



**BOOK REVIEW OF JAMES PATTERSON'S *MAX : A
MAXIMUM RIDE NOVEL***

A FINAL PROJECT

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For S-1 Degree in Literature
In English Department, Faculty of Humanities
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PRONOUNCEMENT

I states truthfully that this project is compiled by me without taking the results from other research in any university, in S-1, S-2, and S-3 degree and in diploma. In addition, I ascertain that I do not take the material from other publications or someone's work except for the references mentioned in bibliography.

Semarang,2018

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MOTTO AND DEDICATION

Innallaha laa yughoyyiru maa biqoumin, hatta yughoyyiruu maa bianfusihim

Allah will not change the good condition of people as long as they do not change their state of goodness themselves.

(Q.S. Ar-Ra'd : 11)

Hasbunallah wa ni'mal wakiil, ni'mal maula wa ni'mal nashir

Allah (Alone) is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs (for us)

(Q.S. Ali Imran : 173)

*This final project is dedicated to
My family and everyone who surrounds me in every
single step in my life*

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The writer realizes that this final project is still far from perfect. Therefore, will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this final project better.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE.....	i
A FINAL PROJECT	i
PRONOUNCEMENT	ii
VALIDATION	iv
MOTTO AND DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of the Study.....	1
1.2. Purpose of the Study	2
2. SUMMARY OF <i>MAX: A Maximum Ride Novel</i>	2
3.1. The Strengths of the Novel	4
3.1.1. Plot	4
3.1.2. Character	6
3.1.2.1. The Flock	6
3.1.2.2. Max	7
3.1.2.3. Nudge	8
3.1.2.4. Fang.....	8
3.1.2.5. Angel.....	9
3.1.2.6. Gazzy.....	9
3.1.2.7. Iggy	10
3.1.2.8. Total	10
3.1.2.8. Mr. Chu	11
3.2. The Weaknesses of the Novel	11
4. CONCLUSION.....	12
REFERENCES.....	1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Interpreting literature can be performed through various manners. Although, it is not wholly true, literature is often defined as imaginative or fictional writings (Eagleton, 1996:1). The basis of science fiction writings is the imagination for advancement in technology, futuristic science, and changes in social or environmental life. This imagination constantly depicted our curiosity for space-time-travelling activities and extraterrestrial life on regular basis (1987:761). The novel being reviewed entitles *Max: A Maximum Ride Novel* written by James Patterson as the fifth out of nine *Maximum Ride* series. The writer highly regards this novel as an adventurous science fiction book, there are so much action that happens in this book. This novel provides constant excitement and successfully draws the reader tension until the end of the story. There is also a movie version that not less interesting from the novel version. This novel will constantly bring our excitement to a whole new level as it successfully attracts our emotional strain until the last page. This novel is also recommended for people who like fantasy story about mutant.

The centre of attention in this review is the story description through analytical point of view in this novel. By reviewing *Max: A Maximum Ride Novel*, the content of the book will be more understandable to the readers. More importantly, this book review gives both positive and negative review to state the writer's standpoint regarding the contents of the book.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The following are the purposes of this project:

1. To find out the strength and weakness of the novel.
2. To get the message from the novel.

2. SUMMARY OF *MAX: A Maximum Ride Novel*

In this series, the story begins with Max and her companion (the Flock) incorporated to Dr. Martinez along with the help of some of her associates to form the Coalition to Stop the Madness (CSM), an ecological conservation organization which helps to spread environmental awareness at public air shows where the Flock's perform. The show takes place in some of the most polluted cities in the world. In their show in Los Angeles, The Flock is attacked by an assassin in the middle of their performance. At the end of day, the assassin blow himself up in nearby warehouse to conceal his identity after being cornered by Flock.

For their protection, Jeb, Valencia, and the Flock are all escorted to a hidden safe house located on the border of the city. In the midnight, Max leave the group by herself on a flight, suddenly she is ambushed by some of M-Geeks and shot down by them. The M-Geeks bring her to meet a short Asian man who called himself Mr. Chu, he declares himself as an representative of the wealthiest and most powerful people in the world. The CSM seems to be an eyesore, and he ask Max to stop their activity, but she refused. Later, she was freed and warned that she will regret her choice.

The Flock are recommend to attend the Day and Night School. Even Max disagree, but they have to try it out. Max's worry is proven by Nudge who find it

is fun to attend the school and decides to stay even though Max want to leave with the Flock. After they leave the school and come back to the safe house, Dr Martinez is missing and they just realize that she is being kidnapped on the way. In order to save Max's mother, The Flock goes to boot camp at Pearl Harbor and they surprise the instructor with their survival session. On the night of their approved expedition to search Dr. Martinez, Fang and Max went on a "date", then attacked by a group of M-Geeks and surprised that Nudge come and save them.

