

ARISU'S PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE DEATH GAMES IN *ALICE IN BORDERLAND*

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Abstract: This study aimed to find the personality development of the main character in *Alice in Borderland* TV series, Ryohei Arisu. This research objective can further be detailed into explaining Arisu's experiences that affect his personality, analyzing Arisu's specific goals which lead his personality to develop, explaining how Arisu's personality develops from the beginning until the end of the series, and showing how Arisu's personality development changes after he is transported to the Borderland. Hurlock's (1974) Theory of Personality Development was used to find out how and why Arisu's personality develops and changes. According to the theory, there are several conditions that are responsible for a personality change, e.g.: changes in the environment, changes in social pressure, and changes in self-concept. The result of the analysis shows that Arisu's selfish, lazy, unconfident, and physically weak personality develops into confident, witty, reflexive, and incredibly responsive characters. Aside from that, Arisu also has a new sense of determination by which he wants to live his life to the fullest and carries on his friends.

Keywords: personality development, death game, *Alice in Borderland*

INTRODUCTION

Individuals around the world are all distinct from each other. Everyone is special and seems to have their qualities. Every person is distinguished by their distinct behaviors, demeanor, and emotions. The distinctions are combined to form a system known as personality. In general, it distinguishes one individual from another. Personality refers to a human's overall attitude, appearance, mood, disposition, conduct, and characteristics. Regarding the personality development of Erikson (1976), he believed that humans' personalities evolved overtime significantly after the age of five and that development was directly related to the decision of existential issues such as trust, self-determination, intimacy, individuality, integrity, and identity.

Many types of literary works use human lives and expressions to express themselves through the art of language. The author's creativity may be used to build a personality in the characters in the story, or the TV series may represent people's personalities in real life. *Alice in Borderland*, a Japanese science fiction suspense-thriller TV series based on Haro Aso's manga of the same name and directed by Shinsuke Sato, is one TV series that portrays human personality development. *Alice in Borderland* TV series tells about Ryohei Arisu, an unemployed young man who gets chastised by his father and brother for avoiding job interviews in favor of playing video games. Arisu storms out of the home, texting his licentious buddies, Chota and Karube. The destruction of the signal, so they escape inside a public bathroom to evade cops. However, when they do come out, everything is as quiet as death. Arisu, Chota, and

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Karube enter a new fantasy world where they must play survival games to acquire Visa or life until the game is over and the next game begins. Arisu, an eager obsessive gamer, easily solves the game's algorithm and the game master's deception; nevertheless, there may be only one survivor in a survival game. Price is expected to make difficult decisions, which forces him to sacrifice his friends and loved ones. His continual battle is to learn about this strange world and escape before the game takes his life.

Unlike previous research, this study analyzes and focuses on the male lead character's personality development in *Alice in Borderland*. The specific purposes of this study are to explain Arisu's experiences that affect his personality and analyze the specific goals of Arisu which lead his personality to develop, also to explain how Arisu's personality develops from the beginning until the end of the TV series. When the environment changes and is not compatible with the individual's values and beliefs, thus the individual must change their personality to meet the balance of the environment. The changes or development of Arisu's personality in *Alice in Borderland* TV series can be analyzed with Elizabeth B. Hurlock's theory.

Literature Review

Several theories of personality development can be used in this research, including Freud's psychosexual stages of development or Erikson's stages of psychosocial development. Freud believed that personality developed through a series of childhood stages in which the id's pleasure-seeking energies become focused on certain erogenous areas. An erogenous area is characterized as an area of the body that is particularly sensitive to stimulation. During the five psychosexual stages, the oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital stages, the erogenous area associated with each stage serves as a source of pleasure. Unlike Freud's theory of psychosexual stages, however, Erikson's theory described the impact of social experience across the whole lifespan. Erikson was interested in how social interaction and relationships played a role in the development and growth of human beings. Each stage in Erikson's theory builds on the preceding stages and paves the way for the following periods of development. Erikson believed people experience a conflict that serves as a turning point in development in each stage.

