

DECISION MAKING IN NICHOLAS SPARKS' *DEAR JOHN*

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Abstract : The aim of this study is to reveal about the decision making by Savannah and John in their love relationship in Nicholas Sparks' *Dear John*. The writers employ qualitative method in conducting this research and in the data collection, the writers use primary source: the work itself Nicholas Sparks' *Dear John* and secondary source: another references such as journals, books or internet sources which related and relevant to the research. In term of data analysis, the writers use psychoanalytic approach because decision making is so related with thoughts, emotions and environment. The study shows that when they are in a long distance relationship, they make a wrong decision too soon to end up their relationship just because of time, situation and feeling and they still love each other deeply when they meet again but it is too late to turn around the situation because Savannah has become someone else's wife and it is impossible to break their marriage. The result of this study shows that when making a decision, John and Savannah prefer in *id* which means that they make a decision just because of their immediate satisfaction that every wishful or pleasure should be satisfied without thinking about the consequences, if it brings a damage or profit in their future.

Keywords : *Decision Making, Psychoanalytic Approach, Dear John, Nicholas Sparks.*

INTRODUCTION

A novel concerned with the close touch of human relationship thought and feeling, passion, birth, growing up, marriage, love, and hatred as well as the happiness and misery of personality or even society is imbued with the dynamic flowing of expressive mind in portraying societies elements by sublimating them in form of literary works (Hudson, 1965). Sabudu also states that Novel is one of many forms of literature. Literature is a reflection of human life, both in society and in individuals' private lives. Every social phenomenon is typically reflected in literary works including poems, novels, plays, and short stories (Sabudu, 2014). Maru (2014) claims that human experience is depicted in literary works as

a written narrative that many readers can feel and examine. The purpose of the story is to teach each other a valuable lesson as well as to entertain. When something is created through the literary process, it can be said to be an imitation or reflection of reality (Tampi, Mamentu, and Liando, 2018). Thus, the writers can say that novel is someone's idea to express their feeling, story and creativity in literary work.

Decisions making involves carefully choosing one course of action from a range of alternatives in order to achieve the decision problem's goal more successfully than the alternatives (Haynes and Massie, 1969). According to the statements above, the writers can say that decision making is choosing what someone wants to do. There are some

factors that influence someone in making a decision both internal factors and external factors, such as: emotion – when someone wants to make a decision and if he/she is angry (for example), they will make a decision carelessly and it will bring regret; thoughts - in making a decision, someone has to think carefully and think about the consequences of each decisions; time – in making a decision, people usually trapped with deadline so they make a decision in hurry.

Dear John tells about Decision Making that can be seen when John chooses to re-enlist to the army and Savannah chooses to fall in love with another man. *Dear John* is a romantic novel by Nicholas Sparks. The story began when a girl named Savannah who met John in the summer holiday and they fell in love. John was an army, so they were separated when his military service. When he was in the military service, he never looked for someone else just because he wanted to marry to Savannah, but he got surprised when he received Savannah's letter that told him that she was in love with someone else.

RESEARCH METHOD

In doing this research, the writers use qualitative method. Descriptive research is qualitative. Instead of numbers, the data are presented as words or images. Data quotes are used in the written research product to support and validate the presentation (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). While conducting this study, the authors gathered information from primary and secondary sources, respectively. Evidence from original sources and evidence from secondary sources are both pertinent types of evidence for essays on literature. Literature's original works are considered primary sources, while information and

viewpoints from other sources are considered secondary sources (Griffith, 1986). It is believed to be essential to apply literary approach when using literary work as its object and primary sources for analysis. It aids in illuminating the novel's purpose (Maru 2014).

The writers' analysis of the data is based on psychoanalysis. While Freud's psychoanalytic theory states that personality is made up of three components. Complex human behavior is a result of the interaction between the *id*, *ego*, and *superego*, the three components of personality. *Id*, *ego*, and *superego*, in the words of Freud, "are not persons, places, or things; they are the labels given to some motivational factors, whose existence is inferred from the way people behave" (Feist, 1985:24). Character can be used to inspire actions or desirable behavior (Tania, Liando, and Maru, 2018).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Structure of John's Personality and His Decision Making

John's Id

When John sees Savannah walking up the pier, there appears his first *id* when he calls her instinctively when she is close, even he does not know her or even meet her.

"Hey, I called when they were closer. Not very soft, and I can not say I hope anything response," (Sparks 2006:29).

"I suppose I should explain why I jumped into the waves to retrieve her bag. It wasn't that I thought she would view me as some sort of hero, or because I wanted to impress her, or even because I cared in the slightest how much money she'd lost. It had to do with the genuineness of her smile and the warmth of her laugh" (Sparks 2006:33).

