

## Arvin's Realistic Personality Development in Donald Ray Pollock's *The Devil All the Time*

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyse the personality development and the factors that influence the personality development of Arvin, in *The Devil All the Time* by Donald Ray Pollock. The researcher sets three formulations of the problem to be analysed the first is identifying Arvin's basic personality. The second is identifying Arvin's personality development. Third is identifying the factors that cause Arvin's personality development. To analyze the formulation of the problem, the researcher uses character theory and characterization to identify Arvin's basic personality, then uses Elizabeth B. Hurlock's personality development theory to identify personality development and the factors that influence Arvin's personality development. The results of this study found that the first is Arvin's basic personality, namely innocent child, obeying his father's orders, and having strong faith. Second is Arvin's personality development, namely from an innocent child to a skeptical mind, from a faithfulness child to a rebellious child, and from having strong faith to losing faith. Third, factors that influence Arvin's development are physical changes, changes in the family, changes in the environment, and significant people. However, from the four personality development factors that the researcher found, significant people have the most influence on Arvin's personality development. The conclusion is that Arvin experienced personality development from a good child to a realistic and rude child, this factor was caused by a significant person, namely his father.

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### Introduction

Personality is one part of human beings that affects daily life, many personality types in humans tend to be stable and do not change because they have been unique since birth. Personality can also be adapted from the environment in which a person interacts socially. Personality can be defined as a relatively stable and distinctive set of patterns of thought, behavior, and emotional responses that characterize a person's adaptation to his environment (Alidemi & Fejza, 2021).

According to Ewen (2010), personality refers to important and relatively stable elements of behavior. From this statement, personality is an important and stable part of human beings, but personality will continue to develop and change over time because it is influenced by certain things. While personality is relatively stable throughout time, it is additionally subject to change during the course of someone's life (Geukes et al., 2018).

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Personality in a literary work can be found in the character that is created by the author through his imagination and experience. According to Garc (2015), character personality is only a link to the whole author's overall intent, which is created by the author through the principle of awareness of imagination and social reality, then more than just a visual reflection of the author's ideas. Character is a language projection, a social act that reflects a particular ideology and civilization (Garc, 2015).

Then, a round character is often the main object in personality development. It is reasonable to claim that fictional characters appear psychologically correct, especially when the author has studied the psychology of the characters and the interpersonal relationships he has used in his work (Santos et al., 2018). The round character is complex and can develop because it is influenced by other characters, and one day it will surprise the reader (Schirova, 2006). Round characters are more complex than flat or stock characters and often display the inconsistencies and internal conflicts found in real people and will change throughout the story (Schirova, 2006). Sometimes, round characters can be influenced by flat characters because, in stories, round characters often interact with flat characters to form characters out of them.

Personality development is a stage in the individual growth of the developing cycle. There are several factors influence the process of individual development like family, environment, and the other else (Hurlock, 1974). The reason why *The Devil All the Time* by Donald Ray Pollock is very interesting to study is because, in that story, there are a lot of events related to the theoretical concepts used such as a radical father, a crazy environment, a couple of psychopathic lovers, an obscene priest and so on. In all this madness, one main character is trapped in it, ultimately affecting his growth and development. Sometimes personality can change when someone is at home gathering with his family, then when someone outside the house gathers with friends. In other words, our persona might be the mask we wear when we interact with the outer world (Schultz & Schultz, 2017: 5).

However, another reason why this research contributes to knowledge is that the researchers hopes that this study can be practically useful, which can be useful as a reference to add insight for future researchers, especially students who want to take the same topic. Then, it can also be useful theoretically where this research can add insight into Elizabeth B. Hurlock's theory, namely the theory of personality development, and help make it easier to understand personality development.

This study focuses on the development of the Arvin's personality development as main character using the theory of Elizabeth B. Hurlock. Then, the theory of character and characterization identifies the Arvin's basic personality. There is no research on personality development from *The Devil All the Time* novel By Donald Ray Pollock. Therefore, the researcher chose the development of the main character's personality as the topic of discussion.