Finally the Flock accompanied by Brigid, one of the researcher in the expedition, they drive the mini sub to go deeper into seabed to inspect everything that causing contamination which killing the fishes. When they returns, the ship is attacked by a group of M-Geeks. With the help of mini-sub's arms and a bomb from Gazzy and Iggy, Max takes them out. Then, something appear from the under of sea floor that shows in earlier surveillance, an apparent underwater mountain. Max and Fang along with two scientists explore an underwater cave on the mountain. Suddenly, they are attacked by a giant squid and a giant snakes. After fend them off, they find a giant underwater dome where Max mother is taken captive through the traces of the snakes. The snakes is rampaging and breaking the facilities. Max and her mother barely escaped because the dome is flooding thanks to the snakes.

Upon returning to the base, Max spotted Mr. Chu and Brigid talking to each other, and The Voice inside Max's head tells her to be on guard of them. As the Flock leaves, Max confessed her love to Fang, and they seem closer to each

other. She tells him about how precious The Flock and him to her. As they kiss, Angel whispered to her head that she is glad with their new relationship.

3. REVIEW OF THE JAMES PATTERSON NOVEL BOOK OF MAX

Novel narrates a story regarding certain problems or events, and the whole story has its own centre of attention (Luckas, 1971: 25). The main idea of a novel becomes the focus where story elements revolve around.

The strengths and weaknesses become the major distinguishing factors from one literary work to another. In this project paper, the strengths and weaknesses of the novel *MAX: A Maximum Ride Novel* will be described comprehensively.

3.1. The Strengths of the Novel

The literary works always have intrinsic and extrinsic elements. A novel as one of literary works has intrinsic and extrinsic elements too. There are many elements that represent the point of the whole story. The strengths of this novel is plot and character.

3.1.1. Plot

Plot is the main parts that describe the sequence of events in a story. The plot is the story or it is deciding how the story will construct, unfold, and grow in time. A good plot usually leads to an interesting story/novel, as plot encompasses most literary elements.

For thriller and science-fiction enthusiasts, *Max* is definitely a novel worth reading. The suspense element of this novel really stands out as the critical characteristic because it left the reader wondering about the plot of the novel.

Therefore, it will continuously excite the reader to follow the story until the last page. *Max* is also exciting with the surprising events, better twists, and mystery about the enemy who wants to make Max and the Flock dead.

There are many surprising events in this series. The surprising events can be seen as follows.“Heads up!” Fang shouted. We had a second to exchange glances, thinking the same thing: We hadn’t seen them on the roof, just minutes before. Where had they come from?” (Patterson, 2010: 37).

The quotation above shows swift action performed by the flock when they suddenly attacked by someone during their air show in the stadium and they don't know who the attacker is. Another surprise attack comes from a monster that went out of control and thought they are going to die on their submarine.

“Just then something hit the sub hard, knocking us off balance. More alarms blared, and we heard shouting. There was a gut-wrenching grinding, the sound of screeching metal, then the sub went silent, tilted on its side. We were dead in the water.” (Patterson, 2010: 204).

A twist in plot provides some tuning point which makes the story more interesting to follow through. A twist in this novel can be seen at:

"Max," said Nudge, and instinctively I braced. I'd known something was up.
“Get in sweetie," I said, pretending not to notice anything was wrong. She swallowed. "I'm staying."
"You can't. It's not safe."
"I'll be safe at the school, in the dorms," she said. She gestured limply to the house, it's surrounding wreckage. "I can't do this anymore. I want to go to school. I just want to be a kid. At least for a while."” (Patterson, 2010: 94-95)

The mystery about the real identity of real enemy is haven't been solved and continued as a plot twist that excite the reader to guess how the story will continue. The mystery and plot twist can be seen at:

“Beware of Mr. Chu, the Voice commanded like a foghorn booming inside my head. And maybe Brigid. Maybe? I asked the Voice, incredulous. I would say, definitely. Wouldn’t you?” (Patterson, 2010: 265)

3.1.2. Character

Character is a figure that is created by the author according to his or her representation of a human being. The reader can recognize and understand the characters through their dialogue, actions, appearance, inside feeling and motivation in the narrative description.

The characters and personalities of The Flock and Max vary so much not only provides the best story but also makes the entire book series interesting. Each of them have their own characteristics. Even they are still young, they can think independently. Characterization makes this book, which was written for a younger audience, can attract adult to fall in love with the characters, too.

