

A Sheila's Chaotic Personality Viewed from a Psychosocial Development Perspective

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Abstract: Sheila is a major character in *One Child* novel written by Torey Hayden. This article attempts to analyze *One Child* based on its' structural elements and to explore Sheila's chaotic personality based on psychosocial developmental perspective proposed by Erik H Erikson. This is a qualitative research which employs textual data taken from two sources; primary data source and secondary data source. Primary data source is the novel itself and secondary data source are from the other materials which are related to the study. The technique of data collection is library research which is analyzed using descriptive technique. The study result shows that the structural elements of the novel present a unity appears in the exposition, complication, climax, and resolution of the story. Furthermore, the psychosocial developmental analysis shows Sheila's chaotic personality mostly caused by her past traumatic experience in her early life. Sheila had past traumatic and chaotic personality namely Mistrust (in stage infancy: birth – 1 year), Shame and Doubt (in stage early childhood: 2-3 years), 3) Guilt (in stage preschool age: 4-5 years), and 4) Inferiority (in stage school age: 6-12 years). The early life of Sheila was not told clearly, but Hayden just told the crucial event and condition of Sheila that made her become destructive, uncontrollable child, and has chaotic personality. Sheila tried to solve her crisis to develop her healthy ego development.



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INTRODUCTION

Personality is a dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determines unique adjustment to his/her environment (Allport in Sujanto, Lubis, Hadi, 1991: 11). From the point of view of the individual, personality is defined as the combination of the relatively enduring traits that influence behavior in a variety of situation that has tended to focus attention on the ways in which people with different traits in their responses to a given stimulus. (Baron and Byrne, 1983: 493). Change and stability in personality, emotional life, and social relationships together constitute psychosocial development, and this can affect, cognitive, and physical functioning (Papalia, Gross, Feldman, 2003: 10).

The human's personality development depends on two interacting factors; heredity factor and environmental factor. Beside heredity factor that is inherited from parent and transmitted by genes, environmental factor also gives influence to the development of child's personality. Environmental factor refers to the conditions in which the child lives and the experience he/she has. Everything outside the child, that is

concrete and abstract, plays an important role in shaping the child's personality. It can human being, plant, animal, stone, picture, and so on. It can also be guidance, education, ideology, custom, and so forth that can influence the child's attitudes, value, belief, or prejudices.

Spencer (in Ahmadi, 1999: 161) used the word of attitude to show one's mental status. Child's mental condition is not stable yet when he/she gets influence and stimulus from the environment. The concept of attitude and personality has been studied in psychology. Psychological aspect that has close related with human is not only a study in psychology subject but also in literature. Literature is interpreted as a creative form of an artistic process with human being as its object (Semi, 1988: 8).

Literature has a tight relationship to psychology since literature is the exposition of man's mental life. Wellek and Warren (1984: 91) state that literature has human being as its object of the study, so psychology has. As a literature is imitation of life, the character in it is identical with the real person or human who has psychological aspect.

One Child is one of the novels written by Torey Hayden. Beside she is a special education teacher, she also an educational psychologist. This novel which is published in 1980 by Avonbooks Harpercollin in New York is her first novel. Hayden also wrote some other novels inspired by her students, such as *Ghost Girl*, *Just another Kids*, *Murphy's Boy*, *Somebody Else Kids*, *The Tiger's Child*, and *Beautiful Child*. Her name is getting well known together with the high selling rate of *One Child* and to be the best seller in eighties. *One Child* consists of 318 pages, 20 chapters, translated into 28 languages, adapted in various form, such as one act opera, Japan's puppet theatre, and cinetron in television.