There are several previous studies that discuss personality development. There are article journal from Rayana & Suspiadji, (2022) and Lah & Supsiadji, (2022). From all previous studies carried out by the researcher, it can be concluded that there are similarities and differences between those two previous studies. What compares the two previous studies listed by the researcher is that both of them use the personality development theory of

Elizabeth B. Hurlock. Then, what distinguishes everything is the data brought by the current researcher is different from previous researchers and in the end will find different findings.

## Method

This study uses an intrinsic elements approach. The intrinsic elements approach is an approach used to analyze a literary work by understanding and interpreting the personality of the main character, regardless of the author and the reader. In this study, the researcher analyzed the basic personality of the main character in the story. then after knowing how the character's basic personality and behavior make it easier for a researcher to move to the next stage. The researcher uses personality development theory from Elizabeth B. Hurlock and is assisted by the intrinsic elements approach.

Then, the method is a qualitative descriptive method, a research method that aims to understand the development of the main character in *The Devil All the Time* novel. This qualitative method is used to obtain the data by reading the novel, highlighting the data then writing notes on the data that has been highlighted in the novel. Qualitative research methods are used to analyze information through several steps of analysis presenting data, interpreting, validating it, and demonstrating the potential results of research (Cresswel, 2014). The type used in this research is a descriptive qualitative type because, in the data analysis process the researcher identifies the data that has been obtained, classifies the data, and evaluates the data based on the researcher's arguments, and then the last one makes conclusions. Descriptive analysis in a study describes data factually with chronology, then describes it through words (Cresswel, 2014).

Researcher also have procedures for collecting data and procedures for analyzing data. For the first data collection procedure, reading the novel. *Second*, taking some highlights of the points in the novel from chapter to chapter. *Third*, showing list of data to make it easier for the researcher. *Fourth*, taking some notes from the novel that has been highlighted. Then, in data analysisist procedure for the first is identifying the data. The researcher analyzed the data which has been collected in the notes to find Arvin's basic personality, Arvin's personality development, and what factors influence the development process of Arvin's personality. *Second*, Classifying the data that has been obtained according to the theory used. *Third*, analyzing classified data to answer Arvin's basic personality based on character and characterization theory. *Fourth*, analyzing classified data to answer Arvin's personality development based on personality development characteristics according to Hurlock. *Fifth*, analyzing data that has been classified to answer the factors that influence Arvin's personality development based on Hurlock's personality development theory. *Sixth*, Evaluating and interpreting the data by compiling the researcher's arguments, supported by the theory used. *Seventh*, drawing conclusions based on the results of the data analysis.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

The Results of this study found, the first is Arvin's basic personality, namely innocent child, obeying his father's orders and having strong faith. Second is Arvin's personality

development, namely from an innocent child to a skeptical mind, from faithfulness child to rebellious child, and from having strong faith to losing faith. Third, factors that influence Arvin's development are physical changes, changes in family, changes in environment, and significant people.

## Discussion

### Arvin's Basic Personality

#### *Having Strong Faith*

Arvin's second personality is having strong faith. Arvin's strong fight personality can see in the story. At the beginning of the story's prologue, data showing that Arvin is a having strong faith can see through the quotation below:

Willard came to the clearing every morning and evening to talk to God. Arvin didn't know which was worse, the drinking or the praying. As far back as he could remember, it seemed that his father had fought the Devil all the time. (Pollock, 2011; p. 3).

The prologue above, explains that Arvin is a strong-faith child because he is praying with his father. It can see that Arvin as a round character follows his father as a flat character to pray when he is little and does not understand what is bad between drinking whiskey every day and then praying. Then other data shows that Arvin is a having strong faith, in the prologue of the story there is a dialog between Arvin and his father. "*Don't pay them no mind,*" Willard said quietly. "*This here is the Lord's time, not nobody else's.*" (Pollock, 2011; p. 5).