Savannah loses her bag into the water and John jumps into the water to retrieve her bag. John's second *id* can be seen when he follows his instinct where he helps her not because to impress her or cares about how much money she has lost but because he is fascinated with her.

"Even though I had no wish to spend time with more frat brothers, Savannah smile at me with such warmth that the words were out before I could stop them. Sounds good. Let me go take my board from the pier and I will be there in a bit" (Sparks 2006:36).

The quotation above shows that John does not want to accept the invitation because of Savannah's friends. It can be seen John's *id* when he follows his instinct when he spit out words reflexively to accept her invitation to go dinner because he is stunned by her smile.

"No. Well, not tonight, anyway. Later. Tonight, I have a desire to show you around Wilmington."

"Are you asking me out?"

"Yeah," I confess. "I will have you back whenever you want. I understand you've got to work tomorrow, but there's this great place that I want to show you" (Sparks 2006:73).

When John and Savannah are watching Frisbee by the water edge while talking about John's dad and his relationship with his father, can be seen John's *id* when he follows his instinct and asks Savannah for a date even though they just meet yesterday because he is interested with her.

"I had a good time tonight," she said. "And today"

"I swallowed. "When can I see you again?," (Sparks 2006:92).

The quotation above shows the situation when John and Savannah in their first date. When John will return home, Savannah delivers him into his car and can

be seen than John's *id* to fulfill his pleasure when he asks Savannah to meet him again for next date.

"You do not have to say it back to me. I'm afraid because I wanted to say it too: I love you, John."

"Even now, I am still not sure how it occurs. One instant we were talking, and in the next she leaned toward me. For a second, I am curious whether kissing her would destroy the spell we both were under, but it was too late to stop. And when her lips met mine, I knew that I could live to be a hundred and see all country in the world, but nothing would ever appeal to that single moment when I first kissed the girl of my dreams and knew that my love would last forever" (Sparks 2006:130-131).

John is afraid to confess his feeling to Savannah because he thinks that she does not feel the same way. But he also thinks that if he do not say it that time, he will never has another chance. After Savannah says that she loves him too, it can be seen John's *id* when he follows his biological need when he kiss Savannah on the lips.

"What happened next was instinctive, over in a manner of seconds. I drove my elbow hard into his solar plexus and heard a sudden groaning exhale" (Sparks 2006:145).

John gets mad at Savannah because she is trying to make him understand about his dad by give him a book, but it offends him. While he is angry, he leaves her. On the way, many her friend who see her crying try to block his way, and want him to give explanation, but he is so angry, he says to let go of him but they do not, so his *id* came when he follows his instinct and hits them up.

"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," (Sparks 2006:174)

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen John's *id* by his decision to fulfill his pleasure by request a transfer to the States because he is madly in love with Savannah and to get closer with her.

"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 retrieve the letter I'd crumpled. I straightened it as best. I could, stuffed it back in the envelope, and decided to carry it with me like a wound I'd received in battle," (Sparks 2006: 233-234).

The situation from the quotation above is when John at his military service and he receives Savannah's letter that tell him that she falls in love with another man. John's *id* come when he has an irrational decision where he does not give her call to clarify their relationship instead he be silent, does not do anything but just carry the letter like a wound he receives in battle and he do not looks for a resolution, but he just surrenders with the situation.

"After twenty minutes of easy dialogue, I took Savannah's picture from my wallet and told him that I was a friend of the family. I used her parents' names and asked questions that made a knot I had been there before" (Sparks 2006:258-259).

John's dad just passed away, and to console himself, he left Wilmington, headed through Raleigh and Chapel Hill and realize that it is the place of Savannah's birth. He stops at the bar and has a dialogue with the bartender. It can be seen John's *id* from the quotation above when he follows his pleasure where he feels satisfied by ask about her.

"It wasn't too late to leave, but I couldn't force myself to turn the car around" (Sparks 2006:260).

From the quotation above, can be seen that John's *id* when he fulfills his pleasure

to see Savannah, visit her in her house and her existence can't make he change his mind to get away from there but he moves forward get closer to the house.

"As more tears began flowing down her face, I think my own eyes fill up. I leaned in and kissed Savannah tenderly on the lips, then took her arms and held her tight. "I love you, Savannah, and I always will," I breathed." (Sparks 2006:329)

When John and Savannah must be separated because they know that their relationship has over, John acts like he is still deeply in love with Savannah. John's *id* come when follows his biological need to kiss Savannah on the lips even he knows that she belongs to someone else.

John's Ego

John and Savannah spend time together before he returns to Germany. John's ego appears when he takes the relationship seriously so he makes a promise that he will marry her when he enlists the army.

"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're not around."

"It's a deal" (Sparks 2006:162).

"It is not going to be simple," she said.

