

## CHAPTER II

### LITERARY REVIEW

In this second chapter, the writer will discuss about some literary theories to support the description in the next chapter. In making an description the writer uses the theory of literary devices, they are; theory new criticism that focuses on character and characterization and theory of personality. The writer uses these theories to know about the character, especially Amanda as the main character. Besides, it is also aimed to know the more detail about Amanda's love affair. The writer also uses psychological approach to support her analysis and to know about the psychology of the main character in the novel based on Sigmund Freud theory.

#### 2.1 New Criticism

Formalism criticism sometimes called new criticism (even though it has around a long time) involves the careful description of a literary text's craft. Formalism or new criticism are particularly keen on isolating parts of a text for an intensive look the assumption that any small passage can be a microcosm that contains or signals the meaning of the whole, as a single strand of DNA can reveal the genetic code of a whole organism. They tend to pick a few section of a poem or story, assess the writer moves and then try to relate those sections to other sections and to the whole work to determine what principle or theme tied them together. (Gillespie 2010:172).

Formalism is sometimes called new criticism (or practical criticism, close reading, text explication). Regardless of the name all these approaches involves the careful description of a literary text's craft. In literature, the focus of this detailed examination or close reading, is the way the components of language, diction, syntax, rhyme, and meter, symbols metaphor, allusions uses of point of view and so forth, form the completed literary text, which is why we call them formal elements (Gillespie, 2010:175).

In conclusion, the new criticism only focuses on the intrinsic unsure of a literary work such as characters, plot, setting, conflicts, and etc. The extrinsic unsure of a literary works are not the matter considered in description the literary works. It means, the description of a literary work through new criticism doesn't affected by the political condition in the time the literary works written, the background of the author, the city of the literary works published, and etc. It only focuses on the draft of the literary work because new criticism assumes that the draft of the literary work is an independent object.

## **2.2 Character**

According to Holman (1986:81), character is complicated term that includes the idea of the moral constitution of the human personality the presence of moral uprightness, and the simpler notion of the presence of creatures in art that seem to be human beings of one sort or another. In this point, it can be concluded that Holman underlined that characters in a certain literary work may not in a form of human, it can be a creature, a thing, or everything but it always

represents the human personality and has moral as human beings. Still in line with Holman opinion, Abrams (1981:20), says that character is a person that is displayed in a story, which is interpreted by the readers it has a moral quality and a certain tendencies that represented by his/her speech and action.

In the literary works, character becomes one of the most important elements that it must exist in the literary works (Nurgiantoro, 1995:164). Without the existence of characters, a literary work will be nonsense because the element which makes the literary work alive is character.

Besides being the most important elements of a literary works, the appearing of characters in a story also has some purposes; one of those purposes is to make the story seems to be a true life. Therefore, Kennedy states that character presumably an imagined person who inhabits a story (Kennedy, 1983: 45). He also says that the existence of character created by the author is intended to make story seems true life.

Understanding character is more difficult than understanding any other elements of story such as plot or setting. Character is much more complex. Anyone can repeat what a person has done in a story, but considerable skill may be needed to describe what a person is (Perrine, 1959:83). Further, Toer (1980) in his book claimed that no matter how intelligent a human being is, he will not be able to understand others' character. Considering that understanding a character is not easy, here in this study, the researcher prefers to investigate the main character & characterization of the novel chosen.

The main character is demanded to be attractive, honest, good-hearted, and perfectly good looking. If he is not virtuous, he must have strong compensatory qualities as daring, dashing, or gallant (Perrine, 1959:84). Therefore, it is quite reasonable that many readers always remember about the main character of the novels they read. The authors, with their ways usually create a main character which is unique in terms of personality, the conflict they faced, the setting they lived, and etc. Talking about the main character of a certain literary work is more interesting than talking about the non main character. It is happened because the author pay attention more in creating as interesting as possible his main character.

In this study, the researcher prefers to discuss character of the main and its characterization because some reason described above: it is difficult to understand and it is generally accepted that observing characters in a story is interesting because observing characters is similar to observing a real human behavior.

### **2.2.1 Kinds of Character**

In fiction, there are many kinds of character. The character may be classified as flat or round character and static or dynamic character. According to Edgar (1986:135), the types of characters are divided into two categories: round and flat character. Roberts (1986:136), says that round characters are usually the major figures in a story. They have realistic traits and are relatively fully developed by the author. For this reason they are often given the names hero and heroine. In addition, round characters presented with more facets. Authors portray the character in greater depth and in more generous detail (Kennedy, 1983:46).

Based on this point of view, it is clear enough that the authors give their attention more toward the round character rather than the flat character. The author develops the round characters in a more detail to make them to be the central of the reader attention. A good development of characters will make them easily remembered and reminded by the reader. Therefore, a unique characteristic is needed to make the characters become much more special.

