

## **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Literature is a reflection of the structure and conflict in society. Everyone could have different perspectives or ideas after reading literary works, however, it might not be as simple to understand them as many people think. Literature describes human life. Literature shows a reflection of social reality in daily life. Literature is also understood as a tool to strengthen or criticize existing power structures. Literary works can be a powerful tool for exposing injustice and voicing the aspirations of a class. Literature is not just a social mirror but is also a powerful tool in fighting for social change and describing the dynamics of conflict and power structures in society.

Everybody has a different and unique body shape, nature, lifestyle, and even destiny when they are born. The idea of literature as a reflection of human life is associated with the Marxist view that society develops through conflict between classes. The issue of social class inequality is one that many people around the world are currently dealing with. There are distinctions in every civilization, which are represented by high or low-status levels. For instance, the income of community groups varies depending on the ability of each individual. The term "upper class" refers to those with the highest salaries, while "lower class" refers to those with the lowest incomes (Supriyanti, 2007).

Inequality of income and wealth shows social class disparities in many countries. Economic factors, such as income, wealth, and employment status, can be used to classify differences in social class. This group includes all members of the upper, middle, and working classes (Weber, 2019). Certain social groups, such as the working class, coastal communities, or ethnic minorities, are just a few examples of socio economic groupings that frequently struggle to access the same economic opportunities and resources as more affluent groups. Additionally, social class disparities can also have an impact on social mobility, education, access to health services, and housing. Because of this, existing socioeconomic inequities may be strengthened and increased.

According to Weber (2019) the resulting type of social class is 'the dominant group of businessmen and property owners'; bourgeoisie (upper class), 'worker with formal credentials'; (the middle class), and 'those who are deprived and receive less income to live off their labor'; (lower class or working class). In Great Britain, the aristocracy and royalty were considered the upper class, and their class status depending on how wealthy they were.

Marx went on to say that there are two classes in society: the upper class and the lower class (Suseno, 1999). The lifestyles of the wealthy and the poor differ due to disparities in income and standard of living. Compared to poor individuals, rich people will have better access to education and prestige. Everything is made simple for the upper class by using the wealth they have. In a feudal society based on land and agriculture, there were two distinct classes of production: masters and

slaves, also known as the aristocracy and peasants. Masters or aristocracy owned masters (means of production), while slaves or peasants owned only their labor power.

Social class distinctions can be reflected in literary works. One kind of literature is the novel. Sometimes most novels are inspired by true stories so that they can reveal many problems in everyday life, therefore, novels are very important for modern society. Novels provide the audience with a source of entertainment that allows them to appreciate remarkable literary representations, identify characters, fashion trends, and genres, and enjoy the events themselves. Additionally, the novel's readers have the power to change how people perceive their environment and society, which benefits the author because the novel has the potential to become a social practice.

Following are some of the points Eagleton discusses on how literature and society interact: "Novels can reflect their authors' personalities, depict the facts of life around them, and affect the readers' ideas and emotions. Novels also have the ability to reflect the social, political and cultural conditions of society in a certain time" (Eagleton, 2011).

The Notebook by Nicholas Sparks depicts a wider social context by depicting the differences in social class between its main characters, Noah Calhoun and Allie Nelson. The class division described in this novel has a significant impact on their lives.

First, the stark difference in social class between Noah and Allie plays a significant role in hindering their relationship. Noah comes from a working background, while Allie is a child from a billionaire family. As their relationship gets serious, Allie's family looks down on Noah due to his lower social status. They assume that Noah is not suitable for Allie due to his lack of wealth and high social status.

In addition, class division has an impact on the life choices and goals of the characters in the novel. Allie lives in an environment full of pressure and expectations from her family. She was asked to marry a rich man who fit her social class. This class division influences her life decisions, especially in her relationship with Noah.

This novel also discusses the psychological impact of social class division. Noah becomes insecure and feels unworthy to be loved by Allie because of the difference in social class. On the other hand, Allie experiences pressure from her family and questions whether she will ever be truly happy with a life dictated by her social class. This novel raises broader questions about how social class divisions can affect relationships and one's personal life by showing the differences in social class in the relationship between Noah and Allie. This novel also shows how the general public perceives differences in social class and the extent to which it can affect one's opportunities, ambitions, opportunities, and goals in life.

