

## The Psychological Aspects of Conflict of the Main Character in the Novel *The Guardian* by Nicholas Sparks

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### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini berjudul Aspek Psikologis dari Konflik Karakter Utama dalam Novel "The Guardian" oleh Nicholas Sparks. Novel ini adalah novel ketujuh yang ditulis oleh penulis Nicholas Sparks, yang diterbitkan pada bulan September 2013. Penelitian ini bertujuan meneliti dan menganalisis konflik yang dialami oleh tokoh utama di dalam novel dan aspek psikologis dari konflik tersebut yang dialami oleh tokoh utama. Data dikumpulkan melalui penelitian kepustakaan dan dianalisis dengan metode kualitatif. Teori yang digunakan didasarkan pada teori konflik yang diusulkan oleh Kenney, dan teori psikologi yang diusulkan oleh Bernhardt. Konflik Julie dapat dikategorikan menjadi konflik eksternal dan internal. Untuk konflik eksternal terjadi antara Richard Franklin dan Mike Harris. Karakter utama yang diwakili oleh Julie Barenson mendapat banyak perang antara benaknya dan dianalisis dalam konflik internal. Analisis aspek psikologis karakter utama terbagi atas keinginan, emosi, dan perasaan. Keinginan karakter utama yang digambarkan oleh narator cerita ini adalah ketika Julie ingin Richard berhenti mengikutinya lagi. Emosi adalah saat Julie sedih setelah mendapat konflik dengan Mike. Perasaannya adalah saat dia merasa kasihan kepada Richard karena dia tidak bisa pergi bersamanya lagi.*

**Kata kunci:** *konflik, tokoh, psikologi*

### 1. Background of the Study

Literature is a kind of art, which offers pleasure and illumination (Kennedy, 1991). Literature is also an individual expression of human beings which entertain and educate other people. According to Wellek and Warren (1962:107), literature is a form of human creativity consisting of idiom, feeling, idea, spirit, faith, and experience.

This study is intended to analyse the most important part of literature works, namely the main character. According to Kenney (1966:24-25) the character is expected to be natural of life

like. Human being is free but the fictional character is never entirely free because it is a part of an artistic whole and must always serve the needs for that whole. The reason to analyze the main character is that the main character takes an important part in the story and appears continually from beginning until the end of the story.

This study is focused on the analysis of the conflict of the main character in the novel "The Guardian" by Nicholas Sparks published in September 2003. This is a novel published by the first New York Times Bestselling Author with over one hundred million copies of

books sold. It is interesting to analyze the conflicts which were experienced by the main character in this story. Conflict is one of the important aspects built up in the story itself. Many literary works must have conflict because without it, the story would not be interesting to the reader. The story of *The Guardian* by Nicholas Sparks is very interesting to analyze which includes many aspects of life especially human conflicts.

## 2. Problems of the Study

Based on the background above, the problems that are discussed in this study are as follows:

1. What conflicts that affect the characterization of the main character in the novel *The Guardian*?
2. What psychological aspects of conflicts of the main character are available in the novel *The Guardian*?

## 3. Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are closely related to the problems formulated above. The aims of this study are as follows:

1. To identify and analyze kinds of conflicts in the main character of the novel.
2. To find the psychological aspect of the main character through the conflict.

## 4. Research Method

### a. Data Source

The novel is the source of this study entitled *The Guardian*. *The Guardian* by Nicholas Sparks is a romance novel. The novel was first published in September 2013 with 494 pages. This is a novel published by the first New York Times Bestselling Author with over one hundred million copies of books sold. I used a copyright book from Hachette Book Group, Inc. The data were chosen because it can give some data

based on the topic of this study, and also the story is very interesting to analyze.

### b. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The data were collected based on library research and this method was supported by some techniques. First by reading the novel and the biography of the author, and secondly marking and taking notes of parts of the novel related to the study. After getting the source and taking the relevant data, the data were analyzed carefully.

### c. Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The collected data were analyzed using the qualitative method based on the theoretical framework. The analysis starts with the overview of the biography of Nicholas Sparks followed by the synopsis of *The Guardian* novel. Afterwards, the conflict of the main character was analysed by applying the theory of conflict from Kenney (1966). Then, description of psychological aspects of the main character were analyzed by applying the theory of psychology by Bernhardt (1953).

### d. Method and Technique of Presenting Analysis

In presenting the analysis, the descriptive qualitative method was used. The result of data analysis is presented based on two research questions mentioned above. In the first problem, the conflict of the main character was analyzed by applying the theory of conflict proposed by Kenney (1966). In the second problem, the source of psychological aspects was shown through descriptive explanation based on the theory of psychology proposed by Bernhardt (1953).

