

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Commitment is a key component in romantic relationships since it involves a decision to continue staying in the relationship amidst the existing problems, emotional complications, and changes. It is not just a feeling of love but a choice to be together with one another regardless of the issues being faced and the future uncertainties of the relationship. In real life and also in stories, romantic relationships usually pass through a series of events such as separations, social disparities, misunderstandings, and changes in their lives. For this reason, commitment serves as the core factor that will determine the sustainability of the relationship. The main issue happens when these problems make it hard for people to stay together, so they have to show whether their loyalty can face these difficulties over a long time.

In literary texts, romantic relations are usually used to portray the emotional and psychological aspects of the characters. With the help of love, struggle, and separation, writers can analyze the reaction of the characters in times of difficulty and their decision-making process. The notion of commitment plays a vital role in literary criticism since it demonstrates both the emotional state and the personality of the character. This idea of long-term commitment is shown in *The Notebook* written by Nicholas Sparks, through Noah Calhoun. Even though social inequality,

separation, and time stand in the way of Noah and Allie Hamilton's love, Noah never changes his mind about her, remaining dedicated and constantly choosing Allie despite all the hardships he goes through in his life.

What happens with the object of this study shows how real commitment works in difficult situations. In the novel, Noah and Allie are separated for fourteen years because of their different social classes, and Allie even gets engaged to another man. Even though they do not communicate for a long time, Noah still loves her and shows his commitment by rebuilding their old dream house. This big project clearly shows how deep his feelings and efforts are for Allie. Furthermore, when they grow old, Allie gets Alzheimer's disease and forgets everything about Noah. Instead of leaving her, Noah chooses to live with her in a nursing home and reads their love story from a notebook every day, hoping she can remember him. This shows that the main issue in this novel is about how a person can maintain his loyalty despite class differences, long separation, and a sad medical condition.

To see the correlation between the issue of commitment and the object, Noah's actions can be connected to the idea that commitment is shaped by satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment level. In *The Notebook*, Noah's character perfectly shows these elements. His big dedication shows that he has high satisfaction with Allie, he does not care about other women (quality of alternatives), and he gives a lot of time and energy (investment level) by rebuilding the house and staying loyal in the nursing home. For better clarification of this problem, this study uses the elements of both Rusbult's commitment model from the investment model

of extrinsic literature and Scholes' theory of characterization of a person from *Elements of Fiction* in terms of intrinsic literary analysis. This paper seeks to investigate how intrinsic characterization is used to emphasize and strengthen commitment in the context of Noah Calhoun's character. Even though previous studies discuss aspects of devotion, affection, and ambition in *The Notebook*, none of them explore long-term commitment in the light of Rusbult's theory concerning the role of intrinsic characterization.

1.2 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- 1) How is Noah characterized in the novel?
- 2) What is the relationship between Noah's characterization and his commitment in the novel?

1.3 Purpose of the Research

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To describe the characterization of Noah Calhoun as presented in the novel.
- 2) To find out the relationship between Noah's characterization and his commitment in the novel.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on analyzing Noah Calhoun's commitment toward Allie Hamilton in Nicholas Sparks' *The Notebook* novel. The intrinsic analysis is limited to the element of characterization, particularly how Noah is portrayed through his actions, dialogue, and thoughts in the story. Other intrinsic elements

such as conflict and setting are discussed only in a general way to support the analysis of characterization. Therefore, these elements are not analyzed in depth, so that other researchers may still have the opportunity to further explore and analyze them in future studies..

The extrinsic analysis applies Rusbult's investment model of Commitment to examine the psychological factors that influence Noah's commitment. The analysis concentrates on the three components of the investment model: satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size, as reflected in Noah's relationship with Allie.

1.5 Previous Studies

This section presents several previous studies that are relevant to the topic of this research.. First, A journal article entitled *The Psychological Barrier Towards Devotion of Relationship in The Notebook* written by Kadjan and Prautomo (2023) analyzes the psychological barriers that influence the characters' devotion in maintaining their relationship. The study focuses on emotional struggles and internal conflicts faced by the characters. The similarity with the present research lies in the discussion of psychological aspects in *The Notebook*. Nevertheless, the distinction here is that Kadjan and Prautomo concentrate on emotional barriers and individual psychology, whereas this current study centers on commitment through the application of Rusbult's investment model. This paper thus supports the current study by offering an understanding of emotional barriers, though it does not explore commitment within a theoretical perspective.

Second, In the research done by J.K. Laowo (2023) titled “Protagonist’s Ambition in Love in Nicholas Sparks’ Novel *The Notebook*,” the author focuses on the ambition and determination of Noah in sustaining his love for Allie. From the results obtained in this research, it is noted that Noah’s ambition signifies loyalty and devotion. In terms of similarities between this study and the current one, the two papers examine Noah’s unwavering perseverance in love. Nevertheless, there is a distinct difference in terms of theoretical concepts. While Laowo concentrates on ambition as an individual personality attribute, the current study explores commitment as a psychological state, which is influenced by satisfaction, alternatives, and investments.

Third, study entitled *The Reflection of Social Class Conflict in The Notebook* Novel by Siahaan and Satria (2022), which explores the issue of social class conflict and its reflection on the conflict between Noah and Allie. It is evident from the analysis provided in the paper that social class and the pressure of social norms affect the relationship between the couple. The similarities between the present research and the above-mentioned study include the analysis of factors influencing the relationship between Noah and Allie. In contrast to the present study, Siahaan and Satria emphasize social aspects such as social conflict. The current study is primarily focused on the psychological components of commitment.

