

## Quentin's Personality Development in John Green's *Paper Towns*

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to explain Quentin's personality before meeting Margo and how it is after meeting Margo in John Green's *Paper Towns*. The main character, Quentin, changes from being static person in life such as having no ambitions, being a coward person, and disciplined one before meeting Margo to being a dynamic person such being an ambitious person, being a brave person, and being an insubordinate one after meeting Margo. The kind of change in life draws the researcher's interest to conduct the analysis in this article since human's thought develops from time to time whose developments could do the person either harm or good. However, this personality change does the main character good. Using emotional and social determinants and close reading method, the researcher conducts a deep observation about the main character's personality and finds its change from unambitious, coward, and discipline before meeting Margo to ambitious, intrepid and insubordinate after meeting Margo. Thus, two of the eight determinants give a significant change of life of the main character, therefore, such determinants are worth studying very deeply as such knowledge is very necessary to make people able to manage available determinants they encounter in their daily life. Finally, the finding is to develop the theory of literature in application, namely, the personality development by Hurlock

**Key words:** Emotional Determinant, Social Determinant, Personality Development

### INTRODUCTION

Personality development refers to the broader context of the interplay between different family members or significant others and what may be described as the family life cycle implanted in the social/cultural milieu (Hindle and Smith, 2013),

to the encompassing of the ego development, as Loevinger has performed including a meaningful and orderly change in the realms of traits, concerns, and identity (Blasi et al., 2013), whose development is usually identified with growth and change, i.e., in the realm of language development (Bornstein and Lamb, 2013).

The era of grand theories of personality (e.g., those of Freud, Allport, or Murray) has passed the broad theory of personality development. One of the key views of personality psychology is that people display individual differences on a group of characteristics (Mroczek and Little, 2014). Therefore, the earliest definition of personality has some aspects: individual differences, behavioural dimensions, and traits. Individual differences refer to the observation that people differ in a variety of ways. In the study of personality, the important differences involve personality traits, internally based psychological characteristics that often correspond to adjectives such as shy, kind, mean, outgoing, dominant, and so forth (Allen, 2015). Accordingly, one can say that personality is a sum of a person's ideas, attitudes values, which determine their role in society and thus form an integral part of his/her character. One can say that personality is developed by the individual as a result of his participation in group life because being a member of the group, and one can learn specific behaviour systems and symbolic skills which determine his/her ideas, attitudes, and social values (Jain, 2017).

Likewise, personality changes systematically across time, with age, and in reaction to the environment. Consequently, modern personality psychology shifted its focus from stability to changeability of personality traits, resulting in a new area of research, namely personality development research (Specht, 2017). The use of psychology in a wide range of social life has caused this branch of science to become functional (Tatlilioglu, 2017). Personality development explaining one non-stage theory perspective is the cognitive approach. A cognitive approach to personality development suggests that our personality develops. The ability to effectively appraise and adapt our responses to resolve a situation help us better adapt to life circumstances for physical, social, psychological, financial, and well-being outcomes (Patrick et al., 2020). Thus, the study of personality development is a concept used in everyday life to describe character of a person (Tina Abbott, 2021) that can also be found in a literary work. The personality development in literature suggests that characters are relatively continuing attributes that show predictable patterns of stability and change across the lifespan (McAdams et al., 2021). Then, this character development can be found in Karan Bajaj's *the Yoga of Max's Discontent*.

John Green's *Paper Towns* focuses on Quentin's changes from a man who is always static such as unambitious, coward, and disciplined until he finally becomes a man who is dynamic such as ambitious, intrepid, and insubordinate because of emotional and social interference. It starts with Margo asking Quentin to help him with his revenge mission. Margo and Quentin have a day of fun and thrill adventure. During this mission, Quentin find something different and become brave in dealing with anything. Because there are changes in the main character caused by the emotion as well as society and human being's thought tends to develop from time to time, therefore, the researcher is interested in raising this topic to analyze in this study.

Accordingly, this study explores Quentin's personality before meeting Margo and after meeting Margo.