## 5. Analysis

### 5.1. External Conflict and Psychological Aspect

#### a. The Conflict between Julie Barenson and Richard Franklin.

The conflict between Julie and Richard was at Julie's house. After leaving Swansboro city for a long time, Richard was back again. He came to Julie's house and brought her a bouquet of roses. It was not easy for Julie. She hesitated before taking the flowers, wishing he had not brought them. Julie explained that she was out with Mike. Then she was on debate with Richard because she could not have dating with him again. Richard was jealous with Mike and became angrier. She tried to say sorry to him and did not want him to get hurt.

This is the following quotation:

"So, were you in?" he asked.

"Earlier, I mean?"

She felt her shoulders give a little.

She didn't want to do this now.

"I was out with a friend," she said.

"A friend?"

"You remember Mike? We grabbed a quick dinner."

"Oh, yeah. From the bar that night, right?" he said. "The guy who works at the garage?"

"That's the one."

"Oh," he said. "Have fun?"

"I haven't seen a lot of him lately, so it was nice to be able to catch up."

"Good." He glanced off to the side of the porch, then down at his feet, then at her again. "Can I come in? I was hoping we might be able to talk for a few minutes."

"I don't know," she hedged. "It's kind of late. I was just getting ready for bed."

"Oh," he said. "That's fine. I understand. Can I see you tomorrow, then?" maybe we can have dinner.

"I'm sorry," she said, "but I can't. I already made plans."

"With Mike again?"

She nodded

Richard absently scratched the side of his cheek, continuing to hold her gaze. "So that's it then? For us, I mean?"

Her expression answered for her.

"Did I do something wrong?" he asked.

"No," she protested, "it's not that."

"Then....what is it?" Didn't you have fun when we went out?

"Yes, I had fun."

"Then what is it?"

Julie hesitated. "It's not about you at all, really. It's about Mike and me. We just seem.... Well, I don't know how to explain it. What can I say?"

"Must have been an exciting few days while I was gone, huh?" he said.

"Look, I'm sorry....."

**"For what? For going behind my back as soon as I left? For using me to make Mike jealous?"**

**"What are you talking about?"**

**"You heard me."**

**"I didn't use you....."**

Richard ignored her, his tone becoming angrier. "No? Then why are you ending this when we're still getting to know each other? And how did Mike suddenly get so interesting? I mean, I leave town for a few days, and the next thing I know, it's over between us and Mike has taken my place. It sure as hell sounds to me like you planned this all along. You're a jerk."

His anger suddenly gave way to an expression of hurt. "This isn't fair," he said softly. "Please, I

**just want to talk for a minute, okay?” he pleaded.**

**“Look, I’m sorry, Richard. I should not have said what I did. And I did not mean for you to get hurt. Really.” She paused, making sure he was listening. “But it is late and we were both tired. I think I better head in before either of us says anything else. Okay?”** (Chapter 17: 181-183)

The psychology of Julie was feeling. She felt sorry to Richard because she could not go with him again and she did not tell him about her dating with Mike when he was out of Swansboro city. She also did apologize for what she had said to him. His tone became angrier but she tried to explain it slowly. She was guilty and she did not want him to get hurt.

This is the following quotation:

**“I’m sorry,” she said, “but I can’t. I already made plans.”**

“With Mike again?”

She nodded

“Must have been an exciting few days while I was gone, huh?” he said.

**“Look, I’m sorry.....”**

“For what? For going behind my back as soon as I left? For using me to make Mike jealous?”

“What are you talking about?”

“You heard me.”

“I didn’t use you.....”

Richard ignored her, his tone becoming angrier. “No? Then why are you ending this when we’re still getting to know each other? And how did Mike suddenly get so interesting? I mean, I leave town for a few days, and the next thing I know, it’s over between us and Mike has taken my place. It sure as

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**“Look, I’m sorry, Richard. I should not have said what I did. And I did not mean for you to get hurt. Really.” She paused, making sure he was listening. “But it is late and we were both tired. I think I better head in before either of us says anything else. Okay?”** (Chapter 17: 181-183)

#### **b. The Conflict between Julie Barenson and Mike Harris**

The conflict happened between Julie and Mike was at Julie’s house. They were debating about Richard had spent the night at Julie’s house. He was angry because Julie didn’t tell that Richard had spent the night at her house. She was sad because Mike did not trust her explanation. She had explained that she did not sleep with Richard at the night he stayed at Julie’s, but he still did not want to know the truth.

This is the following quotation:

**“That was the night of our first date, wasn’t it? It was also, he remembered, the night he’d first tried to kiss her but she hadn’t let him.”**

Julie nodded. “Nice timing, huh?” It wasn’t the time for jokes, and she regretted it immediately. She took a step forward. “I didn’t know he was going to stop by. I was just thinking of heading to bed when he came to the door.”

“And what? You just let him it?”

