

## An Analysis of John Smith's Character in The Novel "I am Number Four"

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### Abstract

*In I am Number Four novel by James Frey and Jobie Hughes, there is a main character named John Smith. He is 15 years old and at his age, he is in puberty phase which his characters are influenced by people around him. This research was conducted using psychosocial study. The purposes of this study are to analyze what the factors that influence John Smith's characters and what the psychosocial problems that emerge in the development of John Smith's character. The method used was qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected by using content analysis techniques. Based on the findings, that each character of John Smith is influenced by biological factor, familial factor and cultural and situational factor. The character of the biological factor is the genetic character that John Smith gets from his grandfather. The character of the familial factor is a character that he imitates from Henri as his adoptive father. The last is the character of cultural and situational factor, this is a character that he gets through the interaction with the people around him and the situation he faces. The psychosocial problems that emerge in the development of John Smith's character are the emotional problems that he feels, those are; fear, temperament and melancholic.*

**Keywords:** *Psychosocial, Character, I Am Number Four Novel.*

### Introduction

This day the psychosocial phenomena in human life becomes one of the psychology phenomena. It learns about human psychology development and process of shaping identity. This psychological development will create a character of human. Here, the researcher is trying to analyze psychological development of John Smith's character in *I am Number Four novel*. This novel is contained psychological development on John's character.

Psychosocial theory is psychological development in a social realm. That is psychosocial development is how a person's mind, emotions and maturity level develop throughout a life span and the development is dependent on biological processes and environmental interactions. Erik Erikson, learning psychoanalysis from and experiencing psychoanalytic therapy with Anna Freud, expanded Freud's idea to a lifespan development. Psychosocial theory was propounded by Erik Erikson as an extension of Sigmund Freud's psychosexual theory. The psychosocial theory focuses on the development of the mind and brain, and social aspects thus external relationships.

Erikson developed his theory "psychosocial" as the study of human stages development. The term psychosocial "psychology (meaning mind) and social (meaning relationship). Erikson relates psychology approach and social approach in his theory. Psychosocial theory puts a great emphasis on outside interaction. Social influences the individual's psychological development in the process of shaping identity (Harms, 2010).

### **Research Design and Methodology**

This research is a descriptive study. The procedures are data collection, data analysis, and presenting the results of analysis. The data were collected by using qualitative methods. The techniques applied in collecting the data were reading the novel and other sources and taking some notes. The results of analysis are presented formally and informally (Sudaryanto, 1988, 1993).

### **Findings and Discussion**

The problems that the researcher analyzed in this study are, firstly about psychosocial factors that affect John Smith's character in the novel. Secondly, this research also investigated the problems experienced by John Smith in the development of character formation. Based on the information that the researcher has gathered from the novel *I Am Number Four*, the researcher found several psychosocial factors that affect the character of John Smith as well as some problems he faced in the development of the character.

### ***Biological Factor***

Biological factor influences the formation of a person's character in which the character is naturally formed and has become a habit. Genetic is one of the most

influential biological factors in character formation. This genetic factor affects the next offspring. The nature of the former members may descend to the next generation naturally.

In this novel, it is shown that John Smith is a nice figure. He likes to make jokes and make people around him feel comfortable so, people think that he is a cheerful figure. He can even be friends with Sam Goode in a short time, whereas Sam is known as a quite person. The humorous is a character of John Smith that has influenced from biological factor. It is Humorous character from John's grandfather character. In this novel there is a part that proof of John's humorous character from his grandfather. From the dialect of John and Henri in the findings that showed Henri told John about John's grandfather character and one of his character was humorous. It is accurate with Erikson's psychosocial theory that Erikson said person's character was influenced by genetic endowment.

### ***Familial Factor***

Familial factor is the factor that influences character formation through family relationships. Family members are the first social group to engage in interaction as well as the closest and most trusted people such as mother, father, and older siblings. The nature and behavior of family members is what ultimately makes an example for a person's character to imitate the nature and behavior so as to play a role in the formation of one's character. In the novel I am Number Four the writer also finds familial factors that influence the character of John Smith which the character is formed due to the influence of his adoptive father. The character of John Smith that is influenced by the familial factor is 'Dishonestly'. Henri as his adoptive father was the only person who had taught John about everything since John was five years old. Henri was a person that had a big impact in his life. The dishonestly character is the result of family influences contained in one of the characters of John Smith which in this case Henri as a family factor that influenced the character of John Smith.