From the dialogue above, the incident occurs when Arvin hears two hunters bringing the results of their hunt. The hunters are gossiping about what Arvin and his father are doing. Arvin ignores them and focuses on praying but he feels so nervous. From the second piece of evidence, it concludes that Arvin has a strong faith. because even though he and his father are gossiping from behind but they are still focusing on praying. From all the data that the researcher brought to analyze, it can ascertain that Arvin's basic personality is having strong faith.

#### *Innocent Child*

In the story, Arvin's personality describes as an innocent child. Like a small child in general, every question he asks his father seems plain. His innocent nature can identify when he has a dialogue with his father, which according to Abrams (2008), characterization can see through dialogue between characters.

"Did she ever wake up?" Willard asked, in a low voice.

"Yeah," Arvin said, "but, Dad, why doesn't she know who I am?"

"It's just the medicine they got her on. She's gonna be fine in a few days." (Pollock, 2011; p. 33).

The dialogue, explains that Arvin is an innocent child because he doesn't know why his mother doesn't know him. Whereas before the dialogue, Arvin sees that his mother offers morphine to relieve pain which causes memory loss.

Arvin always asks his father questions that seem innocent and end up bringing panic, all of which made his father feel even more restless. Another proof that Arvin is an innocent child is below.

"Them doctors can't do your mom any good," he told Arvin, as they made their way back to the house in the dark. "But I got hopes we can save her if we try hard enough."

"Is she gonna die?" Arvin said.

Willard thought a second before he answered. "The Lord can do anything if you ask Him right." (Pollock, 2011; p. 34).

At that time his father is confused about what to do because the doctor decides that his mother would not be able to survive, so he is praying and continues to pray with Arvin to get a miracle from God. From the dialogue above, Arvin's question seems does not understand what his father's conclusion is, it can prove that he is an innocent child.

### *Faithfulness Child*

Arvin in the story shows that faithfulness child because when his parents told him to do something, Arvin never argues or comments. Arvin's character can see in the dialogue with his father. According to Abrams (2008), characterization can see through dialogue between characters, and prologue from the author by using the showing and telling method. Arvin faithfulness child can see in the small conversation between Arvin and his father. "*You stay here with your mother,*" he told Arvin. "*I'll be back in a little bit.*" (Pollock, 2011; p.33).

From the quotation above, the data shows that Arvin's basic personality is a faithfulness child. The short story from that data is that in 1958 when Arvin 10 years old, his mother Charlotte is severe stomach pain and must bring to the hospital. After lying 2 weeks in the hospital, Charlotte asks her husband to come home because he doesn't want to spend the rest of his life in the hospital. Finally, when they got home, Willard gives him a sedative and tell Arvin to look after his mother.

"Jesus Christ, this ain't no goddamn pet," Willard yelled.

"Get in the house with your mother." (Pollock, 2011; p. 45).

The next data shows that Arvin's faithfulness child from the above dialog between Arvin and his father. The conversation happens when by that time Charlotte is often lost her mind and then she thought maybe something expect of her other than prayers and sincerity. Willard finally comes home from the farm with a lamb in his pickup. The lamb is limping and it cost five dollars. The sheep will use by Willard to make offerings. Arvin comes to his father. He thought about giving the sheep a name. But his father refuses because the animal is not a pet but an animal for making offerings.

### *Arvin's Personality Development*

#### *From Innocent Child to Skeptical Mind*

Arvin's personality develops to be rebellious child. In the beginning to the middle of the story, Arvin's personality describes as an obedient child to his parents, because at that time



Arvin has an obligation as a child to look after his mother who is sick, while his father goes to work to pay for his mother's treatment. However, researchers find two characteristics of Arvin's personality development from Hurlock's theory, those are better versus worse and slow versus rapid changes. Arvin's personality, which develops into rebellious against his family it explains *"I'm not doing that no more," he told his father in a loud voice. He knew it was bound to cause trouble, but he didn't care. "I ain't praying."* (Pollock, 2011: p. 46).

