

Lira's Personality Development in Alexandra Christo's *To Kill A Kingdom*

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Abstract

This study was to analyze the character growth of a unique character of Lira in Alexandra Christo's *To Kill a Kingdom*. It is regarded as a unique character as Lira is not just character. She undergoes a transformation from a rude animal to good human being. Not like the change of character of a man whose changes only from bad to good character without anatomic change, Lira has to face problems to become a good person. Using close reading, the researcher is able to explore deeply the character of Lira before changing and after changing into a human with the result that after taking pains to overcome the problems, Lira is able to change her personality from bad ones: bloodthirsty and obedient (to bad things) to good ones: merciful, disobedient (to bad things), selfless, and noble person. Though the six determinants of Hurlock play important role for the character change, however, the researcher highlights that the more important ones are within somebody himself/herself. Therefore, the six determinants of Hurlock need attention to be more paid because the person plays a role in the world. Thus, the world is a stage within which there are many roles played so that people should be careful to play their roles in this stage.

Keywords: *Close Reading; Hurlock's Determinants; Personality Change*

INTRODUCTION

Man is born with nobility. To the development of his life journey, the nobility can be blur because of the uncontrollable passion that is influenced by inner and outer factors. According to the Islamic teaching, the best faithful person is that with the best deed (Amri & Restiono, 2021). Accordingly, the researchers were inspired to analyze the development of personality referring to the six determinants of Hurlock' theory: physical changes, changes in environments, changes in significant people, changes in social pressures, changes in roles, and changes in self-concept (1974). Thus, personality development cannot be detached from human life.

For survival, human kind needs to develop their personality (Shumate, 2021). Personality development, then, happens automatically because humans live in the world that is a stage. In the stage, there are more people playing their roles. Consequently, people not only develop the facility they get as social actors but also are prepared with the elements of a distinctive presentational style (MacAdams, 2015).

Besides, people alter steadily in the course of time that depend on their biological growth as well as the developing responsibilities they face (Specht, 2017). Indeed, what

people become now is the effect of their personality development (MacAdams, Shiner, Rebecca, & Tackett, 2019). It seems that normal people are categorized by a properly stiff incorporation that reflects social instruction of the rules as well as roles of the society. To get the autonomy development, they have to disintegrate in that they have to do the reorganization in the society. Accordingly, they come to the level of personality development (Dabrowski, 2018).

Personality development can also be seen in the character of literary works, one of which is in Alexandra Christo's *To Kill a Kingdom*. The main character, Lira is a siren, a fierce sea animal feared by human. As the daughter of the sea queen, Lira has a privilege to collect human's heart. However, Lira's fierce as a siren fades away soon after she changes to human. The only theory, then, for Lira's change of her personality refers to Hurlock's personality development with its eight determinants as the influencing factors (1973). However, the mentioned six of the eight determinants above are worth application here as they are undergone by Lira.

Recently, there has been writers studying about character development; Martin McDonagh's in his work *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing*, explores personality development through the characterization of Jason Dixon. It seems that McDonagh is influenced by Freud's psychoanalysis theory, that he performs Jason's personality before the changes through his ego with a bad character like a temperamental person. Through his superego, Jason's personality undergoes a change from temperamental to a good man (Shasita & Hudawinata, 2017). Cody Kimmels in his work *Paranorman* explores a personality development through Agatha Prenderghast's characterization. Kimmels, then, performs her characters before the change such as violent, strange, innocent, hot tempered and loving. By using intrinsic elements like plot, setting, and point of view, Kimmels explores the change of Prenderghast's personality from the bad characters afore mentioned to the good one (Hasanah, Natsir, & Ariani 2018). R. J. Palacio in his work *Wonder* explores personality development undergone by the main character, August. It seems that Hurlock's three determinants, that is, changes in environment, changes in social pressure, and changes in self-concept play important roles in August's personality changes that he is described as being an ordinary kid to be an unordinary kid and an unconfident to be a confident person (Sagimin & Damayanti, 2019).