To get the novelty of this study, the researcher refers to the studies by Erwindriani (2012), with the formalistic approach to analyze Scrooge's character development, this study finds that Scrooge experiences a gradual character development, Aqmarina (2014), with the objective approach, she finds the development of the main character from an arrogance to caring one, Shasita (2017), with the psychoanalysis theory, the main character changes from bad manner to a good one. Accordingly, through emotion and social determinant applied to answer the research questions such as how Quentin's personality is described before meeting Margo and how it is after meeting Margo, this study then meets the requirement of novelty.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Previous Related Study**

Erwindriani (2012) using the formalistic approach to analyze Scrooge's character development, by focusing on A Christmas Carol's text, this study finds that Scrooge experiences a gradual character development that comes from his awareness of his bad character and from the ghosts and other characters after seeing the visions of his past, present and future shown by the ghosts on Christmas Eve. Aqmarina (2014) identifying the character development of Edward Tulane through determining the cause of his change and finding out its meaning of it applies objective approach comes to the result indicating that Edward Tulane's character develops from an arrogant to caring rabbit china doll. Shasita (2017) in her article analyzes the two continued novels from the personality development of Jean Louise Scout in Harper Lee's two novels, *How to Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman* from emotional, cognitive, moral, and religious aspect. Using psychoanalysis theory, the study finds that an individual cannot be separated from its society's tradition in which they should behave in a good manner to be the good member of society as well as in family.

Thus, two of Hurlock's eight determinants, that is, emotion and social determinants above are worth applying here since Erwindriani with her formalistic approach, Aqmarina, her objective approach, Shasita, with her psychoanalysis theory, excluded from Hurlock's determinant theory. The researcher chooses emotion and social determinants because this determinants influence Quentin's personality development. Accordingly, through emotion and social determinant applied to answer the research questions such as how Quentin's personality is described before meeting Margo and how it is after meeting Margo, this study then meets the requirement of novelty.

### **Personality**

The researcher refers to Hurlock's development theory (1973) eight determinants influencing the development of a person's personality: physical, intellectual,

emotional, social, aspiration and achievement, sex, educational, and the last family. The first determinant is physical. While discussing the physical determinant, we are referring to the extent to which external factors shape an individual's character. The body impacts personality traits in both obvious and subtle ways. What people can and cannot do is directly influenced by their physical bodies. Indirect factors include a person's ideal, the opinions of others about their physical abilities and disabilities, and how the person's body is perceived compared to others' bodies. Personality is impacted when a person goes through a physical transformation since it changes how they typically respond to change. The reactions of others and the roles the social group will allow the individual to play due to their changed appearance contribute to the impact of physical transformations.

The second determinant is intellectual. Intellectual capacity has a direct and indirect impact on a person's personality. It has an immediate effect on personality because of the kind of life adjustments that an individual makes. It indirectly impacts their personality because of the judgments that others make of them based on their intellect. It is necessary to be aware of the typical course of intellectual growth to comprehend the consequences of intellectual capacities on behavior. The capability of finding solutions to difficulties is tied to the intellectual component. The degree of the person's success in adjusting will be directly proportional to how they use their intelligence.

The third determinant is emotional. Because it influences both person's personal and societal adjustments, emotion is a significant factor in determining their personality. The ability of a person to form emotional connections with other people and social judgments based on how well that person manages their own feelings are two examples of how emotions can directly impact a person's personality.

The fourth is social determinants. A person's genetic disposition does not determine whether they become social, unsocial, or antisocial. However, it is their early social experiences at home and in the broader world. These formative experiences allow the individual to learn how to interact with others and the virtual drive to do so. The extent to which a person's social group impacts the development of their personality is not only determined by how well-accepted the individual is but also by how much the individual values being well-accepted by others.

The fifth determinant is aspirations and achievement. People are evaluated at every stage of life based on how their accomplishments stack up against their contemporaries. The social group will have a favorable opinion of the individual whose accomplishments in highly valued areas are deemed outstanding in quantity and quality. Aspirations are self-focused objectives that a person establishes for themselves in the form of goals. The more their ambitions are focused on their ego and the more they connect to aspects of behavior that are significant to them, the more significant an impact those aspirations will have on their personality. The type of goals that a person aspires to achieve is heavily impacted by a variety of factors, including a person's intelligence, sex, personal interests and values, family pressures, group expectations, cultural traditions, competition with others, prior experience, the mass media, and personal characteristics.

The sixth is the sex determinant. This factor in a person's life has both a direct and an indirect impact on the formation of their personality. The impacts of a person's sexual hormones, which affect the structure and function of the body and how a person acts, are directly responsible for the influence that sexuality has on a person's personality. The degree to which a person is interested in their sexuality is a crucial factor in determining the extent to which their sexuality will shape their personality.

The seventh determinant is the educational determinant. The environment of the house, as well as the children's interactions with their parents, has a significant role in developing their personalities. How a student feels about going to school and college, the people who teach them, and the importance of getting an education all play a significant role in determining how much of an impact an educational establishment has on the development of a person's personality.