Through this depiction, the novel "The Notebook" presents the conflicts and obstacles faced by its characters as a result of social class divisions. This

highlights the importance of understanding the far-reaching effects of social class divisions on society and how they can affect everyday life, personal relationships and individual aspirations.

To analyze this, the literary criticism theory of Marxism is used to determine the behavior and patterns of society in dealing with the class struggle in *The Notebook* Novel by Nicholas Sparks. The researcher finds some previous studies that are relevant to the research that the researcher has conducted. They are mostly in thesis and journal form. Those researchers are a sign that this kind of research has been applied. This provides four studies conducted by different researchers. The first and second studies discuss the approach that is applied in this study. The third study discusses the novel. The fourth and the fifth discuss social class.

The first research is “Power and Social Standing of Characters in the 1997 Film *Titanic*: A Review of Marxism” by Alius (2022). The writers examine Rose's position in the movie in terms of power and class by using a Marxist perspective on the struggle between the upper and lower classes. Karl Marx's theory was applied in the study to separate social class into two groups: economic background and occupation. The basis of the research is the Marxist perspective of the movie, which is based on the character identities and social class. The theory claims that class conflict arises from social class stratification. Marxist literary criticism analyzes the classes that separate the upper and lower classes within the literary work.

Another research entitled “Analysis of Marxist-Feminism on The Oppressed Women as Breeding Apparatus in *The Handmaid's Tale* Novel” by

Pratama (2018). The author uses Marxism-feminism theory to reveal the reason behind the oppression of the women depicted in the novel. Following a thorough analysis, the study's findings indicate that *The Handmaid's Tale* is fundamentally a futuristic fiction with a structure in which certain groups of women are classified into various social classes. In the extrinsic element, the author finds that the social classes of women dominate one another and that the Gileadean persecution, including the use of religion as a means of manipulating the Handmaids, caused and maintained these social classes.

Related to the novel which the researcher is studying, the researcher find the third previous study by Restuningtyas et al. (2016) entitled “Affection Reflected in *The Notebook Novel* (1996) By Nicholas Sparks: A Psychoanalytic Approach”. The objective of this research is to examine Nicholas Sparks' *The Notebook Novel* based on the structural elements and analyze this novel based on the psychoanalytic approach. The author uses a qualitative approach. According to this study, the main character's issue is that he loves his wife so much that he does everything for Allie, including writing her letters for three years although the letters are never ever replayed by Allie. However, when they finally meet, the love that has been missing for more than 14 years returns to their hearts.

The fourth previous study was written by Nasution et al. (2021) entitled “An Analysis of Social Classes and its Impact in *Crazy Rich Asian Novel* by Kevin Kwan”. The authors analyze this thesis using social conflict theory and social class theory. The findings and analysis of socioeconomic class differences are found in the

book. The concept of social class, where people categorize their social class into the upper class and middle class is what causes this class disparity, where the upper classes do not want to accept the middle class into their class. The impact is the gap in social status in a family life or relationship. This gap affects the thinking of upper families who cannot accept any class lower than them to enter their families.

The last previous study is from Liu (2020) Semantic Scholar, entitled “Analysis of Social Class Inequality Based on the Movie Parasite”. The purpose of this paper is to study the gap between the rich and poor reflected in the movie Parasite. This paper, which is based on the film, focuses on investigating the effects of the rich and poor gaps in modern society, especially in aspects of work and education. The study concludes that the rich own the great majority of high-quality resources in modern society which makes it difficult for the poor to enter the rich class by their own efforts. From generation to generation, the gap between the rich and the poor has become increasingly obvious due to social class strata. (Liu, 2020).

The Notebook by Nicholas Sparks is a novel that describes social inequality. Therefore the correct approach is Marxist, which was introduced by Karl Marx and sociological theory by Max Weber. They saw that human history consisted of high and low classes and that led to disparities. In this study the researcher will explore the relationship between intrinsic elements focusing on setting at the novel with Marxist Social Class Theory. So this research entitled Disparity of Social Classes in Nicholas Sparks the Notebook: A Marxist Approach.