However, the writers decide to use Hurlock's personality development theory for this research. According to Hurlock, personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychological systems which determines his behavior and thought. Hurlock also defined in her book, *Personality Development* (1976) that:

The term 'personality' is derived from the Latin word *persona*, which means 'mask'. Among the Greeks, actors used masks to hide their identity on stage. The Romans later adopted this dramatic technique to whom *persona* denote 'as one appears to other', not as one actually is.

Hurlock (1976) explained that personality change requires effort from the person itself; they usually come from multiple revisions in the thought or feeling related to a person's self-concept. Hurlock also stated in her book *Personality Development* that several conditions are responsible for a personality change. Those are physical damage, environment, significant people, social pressure change, role change, strong motivation, change in the self-concept, and psychotherapy. There is more than one cause of personality changes in a normal person. These causes may or may not be interrelated. It means that every person has a different reason or cause of personality change; several conditions are not related to a person's personality change.

Personality Development of Ryohei Arisu in *Alice in Borderland* TV series can be seen through the situation and events from Arisu's experience across the death game. When the environment changes and is not rateable with the individual's value and belief, thus the individual must change their personality to meet the balance of the environment. The changes or development of Arisu's personality in *Alice in Borderland* TV series can be analyzed with Hurlock's (1974) theory. In the theory of Personality Development, Hurlock defines some conditions that are responsible for the changes or

development of the individual. In *Alice in Borderland* TV series, there are three conditions in Arisu's personality changes. They are: changes in environment, changes in social pressure, and changes in self-concept.

Research Method

This research applied qualitative method. According to Palmer & Bolderston (2006), qualitative research is an interpretive technique that seeks to acquire insight into the unique meanings and behaviors experienced in a given social phenomenon via the participants' subjective experiences. Qualitative research methods help generate detailed descriptions of complex phenomena, collecting data unique or unpredicted occurrences, enlightening the knowledge and interpretation by characters with wide variations wagers and positions, giving a platform those whose perspectives are rarely encountered, undertaking preliminary expeditions to help better understand and produce and even make predictions or hypotheses, and progressing toward interpretations. The best qualitative research is organized and comprehensive, with the goal of reducing bias and error while also identifying information that disproves preliminary or observable hypotheses of the study. This analysis will use instruments to gather and evaluate data in order to classify it. The instrument makes it straightforward to gather data for this investigation. The two categories of research instruments are primary and secondary. The writers act as planners, collectors, and data collectors in the primary instrument. The material comprises the supporting instruments for data collection and analysis, making it simpler to comprehend and finish the data.

The writers used *Alice in Borderland* TV series as the main data source in conducting this research. The writers watch all of the episodes and understand each episode comprehensively to find the data in the pattern of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and images related to the topic being analyzed. To conduct this study, the writer takes techniques of collecting data. There are four basic data collecting techniques in qualitative research: observations, interviews, documents, and triangulation (Gunawan 2014). The writers use observation to collect the data in three steps. The first step is to watch all of *Alice in Borderland's* episodes. The writers also attempt to obtain additional information from other sources, such as related literature, articles, or TV series reviews. After collecting all of the data, it is reviewed and split according to the issue formulation. Then in the last step, the writers write down the path based on what the writers witnessed in the form of a summary of the story that contains the data for this related story.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

To reveal the personality development in *Alice in Borderland* TV series, the data was analyzed using the psychoanalysis approach. The growth of the main character's personality is reflected in *Alice in Borderland*. As the title suggests, Arisu's personality improvement astounded everybody around him, and the main character transformed into a wonderful person. Arisu possessed a renewed feeling of purpose. He desired to enjoy life to the fullest and to bring on his friendships. He aspired to attend college and have a successful profession. He began to commit to what he intended to do the next day.