At the first of this novel it has been shown that John Smith isn't the real name of number four. Daniel Jones was the name that he used before moving to Ohio. John also lies that he comes from Santa Fe, in fact he was in Florida before. As a John Smith the number six lives as a John Smith and starts to use his fake identity and lie to everybody to keep his privacy.

In this novel it described that number four had changed many identities for many times since he and his cepan 'Henri' arrived in earth. Henri is the only one who takes care of him since he was five years old. Henri also the one who taught him about everything included how to keep hiding their real identity to people around them. He always giving number four a new name when they move to another city. Even though, all of John's family members have dead by the mogadorians because of the war but, John already felt that Henri was his father. And he also said that Henri was his father to people around them. Henri also the one who created their fake indentity when they arrived in earth. Henri also the one who influenced John to do lie in public. Since John was a kid he already taught to hide his real identity and just told his fake identity to everybody that Henri created for him. It is shown that the dishonest of John Smith is influenced by familial factor as the novel has described that John already felt that Henri is his father. Even one of John's character is dishonestly but, when he meets Sarah and Sam he tells to them about his real identity because the thinks that they the first people who sincerely befriend him and he believes they are good people and can be trusted. Evidently, after hearing John's explanation they did not get away from him. Similar with psychosocial theory, it tells that family members as a first place of social interaction that has a big impact in developing person's character as we know that a person will imitate what he has seen from his family members and try to do it.

### ***Cultural and Situational Factor***

Culture and situation factors are factors that affect a person's character through social interactions that an individual does with others. Social interaction is what ultimately becomes a factor that affects a person's character. In addition, culture in an environment also plays a major role in the formation of character. An individual will adjust according to the culture contained in his environment. The situation faced by an individual also triggers the development of his character. The character of a person can be seen through the situation he faced. So it can be concluded that cultural factors and situations are factors related to social interaction, people in living environment, culture in the environment, and situations faced by a person.

There are several properties of John that are influenced by these factors. The first seen in this novel is cruel. John did some physical violence against others because of the situation he faced and he could not restrain his emotions. The first physical

violence he did in the novel was shown when John and his new friend Sam were enjoying their lunch at the cafeteria while do conversation. Just then Mark and his friends thrown them with food so their clothes and faces. John, who could not bear Mark's treatment, he approached Mark's desk and his friends. There, one of Mark's friends named Kevin stoped him and make John become very angry, he does not even care if both of his hands will shine and his identity will be uncovered. John just thought how to make Mark and his friends stop bullying him and Sam. This part is the first time John shows physical violence against others. It is influenced by the situational factors that John faces and the influence of others. In that part there is also a cultural factor where John did physical violence because he did not want to be bullied by Mark and his friends. As we have seen that bullying seems to have become a bad culture everywhere.

There is a section where John thinks that bullying is common in life which means that it has become one of the culture of society. It makes John not want to keep silent because he thinks if he continues to stay will make him continue to be a bully of Mark and his friends. It can be seen that John's cruel nature is influenced by situational and cultural factor. There is also a section where Mark still continues bullying him during halloween events. Mark and his friends take Sarah, Sam and Emily and beat John. John, who had been furious about Mark's behavior, had endured more severe physical violence than ever before to make Mark and his friends wary. It can be concluded that from these two events the nature of John's cruel is influenced by cultural and situational factor.

In this novel also mentioned John did physical violence against the officers of a charming magazine office Henri. Henri is curious where Sam got a magazine about aliens finally find out where the office that publishes the magazine. Unexpectedly Henri was taken prisoner by the officers there. John who panicked because Henri did not come home finally asked Sam for helping him to find Henri. John and Sam finally go after Henri with driving Sam's father truck. After arriving at the office of the magazine John immediately sought the whereabouts of Henri, but one of the magazine's officers did not want to tell where Henri is and instead threatened John. Without a second thought, John committed the violence to the officer to tell him where Henri was. Just like the previous case, in this section John executes physical violence because of situational factors and the influence of others.