This study is important because it examines the function and effects of social class disparity in society and how it reflects itself in literary works by using literary analysis with a Marxist theoretical framework. This study examines how the differences between rich and poor people affect the way we live and relate to each other. It makes it easier for us to understand how literature, including novels, may instruct us on how to address these societal issues. In addition, it helps researcher improve their critical thinking and analytical abilities when reading, comprehending, and utilizing social ideas in literary contexts. The findings of this study might also make important contributions to the social studies and literary studies fields.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

1. What are the character and characterization of Noah and Allie portrayed in The Notebook?
2. How does The Notebook's setting, particularly the contrasted locations and social environments contribute to the portrayal of social class differences that influence the experiences and interactions of the characters?
3. How does Noah Calhoun take part in the process of class struggle?

### **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

This study is conducted to respond to the research questions. The objectives are formulated as follows:

1. To analyze the character and characterization of Noah and Allie portrayed in The Notebook.

2. To analyze The Notebook's setting, particularly the contrasted locations and social environments contribute to the portrayal of social class differences that influence the experiences and interactions of the characters.
3. To find out how Noah Calhoun takes part in the process of class struggle.

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This research will examine how novel "The Notebook" describes the social class gap by paying special attention to the intrinsic elements in relation to Marxist Social Class Theory. This study will also investigate how social class is described by the characters and how their experiences and behavior reflect their respective positions in the social class hierarchy using a Marxist approach and the messages conveyed in the novel. The researcher will focus on how "The Notebook" is seen from a Marxist perspective, with a focus on how social class disparities are described and how the story in the novel influences it.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study highlights the socio-economic inequalities that exist in society and shows the actual social class divisions that are shown in "The Notebook." It gives insight into the processes responsible for these differences and how they affect a person's life and relationships. By exploring the disparities in how the social class gap is depicted in "The Notebook" from a Marxist point of view, this research fills the existing research vacuum. Overall, this study is significant because it contributes to literary analysis, explores social inequality, expands Marxist literary analysis, fills knowledge gaps, and connects to contemporary social issues. This study explores the

social class differences in "The Notebook" from a Marxist perspective, provides important insights into complex social class dynamics and invites the reader to consider the broader consequences of social class differences in society. In addition, this research is expected to be used as a reference for future education, especially for students at the Faculty of Law and Languages at Stikubank University.

### **1.6 Context Oriented Approach**

This research is classified as descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research can be understood as a research procedure that uses descriptive data, in the form of written or spoken words from people and actors that can be observed. In other words, this type of research cannot use quantitative methods. In this study, the researcher found problem that could be obtained from theories, facts, and data taken from a literary work, namely a novel. The research object is social class conflict in the novel "The Notebook" by Nicholas Sparks. This research is related to social class conflict. The approach used is Marxism. The researcher uses a Marxist study technique to investigate the research difficulties in this thesis. Researcher uses the theory of Karl Marx and Max Weber. There are two data collection methods, the primary data for this study is a novel by Nicholas Sparks taken from his book entitled "The Notebook" published in October 1996. To enrich the material and complete the research, researcher used secondary data. The researcher takes secondary data sources, including references and materials related to research both taken from books and the internet. The study was conducted by classifying the scenes from the novel related to

the formulation of the problem. The researcher then analyzes the data using a Marxist perspective, and the researcher interprets the findings.

### **1.7 Organization of the Paper**

This research will be organized into 5 chapters, they are follows:

- a. Chapter I contains an introduction to the research. It contains the background of the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, approach of the study and the organization of the paper.
- b. Chapter II contains a synopsis of the novel *The Notebook* (1996) and a biography of Nicholas Sparks.
- c. Chapter III contains a review of related literature. It contains previous studies, popular culture, the description of the novel and its classification, the intrinsic elements of the novel, general and specific explanations of Marxism according to Karl Marx and Max Weber.
- d. Chapter IV contains the findings and discussion thoroughly which are the analysis of the object using the theory of Marxism.
- e. Chapter V contains the conclusion of the study that has been done and the suggestion to the reader and further research.