

**CAITLIN'S PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT IN NINA LACOUR'S
HOLD STILL (2009)**

THESIS

**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of Requirement to Obtain Strata One (S1)
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By:

Mayang Wahyuni

18019090

Advisor:

Dr. Muhd. Al-Hafizh, S.S., M.A.

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY LANGUAGES AND ARTS
UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG
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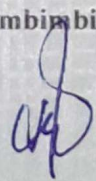
HALAMAN PERSETUJUAN SKRIPSI

Judul : Caitlin's Personality Development In Nina
LaCour's *Hold Still* (2009)
Nama : Mayang Wahyuni
NIM : 18019090/2018
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, 13 Februari 2025

Disetujui oleh,

Pembimbing

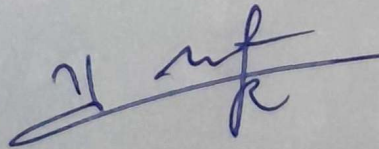


Dr. Muhd. Al Hafizh, S.S., M.A.

NIP. 19791006.200212.1.008

Mengetahui

Ketua Departemen Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris



Dr. Yuli Tiarina, S.Pd, M.Pd.

NIP. 19770720.200221.2.002

HALAMAN PENGESAHAN LULUS UJIAN SKRIPSI

Dinyatakan lulus setelah dipertahankan di depan Tim Penguji Skripsi
Program Studi Sastra Inggris Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni Universitas Negeri Padang
dengan judul

Caitlin's Personality Development in Nina LaCour's Hold Still (2009)

Nama : Mayang Wahyuni
NIM : 18019090
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, 13 Februari 2025

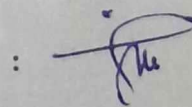
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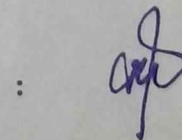
1. Ketua : Devy Kurnia Alamsyah, S.S., M.Hum :



2. Sekretaris : Delvi Wahyuni, S.S., M.A :



3. Anggota : Dr. Muhd. Al Hafizh, S.S., M.A :





KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN KEBUDAYAAN
RISET DAN TEKNOLOGI
UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG
FAKULTAS BAHASA DAN SENI
DEPARTEMEN BAHASA DAN SASTRA INGGRIS
Jl. Prof. Dr. Hamka Air Tawar, Padang 25131 Tlp. (0751) 447347
Web: <http://english.unp.ac.id>



SURAT PERNYATAAN TIDAK PLAGIAT

Saya yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Mayang Wahyuni
NIM / TM : 18019090/ 2018
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

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Diketahui oleh,

Ketua Departemen Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris

Dr. Yuli Tiarina, S.Pd., M.Pd.

NIP. 19770720 200212 2 002

Saya yang menyatakan,



Mayang Wahyuni

NIM. 18019090

ABSTRACT

Wahyuni, Mayang. 2025. Caitlin's Personality Development in Nina LaCour's *Hold Still* (2009). Thesis. English Department Faculty of Languages and Arts. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Advisor: Dr. Muhd. Al-Hafizh, S.S., M.A.

This thesis examines Caitlin's personality development in Nina LaCour's novel *Hold Still* (2009). The central issue of this study is how Caitlin's loss of her best friend Ingrid causes the significant impacts on personality development and factors that contribute to this development. This analysis is a text-based interpretation based on the concept of personality development theory proposed by Elizabeth. B. Hurlock. This analysis uses fictional elements including characters, storylines, and places, that explore deeply the issues of identity, loss, and growth for individuals. The findings show that Caitlin goes through a personality development process due to several significant factors. This study highlights the relevance of personality developments in contemporary literary works and provides a deeper comprehension of these development in the context of grief and loss.

Key words: *personality development, self-concept, Hold Still*

ABSTRAK

Wahyuni, Mayang. 2025. Caitlin's Personality Development in Nina LaCour's *Hold Still* (2009). Skripsi. Departemen Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Pembimbing: Dr. Muhd. Al-Hafizh, S.S., M.A.