Contrasted with round characters, flat character are essentially undistinguishable from their groups or class. Therefore, they are not individual, but representative. They are usually minor characters, although not all minor characters are flat. They are mostly useful and structural in the stories. Usually they are static and not dynamic (Edgar, 1986:136). Flat characters are usually minor actors in novel and stories in which appear, but not always so. Flat characters play a supporting role to the main character, which as a rule should be round. Flat characters have the same quality of person from the beginning until the end of the story. Although flat characters have less space in a story, their appearing cannot be neglected, they play a role to construct the whole story and sometimes, their existence is aimed to make the round characters become more central.

Other type of character is protagonist and antagonist. A protagonist is a character who the readers adore which one of its kinds is popularly called hero. Protagonist character presents the things accordance with the readers' view and expectation, so that the readers often recognize it has many similarities with them: the problem they faced and every circumstance they done (Nurgiantoro,

1995:179). In many literary works, the central characters in them are protagonist. It is probably affected by the fact that many readers expect a good person who will be the stake holder of the story.

The characters that causing a conflict in a story are called as an antagonist character, antagonist character, perhaps can be called in opposition to the protagonist, directly or indirectly, in terms of physical or mental (Nurgiantoro, 1995: 179). The main role of the antagonist characters is as a comparator toward the protagonist characters. However, a good people will be labeled as good people because someone finds there are less good people or bad people. Thus, to clarify that a certain character is protagonist, it is essential to emerge the antagonist one.

Determining a protagonist or antagonist character is sometimes, a complicated thing. We may get difficulties to determine a certain character belongs to protagonist or antagonist. It is because protagonist and antagonist are refer to a certain value, and general fact says that a value is a sensitive topic that people may have different judgment toward them. However, Nurgiantoro (1995:179) noted that a protagonist character is the character that has ideality in moral and the actions he/she done is based on the reader's expectation.

### **2.3 Characterization**

The reader will be able to understand the behavior, personality, attitude and the character of the fictional person by the characterization of the author. Holman (1986, 81) says that the creation of these imaginary persons so that they



Thirdly, the author may give the opinions and reaction of other characters toward and behavior, in this point the characterization of the character is shown through others' character opinion toward the certain character.

The last one, he may show the character's thought and feelings, in this point the characterization of the certain character is shown through the character's thought and feeling. For example a certain character always thinks that no one in the world is smart, but author with his thought, the reader can determine that this character is arrogant.

In literary works, the characters are varied and each of the character has its own different traits because actually characters in literary works are refer to a real human being' behavior and personality.

#### **2.4 The Structure of Personality**

Because the object that will be studied and investigated in the novel chosen is human behavior, the psychoanalysis approach is involved in this study. One of the branches of the psychoanalysis is personality. In this study, the writer will use the Personality theory in analyzing the novel.

According to Freud as quoted in Bernard, (1989:14), there are three components or parts of personality: the id, the ego and, the super-ego. These structures have specific and unique functions as well as distinct processes by which they operate (Bernard, 1989:14). In addition, they were proposed by Freud to explain the observation that behaviors typically result from compromises involving desires, the restrictions placed by the environment, and internalized





The id has another process to aid in the service of the pleasure principle, one that is less immediately evident. Id functioning is characterized by “primary process” thinking (Bernard, 1989:14).

The ego it is evident that for survival organisms must learn to differentiate between milk and the idea or image of milk. That is, fantasy must be distinguished from reality. The ego is governed by the “reality principle” rather than the pleasure principle rather than the pleasure principle (Bernard, 1989:15).

The ego follows the rules of “secondary process” thought. This is thinking characterized by logical, time orientation, and a distinction between reality and reality. The ego also has the tools of memory and attention and the control of motor activity. Thus, its existence provides a means for delay of gratification, long-term goal planning, and so on (Bernard, 1989:16).

The content of the ego are primarily conscious however, the person is not aware of all aspects of ego functioning. The ego includes the mechanisms of defense, such as repression, which protect the individual from psychic pain (Bernard, 1989:16).

The Super-Ego, according to Freud, the last of the three structures to develop is the super-ego. The super-ego has two main functions, both based on built-in reinforcement processes:

1. To reward individuals for acceptable moral behavior
2. To punish actions those are not socially sanctioned by creating guilt.

The super-ego thus represents the internalization of moral codes and is often called one's "conscience". The super-ego opposes the expression of unacceptable impulses rather than merely postponing them as does the ego (Bernard, 1989:16).

In conclusion, this description of the three systems of the personality by pointing out that the id, ego and superego are not to be thought of operating the personality. The personality normally functions as a whole rather than as three separate segments. In general way, the id may be thought of as the biological component of personality, the ego as the psychological component, and the superego as the social component.

In the next discussion, the researcher intends to investigate the factors that trigger the main character's love affair based on those three components of personality described before; id, ego, and superego. It is because id, ego, and superego play a big role toward what people will do, probably do, and what people done.

## **2.5 Related Studies**

In his seventeenth novel, "The Best of Me," Nicholas Sparks seems to have the romance novel formula down to a science. Attractive boy and girl from different sides of town meet and fall devastatingly in love? Check. Couple torn apart by war, parents, spouses, or traumatic past? Check. Shocking tearjerker ending? Double check. Sparks has mastered the art of writing novels that tug at

readers' heartstrings, evident from his novels selling over 77 million copies worldwide.