3.1.2.1. The Flock

The Flock is the group of avian-human hybrids, they are the result of human experiment performed by a research facility named The School, the place of their birth. After a long prolonged dissatisfaction and their poor treatment they decided to flee together as a group. The Flock is the main characters of Maximum Ride series. The Flock member consists of Max, Fang, Nudge, Gazzy, Iggy,

Angel, and Total; the flying talking dog. This book series is part of CSM (Coalition to Stop the Madness) an ecological conservation organization which one of the members is Max mother.

3.1.2.2. Max

Flock is led by Maximum, also known as Max. She is the oldest of The Flock and the only person in the group who close to Jeb, the person who helped them to flee from The School. She possesses flight ability that excels her associates, and she also has an inner voice that helps her to handle the problems and warn her if there is some danger going to happen. She is the most patient of all and very loyal to The Flock.

“I’m the Flock leader. I’m fast. I’m tough, and I can think on my feet or in flight. My hair-trigger responses have saved our hides more times that I can count. So my brain kicked in to high gear right away as I cut to the heart of the matter. (Patterson, 2010: 78)

...

Nudge was silent. I was congratulating myself for averting disaster when she said quietly, “There’s a difference between being special and being a total freak. I’m a total freak. And i’m staying here.” (Patterson, 2010: 71)

Max is a beautiful girl with brown pretty eyes and brown hair. Her friends like her beautiful eyes and her hair. Her characteristics were shown in these snippets of the story. In ““You are really pretty, Max,” said a small voice next to me.” (Patterson, 2010: 29), and “You have nice hair and really pretty eyes,” Angel went on earnestly (Patterson, 2010: 30), the former depicted her beauty through the admiration of her inner voice to her, while the later depicted her physical appearance.

3.1.2.3. Nudge

Nudge is only eleven years old. Her main physical attributes are her fairly tall figure, curly brown hair, mocha colored skin, and dark-brown eyes. She is the agreeable one of the Flock. Her *Magneto*-like ability and hacking skill is very remarkable. Although she is talkative and has a weird interest in clothes and fashion, she wants to be a normal kid who doesn't have wings.

“I just want to fit in,” Nudge said. She looked down at her tan feet, side by side on the new, clean carpet. “I want to be like other kids.”
(Patterson, 2010: 68)

...

“I want to be normal. I want to be like other kids. I'm tired of being a freak and having to run all the time and never being able to settle down. I want a home. And I know how to get one.”
(Patterson, 2010: 69)

3.1.2.4. Fang

Fang is a tall fourteen-year old boy, and he has olive-colored skin, dark eyes, and black hair. He is a mysterious because he spent most of his time in silence and rarely shows his emotions, but he is a gentleman.

“No one looks like Fang – dark and still and dangerous, like he's daring you to set him off. But I'd seen him rocking Angel when she'd hurt herself; I'd seen him smile in his sleep; I'd seen the deep, dark light in his eyes as he leaned over me ...” (Patterson, 2010: 21)

Beside that, he is pretty adaptable to his surrounding environment just as Chameleon does. His presence is often unnoticed as long as he shuts himself up and moves in slow motion. "Fang can pretty much disappear into whatever background he is near." (Patterson, 2010: 29).

His good looking features makes Max fall in love with him. His romantic feeling for Max was shown quite often as they kissed each other. This action often confuses Max.

““I choose *you*,” he said very softly, “*Max*.”

Then his hard, rough hand tenderly cupped my chin, and suddenly his mouth was on mine, and every synapse in my brain shorted out.” (Patterson, 2010: 73)

3.1.2.5. Angel

Angel is the youngest member as she is still six years old. Her angelic look is shown through her white wings as a result of genetic jackpot. In addition, her curly blonde hair and blue eyes complements her physical appearance. She can survive under water for extended period and has knowledge of fish language and mind-reading ability.

“With anyone else, I could ask them how they know that and then discredit them. Not Angel. She knew because she’d seen it, in his mind.” (Patterson, 2010: 30)

...

“Angel was peering downward. “I’m trying to see that big thing,” she said. The big sea-monster thing.” (Patterson, 2010: 207)

Even though Angel has many varieties of power, she is still a child which is stubborn, rule breaker, not sensible, reckless, and difficult to handle.

3.1.2.6. Gazzy

Gazzy is 8 years old. He is Angel brother and they are the only members who are actually related in the Flock. His voice-and-sound-replicating ability with 100 percent accuracy is very remarkable. His other skills are unmentionable. He also very knowledgeable about explosive, even Max praise him for it in the following example."You could lock the Gasman in a padded cell with some dental Jell-O, and he'd find a way to make something explode." (Patterson, 2010: 88).

3.1.2.7. Iggy

Iggy is a 14 years old. His skin is very pale, and he has strawberry-blond hair and light blue eyes. He is blind but has adjusted well. Despite this, he enhanced his other senses to accommodate his weakness as he can differentiate the Flock member only by listening to their footsteps and rubbing their fingerprints and feather.

