool novel. The words are born by the problem of the characters and the novel itself. But in other sight, she is Adelia Ekarle who one of the readers said that *The Last Song* novel is too thick, so it is ripped able. If the reader don’t read carefully, it becomes possible. The statement is coming from Aditya, that the story is not synchronous between title and the story itself. Because the word “The Last” just as cover in the end of story not almost of the whole story.

*The Last song* novel was adapted into film by Jullie Anne Robinson as director and Adam Shankman as a producer. Film which was released in March 31th 2010 by Touchstone Picture is having a good achievement. On 15th July 2010 they got $ 89.041.656 in the world.

Among other points of interest of the novel are as follow, the charming appeal emerged from Alsides, the first is characters or characterization, setting, plot, style of words and others. Ronnie as main figure makes readers’ curious. In the beginning of story, she is a good and sweet girl. But because of divorce, she is being different. The second is the setting, in the beach town of Tybee Island, Georgia, where Steve gets a chance to spend the summer. It is one of the amazing beach that have tiny barrier island with cooling, salty breezes in the heat of summer is an ideal escape not only from the mainland, but also from a busier, noisier world. The third is coming from the plot, it is retreat. In the beginning of the story, the author appears end of the story, and then Sparks continues again with other story. Fourth is the word use, there are similar wave words and collocation words. Absolutely that it kill the readers’ bored.

The main issue of this research is how this novel as a weapon to criticize the society by analyzing the high rate of divorce. Based on the phenomenon, the researcher finds that Sociological approach is appropriate theory to analyze issue of this novel. So for those reason, the researcher decide to write the research paper entitled *Criticism Against the High Rate of Divorce in Nicholas Sparks’s The Last Song (2009) Novel: A Sociological Perspective.*
B. Problem Statement

Based on the background of the study, the researcher wants to analyze the problems:
1. What are the causes of divorce on the character in The Last Song novel?
2. What are the effects of divorce on the character in The Last Song novel?
3. How is divorce depicted in The Last Song Novel?
4. Why did Nicholas Sparks address divorce in The Last Song novel?

C. Objectives

Based on the background of the study, the researcher wants to enlighten:
1. To describe the causes of divorce on the character in The Last Song novel.
2. To describe the effects of divorce on the character in The Last Song novel.
3. To analyze how is divorce depicted in The Last Song Novel.
4. To reveal why did Nicholas Sparks address divorce in The Last Song novel.

D. Benefits

The researcher really hopes that this research on The Last Song (2009) has benefits. The benefits of this study will be distinguished into two benefits:

1. Theoretical Benefits

This research gives contribution in criticizing a literary work and producing the objective criticism about Ronnie in novel The Last Song (2009) sociological perspective.

2. Practical Benefits

The study is expected to enrich knowledge and experience of the researcher and another student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or another University who have interest with literary study on novel The Last Song (2009) sociological perspective.
E. Paper Organization

The research paper organization of this paper purposes to make easier the reader to understand. This research paper is divided into 5 parts. Chapter I consists of Background of the Study, Problem statement, Objectives, Benefits and Research Paper Organization. Chapter II deals with Underlying Theory that consists of Sociology of Literature, Divorce in Social Life, Causes of Divorce, Effect of Divorce and Previous Studies. Chapter III is Research Method, Object of the Study, Type of the Data and Data Source, Method of Collecting Data and Technique of Analyzing. Chapter IV focuses on data analysis of The Last Song (2009) novel that deals with Analysis and Discussion. Chapter V provides the Conclusion, Suggestion and Educational implication.