"I realize it will not," I said. "But I don't wish all this to end." I stopped, knowing words would not be sufficient. "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. Wherever you are, that's where I'll go" (Sparks 2006:163).

Before John returns to Germany, they talk about their relationship during they are apart. The quotation above shows

John's ego when he finds the realistic way in their long distance relationship where he makes an effort to keep their relationship by inform her about his life when he is at the army, such as phone calls or sends her letters.

"Goodbye." I raised a hand" (Sparks 2006:329).

This quotation shows that John accepts the truth that Savannah belongs to someone else. Can be seen John's ego when he chooses the realistic way where he does not force her to come back to him, but he lets her go and acquiesce their relationship has over.

John's Superego

John promises Savannah to come home. But the tragedy of September 11th breaks the promise. The pretension to serve in himself is stronger than ever and he finds himself reenlisting because he is influenced by what's going on and also because of his friends whose reenlisting because of that tragedy.

"Tony was the first of the men in my squad to reup for an additional two years, and one by one, every other man followed his lead. Even I, who was expecting my honorable discharge in December and had been counting the days until I could go home to Savannah, caught the fever and found myself reenlisting" (Sparks 2006 :215-216).

This quotation explains John's superego where he makes a decision based on the morality principle where he as a soldier chooses to serve his country than to go home to meet Savannah.

"My dad, he told me, had just suffered a major heart attack, and he'd already gone ahead and granted the additional emergency leave. Instead of going to Chapel Hill and two great weeks with Savannah, I went to Wilmington and spent my days by my dad's bedside, breathing in

the antiseptic odor that always made me think less of healing than of death itself" (Sparks 2006:217).

John plans to meet Savannah on the next leave on May, but he gets surprised by his commanding officer and get the news that his father is hospitalized so from this quotation can be seen John's superego when he makes a decision based on the morality principle, so as a child in the family, he chooses to accompany his father instead of spending time with Savannah.

"Her knuckles stood out white against her arms. "Could I write to you?"

I coerced myself not to look away, expecting again that the cards had fallen differently for us. "I'm not sure that is a good idea."

"I do not understand."

"Yes, you do." I told her. "You're married to Tim, not me." I let that sink in while concentrating my strength for what I wanted to say next. "He is a good man, Savannah. A better man than me, that is for sure, and I'm glad you married him. As much as I love you, I'm not willing to break up a marriage for it. And deep down, I don't think you are, either. Even if you love me, you love him, too. It took me a little while to wise up that, but I'm sure of it" (Sparks 2006:327-328).

John's leave is almost up, and before he is back to work, he stops in hospital. In the parking lot, he meets Savannah and she asks if she can write letter to him but he refuses the idea and describes the reason why. And from this quotation, it can be seen John's superego when he follows the norm in the society and he does not want to break Savannah and Tim's marriage even he still fall in love with her.

"You're the best thing that's ever happened to me. You were my best friend and my lover, and I don't regret a single

moment of it. You made me feel alive again, and most of all, you gave me my father. I'll never forget you for that. You're always going to be the very best part of me. I'm sorry it has to be this way, but I have to leave, and you have to see your husband" (Sparks 2006:329).

John tells Savannah how meaningful her present in his life. But out of that confession, from the quotation above can be seen John's superego when make a decision based on moral principle where he let Savannah go and suggests her to see her husband because her husband needs her.

"Saying goodbye was the hardest thing I ever had to do. Part of me wanted to turn the car around and race back to the hospital, to tell her that I would always be there for her, to confide in her the things Tim had said to me. But I didn't" (Sparks 2006:329).

This quotation describes that John still falls in love with Savannah and he wants to go back to hospital to tell her that Tim told him that Savannah still in love with him. It can be seen John's superego when he follows the norm in the society where he does not do it and realize they could not be together.

I want to sell my dad's coin collection, and I need the money as quickly as you can get it to me" (Sparks, 2006: 330).

On the way out of town, John sees a jar to collect money for Tim. And John decides to sell all of his father's coins to help Savannah and Tim. The quotation above proves John's superego when he follows the moral principle where he wants to help Savannah for Tim's recovery.

Structure of Savannah's Personality and Her Decision Making

Savannah's Id

Savannah and Susan is walking up the pier and John calls them. From the quotation above can be seen that Savannah's first *id* is when she follows her instinct when she replies to John's greeting spontaneously when she does not know who he is.

"Hiya, stranger," she answered with a smile" (Sparks 2006:29)

"She swaddling her arms around knees. "I commonly do not date strangers," she finally said, "and we just met yesterday. You think I can believe in you?"

"I would not," I uttered.

She laughed. "Well, in that case, I suppose I can make an exception."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah," she told me." I am a sucker for honest guys with crew cuts. What time?," (Sparks 2006:73).