According to Hurlock (1974), the conditions responsible for personality changes can be divided into three categories, namely changes in environment, changes in social pressure, and changes in self-concept.

Changes in Environment

According to Hurlock (1974), to improve one's personality, the environment must do several things: the environment must help the person see himself more realistically.

I saw someone die in front of me, but I'm safe.

I didn't think of that, but... Still, I guess I do want to survive.

(Episode 3/Minute 08:08-08:41)

The quotation above shows how the environment in which the game of survival brought Arisu to have a wider experience and a better mind than before he played the game. This allows him to give a new perspective because he has experienced a life full of survival in the game, not only behavior but also the way of thinking. According to Kernberg (2016), personality is largely constant throughout time. This might be taken as meaning that personality changes can still occur due to new life events. Meanwhile, it might alter over time.

*I will try my best not to hinder you, which you learn while you live in nature to survive, I will also learn that skill while there is still time.
I've lived my life so far without ever thinking about it...for now I don't want to waste a second of my time. (5/03:25-04:04)*

Hurlock (1974, 125) states that changes either in the physical or social environment can cause changes in a person's self-concept and, as a result, in his typical behavior. Personality changes will be determined by how well the person is accepted in the new setting and how well the new environment satisfies his requirements. In his book, Hurlock gives an example of a person's selfishness; qualitative change means that selfishness is removed and replaced with generosity. Based on his explanation, qualitative change means that a person's personality changes very radically due to several factors caused by the environment. In the example quotation, the main character, Arisu, changes his mindset and behavior to be better because of the impact of the environment, which greatly affects the improvement of his personality.

Changes in Social Pressure

Social pressure forces people to change the way they think, act, value, and believe, or their personality, to be acceptable in society (Hurlock 1974). Changes in certain aspects of the personality are encouraged by strong social pressures. Shyness, spitefulness, aggressiveness, and selfishness are more malleable than kindness, aspiration, cooperativeness, and generosity, which are more likely to lead to social rejection.

It's a game—

Stop it. Beginners will only get in our way. It doesn't feel great, but it might good idea to act like Shibuki did. (3/16:03-16:12)

The quotation above shows how Arisu wants to help others to understand the game but is stopped by Kurabe, who thinks that their current situation now, the social pressure, does not support them at all to care for others, and he even suggests sacrificing someone as Shibuki tried to do in the previous games. The higher the social pressure on someone, the bigger his motivation to change. Pressures to conform to the approved pattern are provided by people who are significant in the person's life at the time (Hurlock 1974). Arise has to leave the habit of caring and helping others as a human being to survive in the new society, the Borderland.

... And if we refuse?

You can't reject me. Your visa is expiring today. You have no choice but to participate in a game, don't you? (5/13:10-13:24)

...

What if... I reject your offer?

Rule number three of the Beach. This is the last rule. Death to the traitors. (5/16:11-16:38)

After trying hard to find Beach, Arisu must face the harsh reality once he finds it. The Beach is a self-sufficient community with its resources and rules, including a mandate to wear swimwear and a zero-tolerance traitor policy. The social pressure that the community gave to him puts Arisu and Usagi in a dangerous situation where they must choose life or death. While the community asks him not to be a traitor and wear swimwear, he does it even though he doesn't trust them and feels uncomfortable wearing

swimwear all the time. The social pressure that he gets teaches Arisu to be selfless and cooperative for the sake of his survival and Usagi. It also gives him a chance to put himself in the Beach's society to be accepted in society.

Hurlock stated that because lack of social acceptance has such a negative impact on personality and because most people fall below the average in acceptance, many methods to help people improve their acceptance have been tried. To date, the most promising methods are those that assist the person in changing his characteristic pattern of behavior so that he will be more attuned to the group's ideal and assist him in burying his bad reputation, with geographic mobility if necessary (Hurlock 1974, 262). It implies that social pressure can have an impact on personality development. If a person wishes to be accepted in social situations, he or she must be able to adapt to those situations.