Lucy Maud Montgomery in her work *Anne of Green Gables* explores personality development through the characterization of Anne Shirley. Montgomery, then, performs Anne's changes of personality through three stages that is the early stage, realization stage as well as learning process stage, maturity stage. The first stage refers to her feeling insecure of her identity as well as appearance. The second stage refers to the understanding of her emotion through other characters and her new identity. The last stage refers to her confidence of herself (Az Zahra & Saktiningrum, 2019). Edith Wharton in her novel *Ethan Frome* explores personality development of the main character, Ethan. Using elements of novel, Wharton shows the personality development of Ethan from hopeless to hopeful, from responsible to irresponsible, from faithful to unfaithful, and from happiness to unhappiness (Sugeha, Moge, & Oroh, 2021). Peter Farelly in his *Green Book* explores the personality development of Donald. It seems that psychoanalysis and new criticism influence Farelly's ideas to show the changes of Donald's personality from idealist temperament to moderate one (Sitinjak, 2021). J.K. Rowlings in her novel *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* explores personality development of the main character, Harry Potter. Through the description of the main character, Rowlings explains complex personality development of Harry Potter like from positive to negative and from negative to positive: polite to impolite, good behavior to

bad behavior, calm to temperamental, loving to hatred, and unhappy to happy (Faraditha, Rezeki, Wardah, Rosnija, & Surmiyati, 2022).

Emily Bronte in her *Wuthering Heights* explores the personality development of Isabella Linton. Using indirect characterization of Isabella, Bronte shows the change of her personality such as from spoiled, emotional, and cowardly young lady into a responsible and independent woman (Asmiaty, Kuncara & Lubis, 2022). Michael Lewis in *the Blind Side* explores the personality development of Michael Oher. Through the influence of eight determinants found in Hurlock's theory, the main character changes from someone who is lonely, worried, as well as forlorn gradually to be somebody who is self-confident, passion, and enthusiasm (Lah & Supsiadji, 2023). John Green in his *Paper Town* explores the personality development of the main character, Quentin. Through showing his personal emotion as well as society around him (both of which are found in Hurlock's determinants theory), Green shows the changes of Quentin's personality from before meeting Margo, that is, unambitious, coward, and discipline to after meeting Margo, that is, ambitious, intrepid, and indiscipline (Habibah, Thoriqussuud, Rohman, Rohim, & Fanani, 2023). Karan Bajaj in his *the Yoga of Max's Discontent* explores the personality development of the main character, Max Pzoras. Like John Green above, Bajaj explores the changes of the main character through his personal emotion and society before going on a spiritual journey, that is, emotionally unstable and indecisive to be composed and resolute after going on a spiritual journey (Aini, Rohim, Syaikh, Thoriqussuud, Fanani, 2023).

From the fact of the previous studies above, the researcher believes that they lack of strong argument of the used theory though some of them refer to Hurlock's personality development theory; firstly, the use of the determinants are less than the researcher's determinants that close to the complete change of a personality. Secondly, the change of the character the researcher analyzes is unique in that the character undergoes a transformation from animal to human that in the first place, she is hard to behave humanly. This is what people call one good turn deserves another as Lyra's efforts to be good to others come into fruits by her good development in personality. Then, as the novelty of the study, the uniqueness of the main character, Lyra, challenges as well as extends the previous studies above.

Thus, by the gap of the study above, the researcher comes to the question of what personality of Lyra before changing to human and after changing to human. Accordingly, the researcher elaborates how Lyra is described before changing to human and after changing to human as well as the factors influencing the changes.

METHOD

Study Design

The researcher analyzed the passages of the novel using literary analysis with the specific detail as well as deeper meaning. Accordingly, the researcher used close reading method whose meaning came from the researcher's understanding of the passage or text. Pickering highlighted that before conducting a close reading, understanding the whole text is a must (2019). Therefore, using a close reading means that the researcher analyzed the text regardless of the things beyond the text like the life of the author, the society of the author as well as the author history.