The final determinant is the family determinant. A person's relationship with their family is undoubtedly the most crucial component in developing that individual's personality. Everyone, regardless of age, benefits significantly from the guidance provided by their family. The amount of time that is spent in the home, the amount of control that family members have over the person's behavior, the emotionally charged relationship that a person has with their family, and the sense of security that the home environment provides are the primary contributors to the family's prominent influence.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Sample**

The method used in this study is close reading method referring to the literary analysis that focuses on the specific details of a passage or text to discern deeper meaning. The meaning derived from the close reading is the reader's interpretation of the passage or text. A close reading should never be the first reading of a text. Before focusing on the details of a text or passage, it is essential to understand the text as a whole (Pickering, 2019).

Likewise, the researcher uses descriptive and dramatic methods in analyzing the novel through Hurlock's determinants influencing the development of a person's personality by which the researcher means to present the character mainly through description and discussion as well as through reporting the character's speech and actions. Thus, by describing, discussing as well as reporting the character's speech and actions, the researcher presents and analyzes how Quentin's personality is described before meeting Margo and how it is after meeting Margo. Further, to get clear data to analyze, the researcher uses Hurlock's determinant to be a primary method to analyze Quentin's character development in John Green's *Paper Towns*.

Whilst, the sample population are taken from John Green's *Paper Towns* from which the researcher quotes the words that have things to do with the personality

development as well as social determinant. Thus, not all items in the novel are worth quoting here.

### **Instrument and Procedure**

The instrument of this study is the researcher herself through collecting the data in two tables in a note; one part is with the main character's personality before meeting Margo and the other part is with the main character's personality after meeting Margo. Therefore, this kind of procedure makes the researcher easy to analyze the problems.

### **Data Analysis**

Firstly, the researcher explains the main character's personality before meeting Margo and the main character's personality after meeting Margo. Secondly, the researcher quotes the quotation related to his personality before meeting Margo and his personality after meeting Margo. Lastly, the researcher analysis the quotation and relates the quotations to the emotion and social determinants in order that the researcher confirms that the quotations are worth quoting.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

John Green's *Paper Towns* chronicles the life of an American teen who lives in Florida. Quentin Jacobson, a teen, has two friends named Radar and Ben and a neighbor named Margo Roth Spiegelman. In junior high school, they are currently pursuing their last level of schooling. The quest starts when Margo asks Quentin to go on a midnight vengeance mission. Quentin experiences something new and, of course, has pleasure in completing this quest. Margo, however, abruptly vanishes, and Quentin must go in search of him. They begin a hunt for Margo with the aid of his two pals. Quentin's perspective changed during the search mission in a better direction than before.

### **Quentin's Personality before Meeting Margo**

#### **Unambitious**

Though difficult to regard the quotations in this sub-chapter as unambitious, yet, the researcher convinces that this one is the example of unambitious. Therefore, it meets the personality development theory above; teenagers in their senior year of high school typically look forward to prom night. Prom night is a time for youngsters to flaunt their looks and demonstrate that they are the most attractive or handsome person around. Quentin, on the other hand, lacks the side that most of middle and upper teens possess. Considering that he is an introvert and does not enjoy being among people. As seen by the following quotation:

“As she drove, Mom was asking me about classes and finals and prom. “I don't believe in prom,” I reminded her as she rounded a corner. I expertly angled my raisin bran to accommodate the g-forces. I'd done this before. “Well, there's no harm in just going with a friend. I'm sure you could ask Cassie Hiney.” (Green, 2008, p. 15)

In the quote above, Quentin stated that he did not believe in the prom. Even though his mother had also encouraged and suggested friends for Quentin to attend the prom with, he still decided not to attend. Because he does not believe in the prom and feels that going to it would be a waste of time, Quentin lacks the ambition that most other teenagers do to attend the prom. In addition, Quentin explained his reasons for declining to attend the night prom. As seen by the following quotation:

“It’s not just that I don’t like prom. I also don’t like people who like prom,” I explained, although this was, in point of fact, untrue. Ben was absolutely gaga over the idea of going. Mom turned into school, and I held the mostly empty bowl with both hands as we drove over a speed bump.” (Green, 2008, p. 15)

Quentin thinks that prom night is just another typical, unremarkable affair. The lines "I also don't like people who like prom" in the sentence above also indicate that he dislikes those who enjoy attending prom nights. To dissuade his mother from talking to him about prom, Quentin is even prepared to lie to her when he says this. Even though we know what transpired, one of his close friends, Ben, genuinely enjoyed prom night and had made a lot of preparations to appear beautiful on prom night. Evidenced by Quentin saying "*Ben was absolutely gaga over the idea of going.*" Quentin thought about Ben's response when he said that and clearly Ben did not like the idea of Quentin disliking someone who likes prom night. Thus, from the two quotations, the researcher is successful to convince the unambitious personality of Quentin.