**“It wasn’t like that. We had an argument because I told him I didn’t want to see him anymore. It got kind of heated, and then Singer.....”**

**She paused. She didn’t want to go into this at all, because it seemed so pointless.**

**“Singer what?”**

Julie crossed her arms and shrugged. “Singer bit him. When I tried to close the door, he stopped it with his hand and Singer went after him.”

**Mike stared at her. “And you didn’t think any of this was important enough to tell me? Even after everything that’s happened?”**

**“That’s just it,” she pleaded. “It wasn’t important. I told him I didn’t want to see him and he got upset.”**

**Mike crossed his arm. “So let me get this straight,” he said. “He comes to the door, you have a fight, Singer goes after him, and then you invite him to spend the night. Correct me if I’m wrong, but your story doesn’t seem to make a lot of sense.”**

**“Don’t be like this, Mike. Please....”**

**“Be like what? Someone who’s a little upset that you lied to me?”**

**“I didn’t lie to you”**

**“No? What do you call it?”**

**“I didn’t tell you because it didn’t matter. It meant nothing, and nothing happened. It’s not like all this is happening because of that night.”**

**“How do you know? Maybe that’s what set him off in this direction.”**

**“But I didn’t do anything but listen to him!”**

Mike said nothing, and Julie saw the accusation in his eyes.

“You don’t believe me?” she asked.

“What? Do you think I slept with him?”

“I don’t know what to think anymore.”

She suddenly knew that this, too, was part of Richard’s plan.

“Is that what you think of me, Mike? That I’d sleep with a man I barely know on the same day I told him I didn’t want to see him anymore? After I’d told you that I didn’t even like the guy? After all the years you’ve known me, do you really believe I’d do something like that?”

Mike stared at Julie. “I don’t know.”

The words stung, and Julie felt her eyes tear. “I didn’t sleep with him.”

“Maybe not,” Mike finally said. He reached for the door. “But it still hurts to think you didn’t trust me with this. Especially after all this stuff started happening.”

“I do trust you. But I didn’t want to hurt you.”

“You just did, Julie,” he said. “You just did.” (Chapter 32: 355-358)

The psychology of Julie was emotion. It happened because Julie was sad after getting conflict with Mike. He did not trust her explanation that she did not do anything with Richard. She tried to explain but Mike showed his anger and spoke louder. She cried while explaining, but he left her without listening to the truth.

This is the following quotation:

**“Don’t be like this, Mike. Please....”**

**“Be like what? Someone who’s a little upset that you lied to me?”**

**“I didn’t lie to you”**

“No? What do you call it?”

**“I didn’t tell you because it didn’t matter. It meant nothing, and nothing happened. It’s not like all this is happening because of that night.”**

“How do you know? Maybe that’s what set him off in this direction.”

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**“I do trust you. But I didn’t want to hurt you.”**

“You just did, Julie,” he said. “You just did.” (Chapter 32: 355-358)

## 5.2. Internal Conflict and Psychological Aspect

An internal conflict is also sometimes called psychological conflict.

Interpersonal conflict is struggle that takes place in the character’s mind. The conflict happened when she wanted to answer the questions from the people who asked her condition after her husband passed away.

The following quotation:

*You want to know what it was like to lose my husband? She wanted to ask. Here’s what it’s like.*

*Jim’s dead, and now that he’s gone, I feel like I’m dead too. Is that, Julie wondered, what people wanted to hear? Or did they want platitudes? I’ll be okay. It’s hard, but I’ll make through this. Thank you for asking.*

(prologue: xii)

The psychology of Julie was wants. After her husband passed away, she avoided to go outside or meet her friends. She hated everything about Swansboro city. If the people asked her condition, she wanted to answer those questions. She was not in good condition right now.

This is the following quotation:

**She wanted to ask. Here’s what it’s like.**

*Jim’s dead, and now that he’s gone, I feel like I’m dead too. Is that, Julie wondered, what people wanted to hear? Or did they want platitudes? I’ll be okay. It’s hard, but I’ll make through this. Thank you for asking.*

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## 6. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing analysis and discussion, the following points can be drawn as conclusion:

In *The Guardian* novel, there are two intrinsic elements analysed; they are conflicts and the psychological aspects of the main character. The conflict in the novel describes how Julie Barenson as the main character walk on her life with all the problems she gets. The conflict of Julie could be categorized into two general types: external and internal conflicts. For the external conflict, it is shown in this story that mostly the conflict occurred between man and man, Richard Franklin and Mike Harris. The main character represented by Julie Barenson is described as a very thoughtful character. That is why she gets a lot of wars between her mind and it is analyzed in the internal conflicts.

The analysis of psychological aspects of the main character is divided into want, emotions, and feeling. The wants of the main character described by the narrator of this story is when Julie wanted Richard to stop following her again. The emotion is when Julie was sad after getting conflict with Mike. The feeling is when he felt sorry to Richard because she could not go with him again.

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