John Smith's second character, influenced by situational factors, is pessimistic. In this novel illustrated that John Smith has a disbelief in himself. He is pessimistic about the struggle he has been doing with Henri. John is not sure they can beat the mogadorians even if six garde get together. Given the battle that ever happened that made Lorien planet destroyed and killed many people of his race. But Henri, the man who has remained with John all the time, has persuaded John that one day their race can defeat the mogadorians and improve the Lorien planet again.

In his social life John Smith is also described as being pessimistic towards others. John thought those close to him would not accept him if they knew who he really was. However because in an urgent situation he finally tells who he really is. Sam was the first who know about who John really was. At first John thought that Sam would get angry and stay away from him but his guess was wrong. Sam still accepts John as his friend even though they are different. Similarly, when John confessed his real identity to Sarah. At first he thought Sarah would be angry with her. But instead Sarah said that whoever John Smith she will remain the person she loves.

In addition to pessimistic as he revealed his real identity to Sam and Sarah, John was also pessimistic about Mark. John thinks that Mark is a bad person and can not be trusted. However, Mark joined to help John when the mogadorians attacked him. Also shown is a section where John says that Mark is not a bad person as he had imagined before. From these sections it can be seen that John's pessimistic nature is influenced by the situational factors he faces. In the Erikson's psychosocial theory, it mentioned that situational and cultural can change person's character. Situational and cultural factor includes environment, external relationships, and people around. Those elements have a big impact to change person's character by the situational he faced in an environment and by the people who influence him for developing a new character.

In this novel it is also shown that John Smith was a worried person. This characteristic is shown when John was worried and panic about Henri. Henri decided to go to the office of The Walk Among Us magazine to find out where they got information about Lorien. In addition there is also a selfish nature of John when he argued with Henri. Henri, worried about their safety, decided to leave Ohio soon, but John refused on the grounds that he could not leave Sarah and Sam behind. For the first time John refused to follow Henri's orders and instead chose to be with others. John insisted on his will and refused to budge. These two properties of John are also the influence of

situational factors and social influences as well as others. The second problem discussed in this study is about the psychosocial problems that John Smith faced in the development of his character. Here the author finds that emotional problems are often evident in the development of John Smith's character. There are some emotional problems that he faced:

### ***Fear***

Just as teenagers who is in the stage of puberty John Smith begins to feel attracted to girls. It can be seen the first time he met Sarah Hart. John even allowed Sarah to take pictures of him when he knew he would be furious. Henri always commemorated John for indecent information about them including letting others take their pictures. But on the other side John cannot control his emotion againsts Sarah. She could not hide his interest in Sarah. John always seemed nervous and embarrassed when he met Sarah. In some parts of this novel show that John becomes nervous and shy everytime he met Sarah. It also triggers the fear of Henri, John will disassemble their identity to Sarah. It is also the reaping of the conflict between John and Henri. Henri feels anxious about their identity that is threatened uncovered. John also feels that way but, he also can not avoid his interest in Sarah.

### ***Temprament***

As noted in this novel, there are sections where John Smith is trying to hold his temper at the things he faces. Henri also advised him not to be bothered to do anything careless. Several parts show John trying to control his anger so as not to get hooked and make his identity uncovered for example when he was bullied by Mark James and his friends.

### ***Melancholic***

In this novel John also shows the emotion of his grief when Henri was killed by the mogadorians as they fought with the mogadorians. John felt very sorry he did not obey Henri's words to leave Ohio as soon as possible. John feels lost a father figure who had been with him. He also realizes that Henri really loves him and always protect him like father and son.

All of those emotions had revealed in the novel, it showed that emotions become a psychological problem that John Smith had to face. As Erikson said in his psychosocial theory that emotional is one of the conflicts that people have to face in the developing identity. We can see in this novel that John Smith faced many emotions in his social life. Those emotions also the problems that John has to resolve.

## **Conclusion**

John Smith as the main character of I Am Number Four Novel, in his life many things have influenced his nature. In the development of his character John Smith gained much influence from his social environment and his socialization. The emergence of new characters in himself is also the result of the environmental influences he faces and the influence of social interaction on the people he encounters. In the development of his character John Smith also experienced various emotional problems which he must control these emotions.

In the story shows the development of teenagers' characters in the stage of puberty that teenagers have to face various emotional changes. This emotional changes is the problem that emerge in their character development. And also the characters that are formed are influenced by biological factors, family, and social environment. So, this research shows that the experiences of a person in social environment throughout his life is the greatest implication in the formation of new characters.

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