Tesis ini meneliti perkembangan kepribadian Caitlin dalam novel *Hold Still* (2009) karya Nina LaCour. Isu utama dari penelitian ini adalah bagaimana kehilangan sahabat karib Caitlin, Ingrid, menyebabkan dampak yang signifikan pada perkembangan kepribadian dan faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi pada perkembangan ini. Analisis ini merupakan interpretasi berbasis teks yang didasarkan pada konsep teori perkembangan kepribadian yang dikemukakan oleh Elizabeth. B. Hurlock. Analisis ini menggunakan elemen-elemen fiksi termasuk karakter, alur cerita, dan tempat, yang mengeksplorasi secara mendalam isu-isu identitas, kehilangan, dan pertumbuhan bagi individu. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Caitlin menjalani proses pengembangan kepribadian karena beberapa faktor signifikan. Studi ini menyoroti relevansi perkembangan kepribadian dalam karya sastra kontemporer dan memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang perkembangan ini dalam konteks kesedihan dan kehilangan.

Kata kunci: *perkembangan kepribadian, konsep diri, Hold Still*

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The Researcher

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Research

Individuals have their own unique pattern of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. This unique pattern is called personality. Personality involves traits (e.g., agreeableness, extraversion, etc.), character, beliefs, code of ethics and even temperament that individuals are born with and influence the way individuals act and respond to things. Personality is often confused with “character”. Hurlock (1974) stated that character relates to behavior that is regulated by personal will, it implies moral standard and judgment of value. Personality is not something that cannot be changed. Research shows that humans are not only born with certain traits but can develop those traits or patterns over time.

Personality development can be interpreted as a process of developing or improving one's personality. Personality development is not only to make someone better but also helps them to gain confidence and self-esteem. This development can also help individuals to improve the way they see the world and help with their communication skills. According to Erikson (1975), the development of an individual's personality develops significantly after the age of five and this development is related to existential issues (trust, identity, self-determination, intimacy, integrity and individuality).

Personality development is also a crucial aspect of human psychology, which involves continuous growth and change of an individual's character over time. Personality can be shaped by several factors like social environment, emotional experiences, family or just any significant event.

The phenomena of personality development are becoming more noticeable in the current period. The existence of various training programs, seminars, and workshops that aim to improving soft skills such as communication, leadership and emotional management shows that people are starting to aware that personality development is indeed needed for life. Personality development consequently becomes a crucial aspect of parenting. This can be seen from how many parenting consultations have emerged that discuss how parents should raise and treat their kids so they will have good personalities. Personality development theory is also used as a supporting theory to study someone who is experiencing past-traumatic stress. Through the theories, the causes will be studied so that further treatment can be carried out to help the people with the trauma to recover.

Personality development can not only be seen in real life but can also be seen in literary works. Authors often use human life and expression in real life as inspiration for literary work. There are several literary works, including poems, novels, and plays. Rohrberger and Wood (1971) identify the four categories of modern literature such as short stories, novels, poems, and plays. They also stated that the reflection of human experience,

including people's feelings and thoughts, is called literature. Through the author's creativity, the real experiences of human life can be used to create interesting stories and describe the personality development of the characters in those stories as the stories progress.

Characters are the important elements of the novel. According to Gill (1995), character is a person that only exists in literary work but has some human characteristics (e.g., appearance, conversation, action, or thought) (p.127). This means that the characters in a literary work can have a good and bad characteristic just like human beings. The author itself has the freedom and responsibility to create the characters in a novel. Taylor (1981) stated that "character in a novel or play is not a real human being and has no life outside the literary composition, however well in illusion of reality has been created by the author".

Just like humans, characters in fiction also experience certain conflicts. One of them is coping with grief and loss. Coping with grief and loss is not an easy thing to do, some people even need a very long time to recover. The grieving process itself is a process that takes time and does not have a specific time reference to show how a person can recover from that process. Through the process of coping with grief and loss, characters not only slowly show the healing process, but can also show several other processes, for example personality development. The process by which a character's personality develops is typically an essential element in fiction,

particularly when the character experiences trauma or important events that affect their trajectory in life.

Hold Still (2009) by Nina LaCour is a young adult contemporary novel that reflected the issue of personality development of someone after experiencing grief and loss. *Hold still* is the debut released by Nina LaCour, the bestselling and Michael L. Printz Award-winning author of five critically acclaimed young adult novels. *Hold Still* explores the psychological and emotional journey of teenager following the death of her best friend, Ingrid. The main character, Caitlin, is a 16-year-old girl when her friend commits suicide. Caitlin was so deeply affected by this accident, forcing her to confront her feeling of grief, isolation and confusion. As the central character in *Hold Still*, Caitlin sets off on an insightful journey of personality development throughout the novel. The novel shows the transformation that Caitlin undergoes, also the healing process and how Caitlin rediscovered herself.

