A STUDY ON PREMATURE ADULTHOOD
OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN
DAVE PELZER’S *A CHILD CALLED’ IT’*

An UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra*
in English Letters

By

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ENGLISH LETTERS STUDY PROGRAMME
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LETTERS
FACULTY OF LETTERS
SANATA DHARMA UNIVERSITY
YOGYAKARTA
2010
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“BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING, BUT IN EVERYTHING BY PRAYING AND SUPPLICATION, WITH THANKSGIVING, LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD”

(PHILIPPIANS 4:6)
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that the thesis I have written does not contain any works or parts of the works of other people, except those cited in the quotations as any academic paper should.

Yogyakarta, November 16, 2010

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is impossible for me to accomplish to finish this thesis, without assistance. First of all, I thank for Jesus Christ, who never left me alone when I was desperate during the process of finishing my thesis. Jesus Christ gives me great blessing and shows me the best path I should follow.

I also realize that it is impossible for me to finish it without many people help. Now, I would like to express my gratitude for their support in finishing this thesis.

My special gratitude is addressed to my beloved family, especially my mother Anna Rumengan Markus, my father Deany Errol Anthon Rumengan, my sisters Freyske Fraulien Silvandra Rumengan, Deane sisilia Yesika Rumengan, Irenne Patricia Elisha Rumengan. They are my great supporters. I thank them for their prayer, patience and for entrusting me to finish this thesis. My special gratitude is also addressed to my lovely boyfriend and I hope will be my future partner in my life forever Chem Tigor Petterson Akbar biya who always supports me to finish my thesis. His patience and support make me strong when I am down. His motivation makes me really realize that I am able to finish my thesis.

My big gratefulness is addressed to Elisa Dwi Wardani, S.S,M.Hum and as my advisor. I thank her for her guidance, patience, suggestions and corrections in helping me to complete this thesis. Without her guidance, I will be not able to finish my thesis. I thank my co-advisor Dr. F X. Siswadi.
MA for the nice discussion and for his carefulness in reading and checking my mistakes.

My deepest thanks is also addressed to Siskaketsu, Naomi, Pitaketsu, Alfa’galon’, Chery, Rere and my kkn group for the discussions, suggestions, tips, examples and everything. I am deeply indebted to them for their willingness to spend their time to assist me in finishing this thesis.

I also thank my partners in my ex-office, Mey, Pak budi, Riska, My Supervisor for their prayer, and all my ex office’s friend.

I would also give my biggest appreciation to all the lecturers of English Letters Sanata Dharma University and to the secretariat staff of English Letters, Mbak Ninik. A thousand thanks go to their support.

Last but not least, I would like to thank everyone who has not been mentioned here for everything they have given me. A thousand thanks will never be enough.

Marshella Ollivia Rumengan
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ABSTRACT


This study discusses one of Dave Pelzer’s works entitled A Child Called ‘It’. The story tells about Dave Pelzer who experiences abusive treatment by his mother in his childhood. Thus, the aim of this study is to show that Dave’s traumatic experiences may lead to the development of his premature adulthood.

There are two questions in this undergraduate thesis, namely: 1) how is the main character, Dave Pelzer, described through his traumatic experiences in the novel, 2) how do the main character’s traumatic experiences in his past life contribute to the development of his premature adulthood.

To solve the first problem the theory of character and characterization is employed. For the second problem, theory of psychology, theory of post traumatic stress disorder in abuse and neglected children and the theory on adulthood are used to analyze the main character’s personality development. The writer also uses psychological approach because the focus of this study is analyzing the main character’s psychological aspects.

The results of this research show that Dave’s mother bad and mean treatments to him have turned him into a child who has premature adulthood. This is because Dave must be responsible for all ‘new tasks’ that are not suited for a child at his age. He also has to be independent in facing his problems. Therefore, the new tasks which Dave experiences have made him become a child with premature adulthood personality.
ABSTRAK


Studi ini membahas salah satu novel karya Dave Pelzer yang berjudul A Child Called ‘It’. Novel ini menceritakan tentang Dave Pelzer yang mengalami penyiksaan dan kekejaman ibu kandungnya semasa kecilnya. Dengan demikian, tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menunjukkan bahwa pengalaman traumatis Dave dapat menyebabkannya berkembang menjadi pribadi yang dewasa sebelum waktunya.