Besides, to support the six determinants of Hurlock, the researchers used descriptive and dramatic method as this method is useful to know how such determinants are applicable in describing, discussing and reporting the character's speech and action before and after undergoing the character's development.

Sample Population

Since the data are from a literary work of Alexandra Christo's *to Kill a Kingdom*, the researcher then refers to qualitative data in the sense that the researcher used words instead of numbers to explain the character of Lira before changing to a human and after changing to a human. However, not all the words in the novel the researcher cited, only those referring to the six determinants aforesaid mentioned in order that the researcher came to the finding the research questions advanced above.

Data Collection Technique

The researcher referred to Miles and Huberman's idea of technique of collecting the data: interviewing, observing, documenting, as well as surveying (1984). As this study is a study of literature, therefore, observation, documentation and survey would be of any use here; the former referred to the researcher's reading activity to find the problem as well as the related theory. The latter referred to the citation classification of the novels that belonged to physical changes, changes in environments, changes in significant people, changes in social pressures, changes in roles, and changes in self-concept. The last referred to give the interpretation of the data in classification. Those are the ways the close reading as well as data categorization works. Besides, since this is a study of literature, the main instrument of the study is the researchers themselves.

Data Analysis Technique

Likewise, in this sub-chapter, the researchers used Miles and Huberman's ideas about the data analysis method that they went back to the research problem as well as the research problem explanation (1984); first of all, the researcher went back to Lira's character before and after changing to a human as well as factors influencing the changes. Second of all, the researcher explained about Lira's speaking and acting in regard to her personality growth.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before coming to the results and discussion, the researchers would like to tell the story in brief that Lira is a princess that will be a queen in the future on condition that she has to get the human's heart especially the prince's. She then is known as a very cruel animal. Yet, her cruelty is gone after changing to a human.

Lira's Character before Changing to a Human

Before being a human, Lira is characterized as firstly, a bloodthirsty siren. Indeed, the story is about the fight between human and sea creature, the sirens. Human kills the sirens, on the contrary, the sirens kill human for the self-defense. Lira is characterized differently from the other sirens as Lira is the daughter of the sea queen that she automatically becomes the future queen. As the future queen, Lira has to collect the prince's heart not just human's heart because collecting human's heart is the requirement of becoming the sea queen in spite of the fact that human has killed the sirens' goddess, Keto. "*Ever since our goddess, Keto, was killed by the humans, it's become custom to steal a heart each year, in the month of our birth*" (Christo, 2018, p.5). Lira's desire to kill as well as collect prince's heart grows stronger since it is not only a revenge but also a requirement of being a queen. This tradition has been taught to Lira by her mother, the sea queen since her childhood (Christo, 2018). Thus, Lira's characterization of being a bloodthirsty siren has been formed from her childhood.

Secondly, Lira is an obedient daughter. As explained above Lira is with the kingdom family who will heritage legacy as the ruler of the sea. Though she is the owner of the legacy it does not mean that the legacy comes to her easily. She has to obey the queen, her mother, whatever she tells her to do. "*I've spent my life trying to be just what my mother wanted*" (Christo, 2018, p. 27). Beside of the future queen, Lira's obedience

turns out to get away of her mother punishment that as a daughter of the sea queen, she has to kill and to collect the heart of the princes not just human (Christo, 2018).