### **Coward**

Another hesitation of the researcher in regarding the former personality of Quentin is his being coward. However, through reading intensively as well as closely about the previous personality of Quentin, the researcher strongly believes that the quotation available here refers to his cowardice. Cowardice is a quality Quentin possesses. He has had this quality ever since he was a child. Margo, his neighbor, on the other hand, has an adventurous spirit. Quentin merely wants to be in his familiar surroundings. He suffers as a result of Quentin's cowardly disposition. As shown by the quotation that follows, which claims that Quentin has been cowardly since he was a little child.

“As I took those two steps back, Margo took two equally small and quiet steps forward. “His eyes are open,” she said. “We gotta go home,” I said. “I thought you closed your eyes when you died,” she said. “Margo, we gotta go home and tell.” (Green, 2008)

From the quotation above, it can be said that Quentin has a cowardly nature since childhood. The quote above explains that after Quentin found dead body hanging from a tree he took two steps back and he was behind Margo. Evidenced by the words "As I took those two steps back." Then, Quentin asked Margo to go back home because she was scared, but Margo did not heed Quentin's invitation and Margo continued to observe the dead man. Because Quentin was already very scared, he once again asked Margo to go home and from his tone that looked like someone was scared, namely by speaking without a clear tone like the following

sentence 'Margo we gotta go home and tell.' He said those words in a rush filled with frightened people.

### **Discipline**

The last personality of Quentin that is worth discussing here is his discipline. Initially, the researcher wonders whether or not discipline is appropriate to be included in this negative personality of Quentin. Yet, after considering the effect of his character after the change, then, the researcher comes to conclude that discipline is worth putting as Quentin's previous personality to change; discipline is a personality or character that human audiences frequently possess. One of them is Quentin, who prefers to be meticulously organized and resist change. The following quotation serves as evidence for this Quentin characteristic:

"I usually got a ride to school with my best friend, Ben Starling, but Ben had gone to school on time, making him useless to me. "On time" for us was thirty minutes before school actually started, because the half hour before the first bell was the highlight of our social calendars: standing outside the side door that led into the band room and just talking. Most of my friends were in band, and most of my free time during school was spent within twenty feet of the band room." (Green, 2008, p. 15)

In the quotation above, it can be seen that Quentin's routine every time he goes to school is that he rides with his friend Ben to go to school, as evidenced by the words "I usually got a ride to school with my best friend," the word usually proves that they usually go to school together. Furthermore, in the quotation above, Quntine also explained that they always go to school on time, that is, 30 minutes before the lesson starts, they arrive at school. Evidenced by the following sentence "On time" for us was thirty minutes before school actually started" which shows that Quentin is a very structured person. He must arrive at school 30 minutes before school starts.

### **Quentin's Personality after Meeting Margo**

#### **Ambitious**

Surely, the opposite of unambitious is ambitious when such a personality changes. Likewise, the researcher is reluctant to put the quotation here as an ambition marker, yet, through understanding closely his speech as well as behavior, the researcher is convinced such personality is an ambition; previously, Quentin's character was that he did not have any big ambitions and was a boring teenager. However, after doing a one-night mission with Margo he has a little zest to live or one can call it ambition. Evidenced by the quotation below:

"Collier Farms —one of the two pseudovisions on my list I hadn't yet visited. I finished copying the subdivision names and returned my notebook to my backpack. Call me selfish, but if I found her, I wanted it to be alone." (Green, 2008, 115)

The Quotation above explains the situation regarding Quentin who is looking for Margo's whereabouts. Quentin was not alone when he was accompanied by Radar and his best friend Ben. Quentin's character underwent a change which is called a dynamic character. This happened because Quentin's previous character was a man



who lacked ambition, but in this case he wanted to find Margo who had disappeared with his ambition. This change in Quentin's character did not happen suddenly because previously he had spent one night full of adventures with Margo, so Quentin indirectly observed a lot of personality from Margo who has an ambitious nature. With that in mind, Quentin applied it at this point when he lost a Margo, so he ambitiously searched for Margo's whereabouts. Furthermore, Quentin's personality evolved with time. According to Hurlock, a person's personality can vary based on how they react to their surroundings or circumstances.