In "The Best of Me," Sparks adds the presence of unexplained mystical presences that help shape the characters' lives. Ultimately, "The Best of Me" is about the characters being haunted –haunted by ghosts, past loves, and the possibilities of what could have been. But in the end, readers may be left feeling haunted by the somewhat undeveloped love story and overly dramatic conclusion.

"The Best of Me" tells the story of Dawson Cole and Amanda Collier. Amanda is the popular Southern belle of the small town of Oriental, North Carolina, raised in an elite rich family who has high expectations and overbearing opinions. Laying the classic foundation for a tragic love story, Dawson is poor and born into a family that traditionally breeds "moonshiners and drug dealers, alcoholics, wife beaters, abusive fathers and mothers, thieves and pimps, and above all, pathologically violent" members. The two meet in high school and fall in love, but parental disapproval forces them apart. Twenty years later, we meet Dawson when an oil rig explosion nearly kills him. A mysterious vanishing "being" saves his life thus introducing the first element that haunts the characters ghosts.

When ghosts are not haunting Dawson and Amanda, they are being haunted by the memories of each other. Like most dreamy male leads in a romance novel, Dawson is a loner. When he is not working on the oil rig, he lives alone in a run-down trailer in New Orleans. He of course has a ripped, delicious body courtesy of a strict exercise regimen. Dawson also possesses the trademark

handsome, silent male persona, due to his rough upbringing at the hands of his abusive father and cousins. He still considers Amanda to be his one and only true love, even though he does not know that she is married and has children. While as a teenager Dawson suffered from physical abuse by his family, Amanda's adult life brings suffering through emotional abuse by her husband, leading her to wonder what kind of life she would have had if she stayed with Dawson.

These possibilities of what could have been continuously haunt the couple in their individual lives. Amanda's daughter loses her battle with brain cancer as a toddler, pushing her marriage almost to a breaking point. Sparks shows how alcoholism affects Amanda's seemingly perfect family, presenting the possibility that her unhappy marriage might lead her back into Dawson's arms. When Amanda and Dawson find themselves back in their hometown after a friend's death, they are faced with their forbidden desires to rekindle their teenage love affair. Unfortunately, for them, Dawson's abusive cousins know that he is back in town and are annoyingly obsessed with seeking revenge on him.

The two antagonists in the novel are Dawson's cousins, Abee and Ted. Sparks seems to struggle with creating believable evil characters, probably because he is more accustomed to writing about men who wish to sweep women off their feet as opposed to men who wish to sweep the floor with another man's face. Indeed, his attempts to produce fearful enemies fall flat. It is difficult to feel threatened by a character who dates a girl named Candy, uses phrases like "shortly shorts," or considers the nickname "little miss cheerleader" to be derogatory. Sparks uses these characters to heighten drama and ultimately create a

heartbreaking ending, but it would have been better if they were characters that readers could really hate as opposed to just find plain annoying.

In addition, Sparks does not focus too much on Dawson and Amanda's young relationship, so it is hard to sympathize with and support their unrelenting forbidden passion for each another as adults. Readers instead must learn about the couple's young love through flashbacks and tender reminiscences, not from being in the moment with the characters while their love is blossoming. Focusing on the couple twenty years after their relationship instead of giving readers the opportunity to witness it as it grows allows the novel to escape being a teenage romance story, but sacrifices adequate reader empathy towards the couple. At one point, Amanda's mother worries that her adult daughter's behavior with Dawson is a repeat of her rebellious teenage years, and it is difficult not to agree with her since Sparks only reveals the lustful surface of the couple's connection.

Surprisingly, the complicated, adult relationship between Amanda and her alcoholic husband Frank has more substance than Amanda's teenage courtship with Dawson. As an avid Sparks reader, Amanda and Frank's relationship may be one of the most captivating relationships in any of his novels. Usually, Sparks has a tendency to write alcoholic characters like caricatures from bad Western films—like Dawson's father and cousins are the town drunkards that not even the police want to deal with (and use terms like "shortly shorts").

But Amanda and Frank are a married couple dealing with the untimely death of their child while raising three other children. Amanda and Frank's relationship may not have the mind-blowing lustful passion that Amanda feels

with Dawson, but maybe because her twenty-year long marriage with Frank has been riddled with complications and emotions that she never had with Dawson. The novel might have fared better focusing on a marriage wrought with real-life pain as opposed to a teenage love reunion filled with anxieties of everything that never was.

Nicholas Sparks is not known for having the most complex characters and impressive literary language. But the man sure knows how to make readers shed a tear. Despite "The Best of Me"'s melodramatic and far-fetched ending, it still manages to add an emotional punch like a Hallmark card. Fans of Sparks will enjoy this novel because it fulfills every desire they have to swoon and be shocked. But those Sparks fans looking for a fresh storyline will not find one in "The Best of Me"; they will find a recycled formula that has been proven successful millions of times over. Overall, Sparks' seventeenth novel is an easy beach read, but it certainly could not be called *the best of* his work so far.

By: Laura Santaa, October 11, 2011.