The dialogue shows that he started to develop into a rebellious child when he is little. That part of the dialogue takes place when he obeys Willard to pray constantly for a miracle to cure his mother's cancer, but nothing comes of it. From this data when views from the theory of developmental characteristics of Hurlock, this development occurs so rapid changes. According to Hurlock (1974), rapid changes identify as harmful changes. Usually, this fast change causes by the sharp effects which in the end will forget the true self-concept. From that statement, these fast effects are when Arvin has a bad experience and then lost confidence because he sees his mother die even though he prays as hard as he could. In the end he rebels against his father and decides not to pray anymore.

#### *From Faithfulness Child to Rebellious Child*

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#### *From Having Strong Faith to Losing Faith*

In this section, the researcher finds two characteristics of Arvin's personality development. the two developments are better versus worse and slowly versus rapid changes. Two of these developments will describes through all data analysis by the researcher. Arvin develops into a loss of faith. This personality develops because Arvin and his father pray for a miracle from God so that his mother could recover from the disease. However, Arvin's faith begins to lose because of all his efforts to pray for a miracle, Arvin felt nothing. Data showing that Arvin's

personality is losing faith can see from the author who describes Arvin in the story. The data explains below.

By three in the morning, his throat was raw and blistered. His father came once and dumped a bucket of water on his head, implored him to keep praying. But though Arvin kept screaming for the Lord's mercy, he didn't feel anything and none came (Pollock, 2011: p. 44).

The data shows that Arvin has started to lose faith. It is three o'clock in the morning, he insists on praying even though his throat is swollen and starting to hurt, even though he is starting to have no faith that he felt nothing and no miracle could heal his mother. This characteristic shows that Arvin is starting to develop slowly, because as long as he is praying, he doesn't feel any miracle coming.

### Factors Influencing Arvin's Personality Development

#### Physical Changes

One of the factors influencing the development of Arvin's personality from an innocent child to a skeptical mind is physical changes. Arvin's basic personality as an innocent in the story when he is ten years old. That evidence explains in below.

"Someone was always dying somewhere, and in the summer of 1958, the year that Arvin Eugene Russell counted himself ten years old, it was his mother's turn." (Pollock, 2011: p. 32).

The evidence above describes Arvin having a basic personality when he is ten years old. At this age, he is an innocent child in every question asked of his father. Then, Arvin's personality developed into skeptical thinking when he is a young adult who is fifteen years old. That evidence explains. "*ON ARVIN'S FIFTEENTH BIRTHDAY, Uncle Earskell handed him a pistol wrapped in a soft cloth along with a dusty box of shells.*" (Pollock, 2011: p. 99).

The above evidence is one of the transition factors in personality development cause by physical changes. According to Hurlock (1974), at the time of a person's puberty, a person will experience physical development, then he will adjust his self-concept to his developing mind at that time.

#### Changes in Family

Arvin in the family knows for his attention and kindness in everything he gets from his mother, as describe by Hurlock (1974), the direct influence of the family in the development of the child's personality comes from the parenting pattern of parents who teach about interests, attitudes, and moral values towards other family members. When Arvin is still living with his parents, he looks after his mother who is sick when his father goes to work.

"It's been a rough summer, hasn't it, Arvin?" Charlotte said, running her bony hand through his dark hair. He was such a sweet, gentle boy. She hoped Willard would realize that when she was gone. (Pollock, 2011: p. 40).

It explains from his mother who thinks that Arvin is a kind and gentle child. In the end, with the influence of his parents, it brings Arvin while living with his grandmother's family. Evidence that shows the influence of his mother can see in the following quotation.

It can conclude from the evidence identified by the researchers that one of the factors that influence Arvin's personality is family. The direct influence of the family in the development of the child's personality comes from the parenting pattern of parents who teach about interests, attitudes, and moral values toward other family members (Hurlock, 1974: p. 354).