Lira's Character after Changing to a Human

After being a human, Lira is characterized as, firstly, merciful person. It has been told that Lira has broken the rule and dragged her mother's anger. Therefore, her mother curses her to be a creature she hates so much, a human. Becoming a human, she still has the characterization of siren, to kill and collect human's heart. As time goes, she learns human being's behavior that is so kind that she changes her wicked personality into kindhearted one. *"How strange that instead of taking his heart, I'm hoping he takes mine"* (Christo, 2018, p. 231). Lira addresses to Elian, the real human prince, after some times of being a human, she feels the softness of Elian. Therefore, she decides not to kill and get the heart. She falls in love with him, instead. This is the personality development of Lira from being harsh animal to a gentle one after mingling with human and feeling human's softness. Another example of her change in personality is her growing guilty after killing Tallis Rycroft, a pirate, who well-nigh puts her and Elian to death. *"I was a siren and so I was a killer. It was never wrong or right; it just was. But now my memories are cruel dreams, twisting into merciless visions and accusing me of a past I can't deny. The truth of what I am has become a nightmare"* (Christo, 2018, p. 210). As true siren, Lira is never sorry for killing a human but now she feels sorry. This kind of feeling from being cruel to merciful is sort of personality development undergone by Lira after being sociable with human.

Secondly, Lira is characterized as being disobedient. No sooner Lira becomes a human than realizes that all the times she is with her mother, the sea queen, she is taken advantaged to kill human and other sea creatures for her mother's glory. Accordingly, she has to take the queen throne for herself and save her cousin, Kahlia, from her mother's cruelty. By taking the queen throne, Lira can make peaceful life between the sirens and human as the war between human and the sirens is caused by her mother's ambition. *"I'm her worst nightmare come true. The daughter she was always so reluctant to let take her crown, primed to usurp her. It hits me now that she has no power over me. For the first time, we're on even footing"* (Christo, 2018, p. 266). To take the crown of the queen means becoming a queen since the sea queen is indicated by the crown. Then, Lira's change from obedience to disobedience to her mother is sort of personality development caused by her awareness of her mother's fault of bringing her to be a cruel siren.

Thirdly, Lira is a selfless person. This is because Lira pays the kindness Elian has given her, that is, saving her the first time she is cursed to be a human and assigned to kill prince Elian. *"I pushed him from the bullet the same way he pulled me from the ocean"* (Christo, 2018, p. 202). Though an animal, however, Lira uses her instinct to save the man from the sea queen's attack since the man has saved her from the watery death. This happens also in the real life that though an animal is wild and dangerous but through feeding it every day, the animal will be tame to the human. This personality changes the researcher considers is from the surrounding by whose kind can make other bad into good.

Fourthly, Lira becomes a noble queen. This last change of Lira's personality is to imitate the way Elian, the real human prince, in running his society in peaceful one. After becoming a sea queen replacing her mother, Lira makes a reconciliation between sirens and human kind as well as between sirens and other sea creature. Accordingly, the life of sirens are peaceful not like when the sirens are led by Lira's mother, bloodshed is

everywhere. *"If I find the eye, maybe it's not just sirens who don't need to suffer anymore, but humans too"* (Christo, 2018, p.203).

The researcher regards that the personality development of Lira is unique in that it is different from that undergone by characters in the previous studies above. The uniqueness refers to how hard Lira changes her personality since in the first place Lira is an animal with only instinct (without moral value) as well as raised up to kill human. It may raise a question that Lira changes her characterization a long with her change biologically, from animal to a human. It is not like that. Lira undergoes transformation through learning how human treats her compassionately. Steadily as well as lovely cared, her bloodshed ambition to human fades away eventually. She becomes like human biologically as well as morally. How McDonagh changes his personality from a bad person to a good man. This change is not as hard as that experienced by Lira as the change refers to moral from moral without biological/anatomic change.

Likewise, Prenderghast, August, Anne, Ethan, Donald, Harry, Isabella, Oher, and Max undergo normal transformation from man to man indicated solely by the change of their moral value from bad to good. Though some of them have similarities with the researcher's study by using Hurlock's theory of personality development, the difference refers to the character of Lira that transforms from animal into human with difficulty in the change. Therefore, this is the gap of the study. This is the novelty.