Ada dua pertanyaan yang terdapat dalam skripsi ini. Pertanyaan yang pertama adalah 1) Bagaimanakah karakter Dave Pelzer, tokoh utama di dalam novel tersebut digambarkan melalui pengalaman yang mengguncang jiwa? 2) Bagaimana pengalaman traumatic karakter utama dapat menyebabkannya menjadi pribadi yang dewasa sebelum waktunya?

Untuk memecahkan masalah yang pertama, beberapa telaah referensi yang berkaitan dengan teori karakter dan karakterisasi dilakukan untuk menemukan karakterisasi tokoh tersebut. Untuk memecahkan masalah yang kedua, digunakan teori psikologi, teori gangguan stress paska trauma pada anak yang disiksa dan diabaikan serta teori mengenai kedewasaan. Penulis menggunakan pendekatan psikologi karena fokus penelitian ini adalah membahas tentang aspek psikologi dari tokoh utamanya.

Hasil – hasil dari telaah penelitian ini menunjukan bahwa kekejaman and penyiksaan ibunya terhadap Dave berkembang menjadikan Dave sosok anak yang dewasa lebih awal sebelum waktunya. Hal ini dikarenakan Dave harus bertanggung jawab atas new tasks yang seharusnya belum pantas dilakukan oleh seorang anak kecil dan harus mandiri dalam menghadapi masalah. Oleh karena itu, new tasks yang Dave alami membentuk dia menjadi sesosok anak yang kepribadiannya dewasa sebelum waktunya.
A. Background of the study

Literature as the expression of life through language can be regarded as something essential. It is essential because literature talks about real life, people’s thought and the feeling about life. Therefore, Reading literary works can give the pleasure to the readers, and it can also broaden and deepen the reader’s knowledge of human’s life.

Literature is usually related to human experience which can find in our daily life. It can bring us back to the reality of human situation, problems, feelings and relationship (Moody, 1968:3).

Clara Reeve states that a novel is a picture of real life and manners (Wellek & Warren, 1956: 216). It represents the author or people’s life that is shared to the reader in the novel.

Among several genres in literature, the writer is mostly interested in novels. Novels usually present in detail the development of a character, a large complex social situation, relationship involving many characters, complicated event covering many years, a complex relationship among a few characters and moral value in the story of novel. By reading an interesting novel, it can bring people into the story. People who read the novel can become a part of the novel, by taking up its meaning and mingle it with the reader’s heart. There are many reasons why the writer interests in discussing
the novel. Reading is an activity that can give us the knowledge, as it makes people informed about the events or experiences of the people around. In this case, by reading the novel, sometimes the author shares his/her own life and his/her experiences that can make the reader understand.

* A Child Called ‘It’ * is a literary work by Dave Pelzer about child abuse. It is very interesting and extreme story because Dave, a 5 year-old-boy, must receive abusive treatments from his mother. Dave was forced to eat his own vomit, swallow soap, ammonia, and Clorox. This was just the beginning of his mother's "games." Dave's childhood was not always a nightmare, because before he was 5, he felt the warmth of his family. He stands up for himself, dares to survive in his awful life, decides something to save his life from his mother’s abuse, and tries to believe that he will get a miracle from God someday.

* A Child Called ‘It’ * was first published in 1995 in USA. This is Dave's first book and * A Child Called ‘It’ * was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. The book is written from the perspective of a child and is based on a true story. This book is published to make the society realize that child abuse is real and it happened in America. Child abuse is psychological or physical mistreatment of children by the parents/adult. Most child abuse occurs in child’s home. This novel focuses on the character of Dave and his life experiences. Mistreatments that Dave receives are physical and psychological abuse. Dave have been being threatened inhumanly. Dave’s mother denies the existence of and always blames Dave for everything in school or at home.
His mother is pretending Dave as entirely bad and worthless. Child abuse involves psychological abuse, physical abuse and child sex abuse. Child abuse that happens in Dave’s problem is psychological and physical abuse.

Physical abuse is the most commonly recorded type of abuse, and it is easiest to define, observe and take action against this kind of maltreatment. Severe bruising and fractures caused by blows, head injuries, shaking, eye damage, suffocation, poisoning, marks made by sticks, whips and cords, marks of burning, biting and scalding are the most extreme examples (Kempe et al. 1985; Meadow 1993).

Psychological abuse, also referred to as emotional abuse, is a form of abuse characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another to behavior that is psychologically harmful. Such abuse is often associated with situations of power imbalance, such as abusive relationships, bullying, and child abuse and in the workplace (http://en.Wikipedia.org/Wiki/ Psychological_abuse).