Changes in Self-Concept

Self-concept is everything you know about yourself, everything you believe, and what has happened in your life is captured in the mental impulses of your personality (Hurlock 1974).

Arisu, live for us."

...

Not me, I shouldn't be alive-

... Arisu, Thank you. (3/36:31-37:33)

In this scene in episode three, there is game hide-and-seek with a difficulty of 7 hearts. In this game, Arisu lost his two best friends. They choose Arisu to stay and give their lives to Arisu. He was so devastated by the death of his two best friends. He thought that there was no hope for him anymore. Arisu feels very guilty for the death of Chota and Karube, his two best friends. He kept blaming himself. He felt lost and could not live without his two best friends. Arisu decides to die with him not following the game so his Visa will expire. In this scene related to the theory from Calhoun & Acocella (1995), self-concept is a mental picture of oneself consisting of knowledge about oneself, expectations for oneself, and self-assessment. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the self-concept developed by a person (positive or negative) will greatly determine how he can accept the conditions that are happening to him, as well as how he behaves when he is having problems or difficulties in his life.

... There's no point in me living...

Everyone died because I survived...

I was the one who killed them all.

It's unforgivable if someone like me lives... (4/10:41-11:31)

In this scene, it is shown that Arisu is experiencing intense mental stress and depression due to the loss of his best friends. Until the moment he meets Usagi, who invites him to join the game. Finally, he decided to return to play.

Take him to that room!!

...

You can't hear, see, and don't know the time ... (6/26:09-26:42)

This scene tells that the militants led by Aguni captures Arisu. His body was tied to a chair with duct tape. His eyes are closed, his mouth is closed, and his ears are closed. There was also a fire, resulting in smoke in the room where Arisu was being held. He kept trying to scream and remove the duct tape until his chair fell and his body fell too. Arisu was desperate, he didn't know what else to do. Until he remembered his friends. It made him get up, and then he rubbed the duct tape covering his mouth against the floor, he managed to get the duct tape off. Then, Arisu shouted for help.

Anyone...help me! (7/32:51)

In this scene, the self-concept is also shown. When Arisu really felt hopeless, then he was able to get up again because he was reminded of his two best friends. Arisu felt that when his chair fell, it would be the last moment of his life, but due to his strong urge to stay alive, he found a way. Because his chair fell, this brought him close to the floor, so he rubbed the duct tape that was in his mouth to tear the duct tape. Then Arisu screamed as loud as she could until finally, Usagi was able to find her and free her. In this scene, Arisu shows that there is hope in Arisu to survive for the sake of his dead friends, as explained by Calhoun & Acocella (1995) regarding the dimension of hope, which is a person's ownership of a set of views about what he might become in the future.

CONCLUSION

Literature and psychology are inextricably linked. Since the beginning of psychoanalysis, the discipline has shown many similarities with literature, which can also be regarded as mutual recognition of emotion. Psychoanalysis frequently helps to determine literature, but it frequently uses literature as a surface or an explanation with its own psychoanalysis knowledge. In this chapter, the author concludes the previously stated problems by describing and developing the primary character of *Alice in the Borderland* TV series, Ryhoei Arisu. He is characterized as capable of being exceedingly selfish, owing to the lack of attention and love he got as a youngster. He believed he would be incapable of providing love since he had never experienced it, and his trauma progressively showed itself throughout his time in the Borderlands. Everything he did was for himself, and he was always thinking about himself. He didn't recognize it for a long time. He finally understood how selfish he was in the end. He began working on himself after that, trying to change. He came to realize that it wasn't always about what he intended to do, but about what others needed him to do.

The writers conclude that Arisu's personality development was related to Hurlock's theory of personality development in conditions responsible for personality changes, including changes in the environment, social pressure, and self-concept, which make Arisu become a new person. The writer also concluded that the situation was very influential in developing Arisu's personality.

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