In this thesis, the writer attempts to study the personality development process of *Hold Still's* main character, Caitlin by Nina LaCour (2009). The novel addresses issue of the feeling of loss felt by the main character and the process of how the main character can accept reality and develop into a better person. This study focuses on the factors that influence Caitlin's personality development and how Caitlin's emotional journey aligns with theories of personality development. This research will explore how LaCour portrays Caitlin's recovery process through her experiences,

interpersonal relationship and engagement with art. This study also intends to give information to people about personality development.

1.2. Focus of the Problem

The novel written by Nina LaCour entitled *Hold Still* (2009) reflected the issue of personality development after experiencing grief and loss. The research focuses on the process of Caitlin's personality development in the novel *Hold Still* (2009) by Nina LaCour.

1.3. Research Questions

According to the background of the study, there are two research questions to reveal the implied meaning:

1. How is Caitlin's personality development depicted in the novel according to Hurlock's personality development theory?
2. What are the factors that influence Caitlin's personality development in *Hold Still* (2009)?

1.4. Purpose of Research

The purpose of the study is to explore and reveal the process of personality development that Caitlin experienced in *Hold Still* (2009) by Nina LaCour. Also, it is aimed at knowing how Caitlin's emotional journey goes through grief and loss in the novel *Hold Still*.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The issue of personality development can be shown in the novel *Hold Still* (2009) by Nina LaCour. Character, plot, and setting are used to reveal the meaning beyond the novel. This analysis uses the theory of personality development by Elizabeth B. Hurlock (1974).

After analyzing the novel, Caitlin is described as the main character in the novel entitled *Hold Still* (2009). Caitlin described to have initial personality as avoidance, insecure and always blames herself for what happened to Ingrid. Her avoidance is shown in how she always tries to avoid talking to people around her. She always thinks that people will ask her about Ingrid, or anything related to the incident. Because she does not want to feel sad, she always tried to avoid people around her. Caitlin's insecurity is shown when she always feels unsafe in her class and always thinks that she is unable to do anything because she is always scared and worries about what others think about her. Caitlin's self-blame can be shown when she always thought that Ingrid's death was also because of her. She thinks that she is responsible for what happened to Ingrid. Additionally, Caitlin frequently imagines the conversation she had with Ingrid and constantly thinks about "what if" scenario that could change Ingrid's fate.

Caitlin's transitory personality shows after she meets Dylan. Through Dylan, Caitlin began to slowly change her personality. Caitlin

became more expressive and able to express what she felt. This is very different from the previous Caitlin who always closed herself off to others. Caitlin also began to be able to express her feelings by laughing, crying and others in front of people. At the beginning of the story, Caitlin always thought that expressing her feelings would make her feel even worse, but now she no longer thinks that way. Caitlin also shows the change in her personality as she becomes confident. At the beginning of the story, Caitlin always thinks that Ingrid is always better than her in photography. She also thinks that her photography teacher, Ms. Delani, hates her because she is not good at photography. After meeting Dylan, Caitlin becomes more confident and creative.

Caitlin's personality development is mostly influenced by a factor that is called changes in significant people. Dylan's appearance in Caitlin's life has a big influence on Caitlin's personality development. Caitlin, who feels that Dylan's personality is a good personality, begins to adjust herself, and even slowly absorbs and imitates Dylan's personality pattern. Another factor that influences Caitlin's personality development is strong motivation. The motivation to be more independent makes Caitlin slowly change her personality. This is what then makes Caitlin's self-concept also start to change. After a process of self-introspection, Caitlin began to think that she had to change her self-concept, and this process continued until Caitlin finally liked and accepted her self-concept. These changes will then change Caitlin's entire personality.

In this analysis, the process of personality development is reflected by Caitlin. The way she is going through the process of personality development while experiencing grief and loss brings her on a new journey and makes her a better person. In this research, the researcher found out that there are 3 out of 7 factors that influence Caitlin's personality development. There are changes in significant people, strong motivation, and changes in self-concept. Thus, the analysis proves that someone who experiences grief and loss can also have personality development.

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