This novel tells about Hayden's real experience as a teacher in special education that has special student that different with others. The name of her special student is Sheila, described in this novel as major character. In this novel, Hayden tried to help Sheila, to bring the accused child back from her secret nightmare because beneath the autistic rage Hayden saw Sheila the spark of genius. Sheila is the center of *One Child* as the antagonist character. She is six years old. She never spoke, never cried, and her eyes were always filled with hate. When she was four, she abandoned on a highway by her mother and abused by her alcoholic father. Sheila was placed in the class for the hopelessly retarded after she committed an atrocious act of violence against another child. Everyone said Sheila was beyond salvation, except Hayden. Hayden has succeeded to reach Sheila. With her skill, patience, and abiding love, Hayden fought long and hard to release a haunted little girl from her secret nightmare and nurture the spark of genius. Hayden recognized trapped within Sheila's silence. Sheila's attitude had been change. She became a beautiful and a nice little girl. From this description, the researchers analyze Sheila's personality based on the scientific perspective from the theory of psychosocial development by Erik H Erikson.

THEORETICAL SUPPORT

Psychosocial development is human development viewed in terms of its dependence on interaction with others (Dunn, 2002: 14). Psychosocial development is the theory presented by Erik H Erikson. Erikson is known for his work in developmental psychology. He treated youth with emotional problems (Corsini, 1987: 382). Erik Erikson began filling a gap in psychodynamic theories of personality development, extending them to cover the full cycle from the cradle to the grave (Corsini, 1987: 309).

Erikson emphasized the autonomous or conflict-free development of an adaptive ego and released a life-span theory of psychosocial development (Corsini, 1987: 383).

Therefore a firm sense of ego identity—a perceived sense of personal wholeness and “continuity of experience”—must be achieved for optimal personal functioning (Corsini, 1987: 383). Moreover, ego development is solely defensive in nature; the ego emerges in order to control and regulate biologically determined instincts and drives, or the id. While working within a psychoanalytic frame, Erikson is chiefly concerned with ego development, for he sees attainment of ego identity as a key developmental task of puberty and adolescence and a sound foundation for adulthood (Pikunas, 1976: 14). The central concept in this developmental scheme is the achievement of ego identity during adolescence (Corsini, 1987: 383). Firstly, the theories emphasize the importance of the child social environment (Erikson in Lefrancois, 1984: 34). The second, Erikson describes “the developmental of healthy ego (of identity, in Erikson’s terms) rather than with the resolution of powerful internal conflict” (Erikson in Lefrancois, 1984: 34). It means Erikson straightly emphasizes on the role of ego rather than the superego.

Furthermore, Erikson presents eight stages in human development. Erikson’s theory of eight stages of man is primarily concerned with the psychosocial aspects of development (Pikunas, 1976: 14). Erikson describes human development in terms of eight stages. The first five of which span infancy, childhood, and adolescence; and the last three describe maturity (Lefrancois, 1986: 47). Each of Erikson’s stages is described in terms of basic conflict, brought about primarily by the child’s need to adapt to the social environment (Lefrancois, 1986: 47). Erikson proposes a sequence of eight stages from birth to death, each accompanied by a particular psychological crisis. The term of “crisis” as he uses it means not a threat of catastrophe but a period of increased vulnerability and also of heightened potential.

Meanwhile, personality is the sum total of the ways in which (individual) characteristically reacts to and interact with other. This is the sum total of all the biological innate disposition, impulses, tendencies, appetite, instinct of individual and the acquired disposition, and tendencies acquired by experience. By those definition about personality, it is quite clear that personality of human always develop because he/she gets new experience that comes from interaction with his/her environment. Personality has been formed since she is born, but it develops when she already enter a new environment in society. A human also learns from the behavior he/she has and observational he/she does to someone else. It means that he/she develops his/her personality by learning another people’s action and look at the consequence of the action. Family also takes an important role in making the development of someone’s personality. So, family and environment where he/she lives has a major effect in developing the personality of someone. Personality is the sum total of what he/she has felt, acted, and thought.

METHOD

A qualitative research is used in this study. Data sources are using literary data. The Hayden’s novel titled *One Child* which is published by Avonbooks Hapercollin in 1980 is the study object. A primary data is the novel of *One Child*. Secondary data include material about the author, and the material about the characters. The steps of data collection technique are:

- a. Reading the novel.
- b. Taking notes of important in both primary and secondary data.
- c. Classifying the data into some categories.
- d. Taking notes from the material and some other resources relate the novel.