John and Savannah are watching Frisbee by the water edge while talks about John's dad and his relationship with his father and then John asks Savannah for a date. From the quotation above, Savannah's *id* proves when she follows her pleasure by accepts John's invitation to have dinner with him even they just meet yesterday.

"Instead of the excited response I expected, she grew silent. All I could hear was the sound of her breathing.

"Did you hear me?" I asked.

"Yeah," she said, her tone soft. "It is just that I've heard that before."

It was the truth, and we both realized it, but I didn't sleep well for maybe a week" (Sparks 2006:223).

John and Savannah have troubles in their long distance relationship. So he makes more effort such as he calls her more regularly. John tells her that four days before Christmas he will be home.

But instead of excited about the news, she just gives unexpected response, she does not get interested again about the news because he already tells about it in many times but he never fulfills his promise to come home. The quotation describes Savannah's *id* where she chooses the irrational option when she does not search for the solution but she just be silent.

"I understood your excuse for staying in the army, and I respected your decision. I still do, but we both know our relationship become different after that. (...) I know that sounds like an excuse, but please believe me that I didn't mean to fall in love with someone else. If I don't really understand how it happened, how can you?," (Sparks 2006:228-229).

The situation from the quotation above is when John at his military service and Savannah's sends him a letter that tells him that she falls in love with another man. Savannah's *id* comes when she has an irrational decision where she does not tell John about all of her piques and chooses to fall in love with someone else.

"Her knuckles stood out white against her arms. "Can I write to you?" (Sparks 2006:327)

It is the last time for Savannah to meet John because he will return to his work. But before he goes, Savannah asks him if she can write a letter to John when they are apart from each other. The quotation shows Savannah's *id* when she follows his pleasure that can be seen when she still wants John's news and she suggests that they both can exchange letters.

"I love you, too, John" she said. (Sparks 2006:329)

Before John leaves Savannah, he says that he still loves her and Savannah's *id* comes when she follows her instinct by confessing her feeling to him that she feels

the same way even though she has already married with Tim.

Savannah's Ego

Before John return to Germany, he makes a promise to Savannah that one day he will marry to her because he takes their relationship seriously.

"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're not around."

"It's a deal." (Sparks 2006:162)

From the quotation, it describes Savannah's ego when she follows her instinct by made a requirement that John must come back home to marry her.

Savannah's Superego

Savannah is walking up the pier and her friends hit her bag then it trumbles over the edge. When John sees it, he helps Savannah by jumps into the edge to retrieve her bag.

"Well, I think I should do something for you."

"You do not need to do anything."

"Have you eaten?" she asked, disregard my comment. "We are getting ready to have a cookout, and there's plenty to go around. Would you like to join us?" (Sparks 2006:35-36)

From the quotation above, it can be seen Savannah's superego when she follows the moral principle by inviting John to have dinner with her because she appreciates John's effort by retrieving her bag.

"Still, she confused. Then she extend into her bag and pulled it out. When she handed it to me, I read the title. At first, I did not know what to think. It was a book

– more like a textbook, properly – about autism and Aspergers's.” (Sparks 2006:139)

Savannah's superego comes when she follows the moral principle and wants to help John, where John's dad has Aspergers syndrome that makes their relationship do not like a common father-son relationship, because they just talk about the regular topics and John's dad is quiet except talking about coins, because he is interested with coins. Savannah wants to give John a book about Autism and Aspergers so John can understand about what happened with his dad and so he can understand and behave as he should.

“I just can not continue lying to you. Lying would diminish everything we've shared, and I do not want to do that, even though I know you will feel betrayed” (Sparks 2006:229).

John works to move from place to place and the letter comes unregularly. When he receives his letter there are six letters from his father and one letter from Savannah. She follows her superego because she does not want to feel punished and guilty by lying to John or to hide it from him, and in the letter tells him that she already falls in love with someone else.

CONCLUSION

After conducting this research, the writers conclude that in making a decision, John and Savannah prefer *Id* which means that they make a decision just because of their immediate satisfaction that every wishful or pleasure should be satisfied without thinking about the consequences, if it can make a damage or profit in their future. When they were in a long distance relationship, they made a wrong decision to soon to ended up their

relationship just because of time, situation and feeling.

The writers find that they still love each other deeply, when they meet again. But it is too late to turn around the situation because Savannah has become someone else's wife and it is impossible to break their marriage.

After conducting this research, the writers would like to give suggestion to the reader that the novel entitled *Dear John* by Nicholas Sparks is very interesting to be read and analyze because it contains so many moral lesson about how to make decision in life, whether big or small decision, because each decision has its own consequence. The writers want to give suggestion for the reader to be wise in make a decision, think about the future and the consequences that the decision can bring, and do not depend on a situation or feeling because it just temporary and can be change sometimes.

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