“Iggy looked in her general direction. He gestured to his pale blond hair, pale skin, unseeing blue eyes. “They’re not gonna call me the *Black Knight*.” (Patterson, 2010: 21)

Gazzy and Iggy are best friend. Being a highly-skilled explosive maker, Gazzy and Iggy together they destroyed the “domb-bots” that attacked the Flock’s safe house by shooting a lightning rod at a crowd of them.

“We saw big thunderheads forming in the distance—the first time in years, I bet! Then—check it out! This house had a lightning rod on the roof! That’s a metal pole that sends any lightning bolts into the ground. We disconnected it, aimed it at the dumb-bots, and enhanced its powers a tad! Next thing you know, they’re extra-crispy! And the best part? They were standing so close together that they helped fry each other!” (Patterson, 2010: 90)

3.1.2.8. Total

Total is a mutant dog and can talk like a human, but it does not explained how old Total is. It is one of the Flock.

“Total!” I said, holding his chunky little body. “Total!” He blinked and moaned. “I’m hit, Max. They got me. I guess I’m gonna live fast, die young, and leave a beautiful corpse, huh?” (Patterson, 2010: 12)

...

... Then he looked at us, these six weird, mostly tall, somewhat ungroomed children who had permission to be on a naval submarine. Plus their dog, who almost seemed like he could talk.” (Patterson, 2010: 166)

3.1.2.8. Mr. Chu

Mr. Chu is the antagonist in *Max : A Maximum Ride Novel*. He is a short Asian man who claims to represent many of the world's wealthiest and most powerful people. He planned on putting an end to CSM activity by kidnapping Max and telling him to follow his order.

“Standing before me was an Asian man, a couple inches shorter than me, but then I'm weirdly tall. He was stocky and wore glasses and the kind of plain, navy Chinese jacket you see in old movies. Thick black hair was brushed back severely from his face.” (Patterson, 2010: 54-55)

...

“I want to explain you that you must immediately sever your ties to the Coalition to Stop the Madness,” the man said, looking intently into my eyes.” (Patterson, 2010: 55)

Mr. Chu seriousness didn't stop there he also kidnapped Max's mother to further convince her to stop what CSM doing.

"Yes," John said. "Just a minute ago, we received another fax. It showed Valencia being held hostage. She was alive when the picture was taken, but we don't know how long ago that was. We enlarged the photo, and the weird thing is, the background looks like she's being held on a boat."

"Boat?" That didn't add up to anything. Oh, wait. Yes it did. When Mr. Chu's M-Geeks had grabbed me, they'd taken me to a boat. I remembered the rocking sensation. Crap." (Patterson, 2010: 79)

All character in *The Flock* are completing each other to cover their own weakness, they are always help each other in every activity and also have strong mutual trust with every member that makes them feel connected more closer as a family, even though they are not related by blood.

3.2. The Weaknesses of the Novel

Beside the strength, the novel has the weaknesses, too. *Max: A Maximum Ride Novel*'s main weakness is only the existence of several storylines that make the readers difficult to connect the dots, because the whole thing is random and

not relevant to the rest of the *Maximum Ride* series. In some storylines there is some point that makes the clue for the story seem to be forced.

"I looked at the barrels and saw they were also stenciled with English words. "It says, Danger, Keep Away." I read slowly, peering through the water. "Property of the Chu Corporation. Huh. No surprise there. And they're marked with some kind yellow and black sign." (Patterson, 2010: 239)

4. CONCLUSION

The strength of the novel *Max* is its unpredictable story line which constantly draws the readers' curiosity and excitement until the end of the story. There are many surprising events happened in this series. Even when finished reading the book, we want to continue to the other series to find out what happens next.

The characters of *Max* and *The Flock* vary so much that provide the best story and makes the entire book series interesting. Moreover, James Patterson is able to give a soul to the main character to which the readers unconsciously grow their sympathy. While reading this novel, the readers can feel as if they were a part of the journey.

The constant excitement, tension, and curiosity that *Max* novel brings are what make the novel interesting to follow. Its unpredictability about the attacks from the enemy makes us wonder who the real enemy is.

Connecting the dots for some storylines is quite difficult for some readers as those storylines often make no sense at all. Hence, it can be said as the weakness of this novel. The whole thing is random and irrelevant to the rest of the *Maximum Ride* series.

Finally, *Max* is one of a thriller and science fiction book that is considered as a worth reading material. This novel tells us about the importance of a family even though they are not blood related and complete stranger. It taught us family is not only about blood relation but also the time they have spent together.

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