The technique of data analyzing in this study is descriptive. To give interpretation of the text and do content analysis, the writer uses deductive and inductive methods. The research analyzes the character of major character through a psychosocial development perspective.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The whole of structural elements of the novel support the theme. In *One Child*, there are 2 major characters (Sheila, an actor who discussed in this study; and Torey, her teacher and also the writer of this novel) and 19 minor characters describing by the narrator clearly. Characterization in this novel is describing the characters clearly through their gesture and manner of their speaking. Setting of time in *One Child* doesn't tell clearly. Hayden used the setting by months, days, and period of days. Setting of place almost occurs in The Special Education School. From the interaction between the characters, Hayden creates conflicts, which build the plot. She uses the traditional plot, which is started by exposition and followed by complication, climax, and resolution. Hayden uses participant point of view in which the narrator is taking position as major character. Hayden presents a theme which can control the other elements to form a unified whole. It provides the basic idea of Hayden who wants to communicate to the reader. The theme is that childhood is a crucial age to develop their personality. Hayden uses style of Standard English both in dialogues and narrations. The figurative language is used in this novel to make it more interesting. The elaboration above shows that the structural elements in *One Child* presents a good unity. It can be seen clearly that character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, theme, and style as the novel's structural elements are interrelated together in building wholeness.

Based on Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, there are eight stages in human development. Each stage, from birth to old age, is marked by a normative crisis that must be confronted and negotiated. Erikson argued that individuals develop their identities and attitudes about the world throughout the entire life cycle as they resolve various developmental conflicts and crisis.

Table 1. The Eight Stages of Erikson's Psychosocial Development Perspective

No	A Psychological Crisis	Stages
1	Basic Trust versus Mistrust	Infancy (birth – 1 year)
2	Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt	Early childhood (2-3 years)
3	Initiative versus Guilt	Preschool age: 4-5 years
4	Industry versus Inferiority	School age (6-12 years)
5	Identity versus Identity Diffusion	Adolescence (13 – 18 years)
6	Intimacy versus Isolation	young adulthood (19 – 25 years)
7	Generativity versus Self-Absorption or Stagnation	Middle adulthood (26 – 40 years)

8	Integrity Despair	versus	maturity
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In *One Child*, Hayden just tells the major character, Sheila, when she was six years old. It means that the crisis of Sheila occurred in stage four (industry versus inferiority). The early life of Sheila was not told clearly, but Hayden just told the crucial event and condition of Sheila that made her become destructive, uncontrollable child, and has chaotic personality.

Followings are the analysis of Sheila's chaotic personality viewed from a psychosocial development perspective by Erik H Erikson:

1. Basic Trust versus Mistrust (infancy: birth – 1 year)

The early development history of Sheila was not told in this novel, so first crisis of Sheila was not described in this study. But, condition of her parents when they had married can give background knowledge about Sheila. Sheila was born two months after her mother had been married with her father, in that time, her mother was fourteen and her father was thirty.

2. Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt (early childhood: 2-3 years)

Early years of Sheila's life were less attention from her parents. Her father had been in prison all those crucial years.

3. Initiative versus Guilt (preschool age: 4-5 years)

Sheila had past traumatic experience in her life. Her mother had abandoned her on a highway when she was four. Her father had spent most of Sheila's early years in prison on assault-and battery charges. Sheila had been shifted around among relatives and friends of the family and she had attended three schools in her short education history. She couldn't solve her crisis in this stage, for example she couldn't do toilet training until she was six. She felt guilty when she urinated not in toilet.

4. Industry versus Inferiority (school age: 6-12 years)

Erikson's fourth psychosocial emphasized developmental of sense industry as it is conveyed in the novel *One Child*. The fourth stage of psychosocial occurs at school age about 6 to 12 years (puberty). Stage four begins at about age 6 because that is when the child goes to school; in culture in which schooling is delayed, and the timing of the developmental task might be delayed too. Sheila had encountered the police three times by six –and-a-half. She was destructive and so bad on the manners. She had uncontrollable behavior. She was unteachable child. In her short education history, she had attended three schools not including the one she was in Torey's class. All the moves had resulted from her chaotic and uncontrollable behavior. Sheila was not going to be an easy child to love, nor was she going to be an easy child to teach.