Fourth, another research paper entitled *Infatuation in Sparks’ The Notebook* by Nadhiroh and Hetami (2020) focuses on emotional attraction and romantic love. It is important to note that infatuation is a powerful emotion that influences the behavior of people. The similarity between the current study and the paper is the

discussion of emotional attraction between two characters. At the same time, unlike the present study, the aforementioned research focuses on infatuation as a temporary condition.

Fifth, In their article titled Devotion and Commitment in a thesis entitled Devotion in Nicholas Sparks' The Notebook: An Individual Psychological Approach by Y.A. Fajarini (2015), examines Noah's devotion toward Allie based on individual psychology. It highlights the point that Noah's perseverance and fidelity towards Allie indicate the high level of devotion and seriousness in love of Noah. The commonality between this particular piece of literature and the current research is that both studies examine Noah's devotion and his dedication to maintain the relationship with Allie. On the contrary, the difference can be seen in terms of the framework used for conducting this study. For instance, Fajarini focuses on analyzing devotion, whereas in this study, the commitment has been investigated based on Rusbult's investment model. It indicates that apart from just describing Noah's dedication, the current study analyzes commitment into components of satisfaction, alternatives, and investment.

Sixth, a review titled Review The Notebook, Nicholas Spark is written by Joy (2019). This review talks about the story of an everlasting love that Noah Calhoun and Allie Hamilton share in the novel The Notebook, authored by Nicholas Sparks. According to the review, it is depicted in the novel how a relationship lasts long enough and withstands different challenges, such as social disparities, separation, and personal struggles. As per Joy, the novel centers on true love, emotional connection, and the unbreakable connection between Noah and Allie

despite all the hardships they face. The similarity between the two works is evident in terms of the description of Noah and Allie's eternal love and dedication towards each other. On the other hand, the difference is reflected in terms of the focal point of analysis. While Joy focuses on providing a general review on the issues addressed in the novel, the current paper analyzes Noah Calhoun's commitment using the investment model by Rusbult.

Seventh, Restuningtyas Puspa Arum, Dewi Chandraningrum, and Titis Setyabudi (2016) presented their thesis titled Affection Reflected in *The Notebook* Novel (1996) by Nicholas Sparks: A Psychoanalytic Approach. In their study, they analyze the representation of affection through the characters' emotions and psychological conditions in the novel. The similarities between this study and the current one involve the use of psychological perspectives in analyzing *The Notebook* novel; however, differences exist regarding the focus of analysis. While the former study examines affection in the novel from a psychological perspective, the latter examines commitment as a psychological construct according to Rusbult's theory.

Eighth, In Le and Agnew (2003)'s meta-analysis of commitment in close relationships, they examined various factors that determine the continuity and stability of relationships. They emphasized that satisfaction, alternatives, and investment are important elements in making long-term commitment. Similarities can be seen in this regard, as both studies emphasize commitment as a major element that ensures relationship stability. Nonetheless, the difference in terms of

methodology distinguishes both studies; while theirs was quantitative in nature, the current research is qualitative in the form of literary analysis.

Ninth, The paper *Commitment Processes in Accounts of the Development of Premarital Relationships* authored by Surra and Hughes (1997) explores the process of commitment formation in premarital relationships in real life. According to the study, commitment increases through shared experiences, intimacy, and perception of one's future with a partner. The study also indicates that commitment depends on satisfaction and stability in a relationship. The common aspect of the selected paper and the current study includes the issue of commitment viewed as a developing process. Nevertheless, the major difference is the object of investigation because Surra and Hughes investigate the commitment in a real-life marriage, whereas the current research involves a literary character. In addition, it is necessary to note that this research involves the use of Rusbult's theoretical framework in a literary text analysis, which distinguishes this study from the chosen article.

Tenth, In her longitudinal study on investment model of Commitment, Rusbult (1983) focuses on the relationship between satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size. This study shows that the subjects commit themselves to their relationships in case of high satisfaction and considerable investment despite any difficulties. Similarity between this study and the present research relates to the usage of the same theoretical approach. The difference between the two studies can be seen in terms of empirical nature of Rusbult's work as compared to an application of her theory in literary criticism of the present research.

From the preceding literature review, one realizes that a lot of scholars have written about such topics like devotion, affection, ambitions, psychological struggles, and social conflicts from *The Notebook*. These are important issues that give us an idea about the deeper emotional aspect of the book. Nevertheless, most of these works have concentrated only on emotional aspects and characters' personalities rather than commit in terms of a well-structured psychological theory. No previous work has ever explored Noah Calhoun's commitment in terms of the investment model of Commitment proposed by Rusbult in intrinsic characterizing process. Consequently, the present study tries to bridge this gap by analyzing the concept of commit in terms of a psychological aspect and relating to the commitment of Noah in the novel. It follows that this study will be based on an analysis of Noah Calhoun's commitment in terms of satisfaction level, alternatives quality, and investment size through characterization of the novel.

1.6 Organization of the Writing

The following is the writing organization of this thesis which is divided into four parts, including:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This section covers the research background, research questions, research objectives, scope of the study, and organization of the writing.

CHAPTER II THEORY AND METHOD

This section consists of two main parts: The theoretical framework is divided into two parts: intrinsic elements and

extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements cover the theory of character and characterization. while the extrinsic elements cover the concept of commitment in romantic relationships. Research method consists of data and data source, method of collecting data , and method of analyzing data.

CHAPTER II ANALYSIS

This section is divided into two parts of analysis: analysis of intrinsic elements and analysis of extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements explore the character, characterization, and conflict. Meanwhile, the extrinsic elements will analyze the commitment applied by Noah Calhoun toward his partner in the novel.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

This section is the conclusion of the answers and the results of the research regarding Noah Calhoun's characterization and how it is connected to his commitment.