### **Intrepid**

Intrepid is one of the Quentin's personality change that makes the researcher come to bewilderment. However, through the same effort as mentioned above, the researcher has a faith in herself that intrepid is the one worth putting in this sub-chapter; furthermore, Quentin underwent a character change that made him better than before, from cowardly to brave. Personality Quentin is a person who is afraid of anything when he is on a revenge mission with Margo. It was so unfortunate for Quentin himself that he went through much trouble. However, after experiencing the events of Margo's revenge mission, he becomes aware that being brave benefits him in many ways. Examples are as follows, as evidenced by the Quotation below:

“Mr. Worthington, I understand that you do not control Chuck and Jasper. But you see, I am in a similar situation. I do not control the little devil sitting on my left shoulder. The devil is saying, “PRINT THE PICTURE PRINT THE PICTURE TAPE IT UP ALL OVER SCHOOL DO IT DO IT DO IT.”  
(Green, 2008, p. 59)

In the sentence above, it can be seen that Quentin bravely threatened a Mr. Worthington. If Quentin's wishes are not followed then he will spread the disgrace of his photo. This courage is actually a very positive thing that Quentin has. Quentin experiences a dynamic character because he changes from being cowardly to being brave. This dynamic character appears when someone changes his personality. In this case, Quentin's personality changes to become brave because someone encourages him to change, that person is none other than Margo.

### **Insubordination**

The last personality change worth mentioning here is from discipline to insubordinate. This term confuses the researcher at first. Yet, the researcher is convinced by the quotation here that discipline is against insubordinate for the change matter.; the simple thing about Quentin's personality change is when he always comes to school on time and is never late to go to school, and he also never skips school because of things that are not too urgent, such as illness. So this time Quentin's personality changed to that of a young man who would easily say he would skip school and have the heart to lie to his parents so he wouldn't go to school with the excuse of being sick. This is proven by the quotation below which shows that Quentin's personality has changed.

“You just woke up feeling ill?” she asked. “Yeah,” I said, which was untrue. I woke up because my alarm went off at six, and then I snuck into the kitchen and ate a granola bar and some orange juice. Ten minutes later, I stuck two

fingers down my throat. I did not want to do it the night before because I did not want it stinking the room up all night. The puking sucked, but it was over quickly.” (Green, 2008, p. 79)

The quote above shows that Quentin is lying to his mother. He said he was sick and could not do anything but it turned out he did not want to go to school and that was what he had been planning since last night. When his mother asked him if he woke up feeling sick, Quentin was honestly woken up because his alarm went off at six this morning. However, Quentin lied instead and said that he woke up because he was in pain. Even though he woke up thanks to the alarm he immediately went to sneak into the kitchen eat a granola bar, and drink orange juice. To make him look sick Quentin stuck his finger down his mouth down his throat and caused him to vomit up the food and drink he had swallowed.

Further, Quentin did this on purpose, because he wanted to skip school and continue his search for Margo, so he pretended to be sick so he would not go to school. Quentin's character experienced personality development where the previous trait was a person who always obeyed orders, was structured, and did not lie to his parents. This changed his character from an obedient child to a child who lied easily. As explained in the previous chapter, she is experiencing personal development due to the influence of significant people in this story. That person is Margo Roth Spiegelman. The sentence in quotation shows Quentin lying is “which was untrue.” he admitted that he lied to his mother he would not go to school, which meant wanted to skip school. He did that because he wanted to find Margo as soon as possible.

In a nutshell, though the following writers analyse the same topic as the researcher's, however, the approaches/the theories are different from the researcher's; formalistic approach by Erwindtiani, objective approach by Aqmarina, psychoanalysis theory by Shasita, the researcher uses the two determinants of Hurlock's theory that are not available in the previous writers: emotional and social determinants. Thus, this study has a novelty.

## CONCLUSION

The researcher feels encouraged-by the fact that there are writers raising the same topic of personality development-to challenge the above writers that there is a gap in this study. Through hard work, using emotional and social determinant by Hurlock, the researcher finds that Max's personality develops from negative condition to positive one: from emotional to calm, suffering to well-being, indecisive to decisive and traumatic to happy and peaceful. That the main character's personality development is influenced by emotional and social determinants is true indicated by the fact that the first determinant refers to the loss of Margo, whilst, the second refers to his two friends named Radar and Ben who help him to find Margo. Therefore, since the two determinants are not used yet in the previous studies, this study then has the novelty.

All in all, the researcher is in a state of considerable hope that in the nearest future, there are writers interested in developing this study with other theories since this study is not flawless. Consequently, literary studies will develop in line with the other studies.

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