Sheila was placed in Torey's class when she was six years old for the hopelessly retarded after she committed an atrocious act of violent against another child. She had taken the three years old boy, tied him to a tree in a nearby woodlot and burned him. The boy was currently in a local hospital in critical condition. And Sheila had been taken into custody. The government took her out of school and made arrangements to send her to the state hospital.

For the first time Sheila entered in Torey's class, she refused to join with others child. She was an uncontrolled, destructive, violent, and dangerous child. Sheila went beyond destroying papers or even baby gerbils. She destroyed the room completely in very short period of time, only ten or fifteen minutes. When someone or something disturbed her, she yelled louder. She refused to do any work and had a bad manner. She

was so negative about paperwork. She steadfastly refused to do paperwork. She felt fear of failure if she couldn't do paperwork correctly. She had apparently caught the goldfish one by one and pokes their eyes out with a pencil. She always destroyed her work before teacher could get a look at it. Still Sheila continued to terrorize the class, refusing to work, destroying things, and attacking other children.

Hayden with patience, skill, and abiding love has succeeded to reach Sheila. She recognized trapped within Sheila's silence. She fought long and hard to release a haunted little girl from her secret nightmare and nurture the spark of genius. During joins in Torey's class, Sheila made progress. Sheila who was in the past never wanted to do any work, suddenly she wanted to write. But, she always felt feeling of inferiority if her work was incorrect.

Sheila tried to solve her crisis to develop her healthy ego development. For example, when Torey left Sheila for two days, she taught that Torey would leave forever and never came back. So, she made destructive action as a protest. After she knew that what she had been done was wrong, Sheila apologized to what she had been done. Her past experience when abandoned by her mother made her not to believe that Torey would come back.

After joining in Torey's class, Sheila's attitude changed. She had evidently not had much of an opportunity to learn how to be considerate of others or how to be kind. Torey taught her how to love, how to polite, and how to live with others. What she had been done caused by she didn't know that was wrong, no one told her about it. Her family and environment didn't teach her about it.

Sheila's performance was better. Within the limits of her situation, she was now always quite clean. She had become a truly handsome child, evoking comment from the other teachers. Academically, Sheila had progress. She willingly did almost anything Torey gave her to do. She also wanted to do math. Socially, Sheila could socialization with other children. Actually, Sheila liked such as innocent child who needed loves and cares from others.

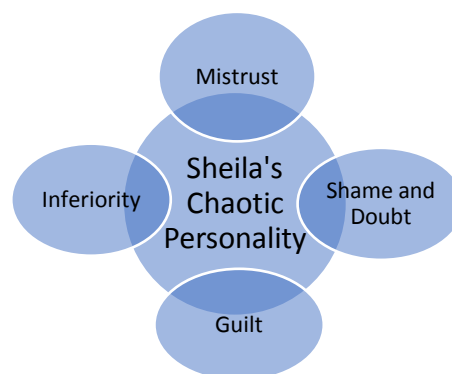


Figure 1. A Sheila's Chaotic Personality viewed from a Psychosocial Development Perspective

CONCLUSION

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development proposes eight stages in human development. Each stage, from birth to old age, is marked by a normative crisis that must be confronted and negotiated. Erikson argued that individuals develop their identities and

attitudes about the world throughout the entire life cycle as they resolve various developmental conflicts and crisis.

Based on analysis of the data, the writer found that in *One Child*, Hayden just tells the major character, Sheila, when she was six years old. It means that the crisis of Sheila occurred in stage four (industry versus inferiority). Sheila's chaotic personality mostly caused by her past traumatic experience in her early life. The early life of Sheila was not told clearly, but Hayden just told the crucial event and condition of Sheila that made her become destructive, uncontrollable child, and has chaotic personality. Sheila tried to solve her crisis to develop her healthy ego development. Sheila had past traumatic and chaotic personality viewed from the stages of Erikson's psychosocial development perspective namely Mistrust (infancy: birth – 1 year), Shame and Doubt (early childhood: 2-3 years), Guilt (preschool age: 4-5 years), and Inferiority (school age: 6-12 years).

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