### *Changes in Environment*

At that time, Arvin stood up for Lenora and in the end, he lost the fight because his body is bigger than them. Even though it took him two months to get revenge until one day he manages to target them one by one. Of the three young men, Gene Dinwoodie is the most severe and admit to the hospital.

"I don't like bullies."

"Jesus Christ, Arvin, you going to meet lots of people you might not take a liking to."

"Maybe so, but I bet he won't pick on Lenora anymore." (Pollock, 2011: p. 109).

From that proof shows one of the factors that influence the development of Arvin's personality is the environment where there is a lot of bullying. That's why Arvin has to protect his half-sister, Lenora. According to Hurlock (1974), to get a significant impact on environmental changes they must increase their status to make it more secure and adequate. From that statement, Arvin has met Hurlock's standards for changes in the environment. As explains from previously section, Arvin beat the three people but then he lost, in the end, he can teach the three bullies a lesson in a little longer time. What Arvin do to secure Lenora's social status so she wouldn't bully again

### *Significant People*

According to Hurlock (1974), the development of a person's personality can also influence by significant people. Someone will inspire by the attitudes of significant people such as the motivations, thoughts, and actions they take. Hurlock explained, Arvin's personality development started from faithfulness child to rebellious against his family, and losing his faith. One of the factors that most influenced him were significant people, but that significant person is his father.

Pick your own time, he remembered his father telling him, and Arvin learned that lesson well, catching whomever his enemy happened to be at the moment alone and unaware in the restroom or stairwell or under the bleachers in the gymnasium (Pollock, 2011: p. 94).

From the evidence above, it can ascertain that one of the factors contributing to the development of his personality is a significant person from his family, namely his father. That explains in the previous study, Arvin is a well-known child and pays attention to small things



in his family. Arvin has his principles towards people who considers jerks out there and that's what makes him inspired by significant people.

From that data conclude that of all the factors that influenced Arvin's personality development, this significant person was his own father who had the most influence on Arvin's personality development. Because when he was little, he always spent time with his father, in the end he learned many things in terms of motivation, mentality and habits that he got from his father. The development of a person's personality can also influence by significant people. Someone will inspire by the attitudes of significant people such as the motivations, thoughts, and actions they take (Hurlock, 1974).

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research, it can be concluded that Arvin in the story experiences personality development. Arvin's basic personality is an innocent child, faithfulness child, and having strong faith. This basic personality was identified by researchers when Arvin was a child aged seven to ten years and still living with his family.

Then, the researcher analyzed and found that Arvin developed from an innocent child to a skeptical mind, faithfulness to rebellious child, and has a strong faith to losing faith. Arvin is skeptical about everything, including people who are considered not in accordance with the principles of goodness according to him. Then Arvin, who rebelled against his family, had reasons because he wanted to protect his half-sister, Lenora, who often got bullied at school. Finally, Arvin, who lost his faith, even though he had prayed with all his might, he and his father could not save his mother who was stricken with malignant cancer.

The researcher found four factors, namely physical changes, changes in family, changes in environment, and significant people. First, this physical change is a developmental transition in physical form and Arvin's age increases from ten to fifteen years old. Ultimately forming a skeptical Arvin mindset. Second, changes in family to Arvin, his grandmother saw the figure of Willard in Arvin for fights, then Arvin's good nature was inspired by his parents, and finally Arvin's personality developed into losing faith due to trauma because he could not save his mother from death. Third, changes in the environment made Arvin rebel against his family, because of what Arvin did to protect his half-sister Lenora from bullying by his schoolmates by beating them up, even though his family didn't agree with Arvin's principles. Fourth, significant people who influence Arvin's personality development. Arvin has a principle that is motivated by the words and actions his father did when he beat up two hunters who gossiped badly about his mother.

Suggestions for future researchers, there are many things that can be analyzed in *The Devil All The Time* novel. Such as analyzing the trauma faced by the main character, or analyzing it from the point of view of a sociological approach. Then, future researchers are expected to increase sources of journal articles so they can find insights in conducting research.

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