Factors of Lira's Personality Development

The first influence of Lira's personality change is her awareness that mankind is not an enemy. This awareness is because of an anatomic change, from animal to human. This kind of change can disguise herself from the animal performance that is worth a help from a man when she finds herself sinking. *"As a human I could pretend I had some kind of clean slate if I wanted to. At least for a while. But not now. Not anymore. I'm a killer in every life"* (Christo, 2018, 191). Her animal's instinct is with her that her liking of killing is a kind of her daily assignment. Through the kindness of a mankind, prince Elian, not knowing what he saves from the sinking is a cruel animal, Lira comes to awareness that mankind is not an enemy. The researcher regards that Lira's anatomic change is the important influence of her character change as without such a change, there has no other changes. She will be watery death, instead. Coming back to Hurlock's determinants, this kind of change refers to physical change as well as change in environment that is the environment of mankind who shows her kindness.

The second influence of Lira's personality change is her awareness of her misguided mother. It turns out that the eternal war between the sirens and human as well as between other sea animal is caused by her mother's ambition, the sea queen. The sea queen takes advantage of her daughter, Lira, to take revenge to human for the sirens' goddess killing. Deeply learning of the situation, Lira understands that her mother is to blame. She no longer obeys her mother to continue war between human. *"I could be the perfect monster and it wouldn't change a thing. If I disappoint her, I'm a failure. But if I excel, I prove my worth as a ruler and that's a far greater sin"* (Christo, 2018, p. 120). This quotation shows that her mother's pressure towards Lira is not fruitful. Lira prefers getting rid of 'greater sin' to obeying her mother, the cause of greater sin. This kind of change then refers to change in social pressure (in Hurlock's theory) that the pressure of continuing a war coming from society within Lira's family leads Lira to understand her mother's mistake.

The third influence of Lira's personality change is Lira's awareness of human's kindness. That Elian saves Lira from the watery death makes him a significant person in the eye of Lira though before she declares war against human especially Elian as the

prince whose heart is worth taking. *"I pushed him from the bullet the same way he pulled me from the ocean"* (Christo, 2018, p. 202). This quotation confirms the researcher that Elian becomes a significant person that she has to protect him from the attack of her own mother, the sea queen. Likewise, from Hurlock's viewpoint, it refers to change in significant people.

The last influence of Lira's personality change is Lira's moderate mind. That power tends to corrupt does not work with Lira when she becomes the sea queen replacing her mother. Apparently, she chooses the reconciliation with all living things though with different species. Political reconciliation can be done by those with political power. Lira has one. *"Peace doesn't come easy, but over half the world has accepted the new order"* (Christo, 2018, p. 281). This shows Lira's desire to have a peaceful life in a world she runs. Surely, to make it come true, the reconciliation must be done to other species. Though having moderate mind, Lira cannot uphold the rule for the peace. Therefore, her new role as a queen and her self-concept (that different from her mother) play important roles in changing her personality.

From the result of the factors above, it is understandable that the major important of the changes of personality is within somebody himself. Though Hurlock's theory of determinants are explainable, still, the theories are the secondary factors. The primary factors of the changes are awareness within somebody as experienced by Lira through awareness of mankind, other misguidance, human kindness, and being moderate. Accordingly, this study gets the novelty since there are no changes of personality like Lira's in the previous studies above.

CONCLUSION

From the result and discussion above, the researchers conclude that personality can change because of two factors, that is, outer factor and inner factor. The former can be explainable from a scientific theory: physical changes, changes in environments, changes in significant people, changes in social pressures, changes in roles, and changes in self-concept. The latter refers to how the person is able to receive and manage the outer factor so that he/she can improve his/her quality of life. From this viewpoint, Lira is able to get her quality of life that she can change her previous personality such as bloodthirsty and obedient into merciful, disobedient, selfless, and noble person. See the table below for the clear cut personality development of Lira

Table 1 Lira's Personality Development	
Before Changing into a Human	After Changing into a Human
Bloodthirsty	Merciful
obedient	Disobedient
	Selfless
	Noble

Thus, this study hopefully gives the readers two learning that though there are theories to make the readers live a happy life, however, the inner factors within the readers play very important role. Accordingly, the readers have to be able to control their emotion well. This study also hopefully can develop the study of literature.

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