Neglected children also experience language neglect, in that their parents may communicate only in commands and do not read to them or talk to them at any length. When adults converse with children, they are helping them to internalize language, preparing them for future social relationships, and arming them with the ability to solve the problems. Children who do not have this vital beginning in terms of their language are ill-equipped to function adequately in school or in later social relationships (Cantwell, 1997).
It means there is no good relationship between parents and children. There is no the spiritual contact between parents and child. Later on, the child is physically, mentally or emotionally in danger of becoming impaired.

This study will explore the psychology of the main character from the traumatic experiences. How miserable the main character life is. Psychology is the most intimate of science. It concerns our thoughts and feeling, our manner and our prejudices (1950:9). The thought will perceive the information and people will do the action. The soul receives the information about the world through the body’s sense.

B. Problem formulation

1. How is the main character, Dave Pelzer, described through his traumatic experiences in the novel?

2. How do the main character’s traumatic experiences in his past life contribute to the development of his premature adulthood?
C. Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to answer the two questions which are formulated in the problem formulation. In this study, the writer would like to discover how the character of Dave is described in the story. Later, the writer would like to analyze how the experiences make his psychological condition develop become premature adulthood.

D. Definition of terms

In order to understand the meaning about the topic of this thesis, there is a term namely post-traumatic stress disorder. The writer presents the explanation of this word.

1. Post-traumatic stress disorder

Is condition in which a person who has experienced a traumatic event feels severe and long lasting aftereffects. (Richard A. Kasschau, PH.D, 1995)

2. Premature adulthood :

Premature is occurring or done before the usual or proper time (The New Oxford American Dictionary, 2005: ). Premature is occurring, existing or developing earlier than expecting, normal, or advisable. (Encarta Webster’s College Dictionary Second Edition, 2005).

Adulthood can be defined as a time when a person matures fully into what he or she is. (Richard A. Kasschau, 1995: ). From definitions above, we
can infer that premature adulthood is a maturity that comes or occurs before the proper time.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL REVIEW

In this chapter, the writer will present some reviews on the novel that is going to be discussed. The reviews are taken from various sources which concern on Child abuse and works by Dave Pelzer. The writer also presents several theories which are used to analyze the character on novel which become the subject of the study.

A. Review of related studies

According to Parke and Lewis about child abuse:

While many parents provide a warm and save environment for their children, there are an alarming number of cases reported in which children are physically, sexually, or psychologically abused or neglected by their parents or stepparents (1980;213).

Here, Parke and Lewis mention that children abuse can be in the form of physical treatment, sexual harassment and psychological persecution conducted by their parents or stepparents.

* A Child Called ‘It’ is an autobiography. A boy named Dave is always abused. He does not like it. His mother is on drugs. At the start of the book, the father is very supportive of his son. But towards the end he is supportive. The boy must do chores before eating breakfast. He usually does not get dinner. His brothers do not do any chores. This book is about a child trying to survive. This child shows extreme amounts of courage, bravery, and a will to survive. This is the emotional and inspiring series.
  (http://www.allreaders.com/topics/info_10286.asp)
According to Nayeem Ahsan, *A Child Called ‘It’* is an autobiographical and inspirational story. He mostly talks about the plot of the novel. Dave’s abusive treatment comes from his mother and shows us that child abuse is really happened.

Different from Nayeem Ahsan, Michael Abernethy mostly talks about the language style used by Dave Pelzer rather than the content of the story.

One could say that *A Child Called ‘It’* is good literature if good literature is, in fact, supposed to illicit an emotional response from the reader. However, from a purely literary perspective, this book, the first of a trilogy about Pelzer's life, is not really "good" literature. Pelzer's writing style is simple at best; there is no great effort to employ the literary tools we associate with the classics: foreshadowing, detailed metaphors, analysis of motivation, etc. (www.popmetters.com/books/reviews/c/child-called-it.shtml)

Here Michael Abernethy shares about Dave Pelzer’s writing which is interesting and simple in order to be understood easier by the readers, especially children. The language used is developed from child’s perspective.

Dave Pelzer grew up in California. He was abused by his alcoholic mother. It is noted that pelzer’s case is one of the most severe child abuse cases in the state of California. By the age 12, Pelzer was rescued at school with the help of his school’s staff and local police department. From there, Pelzer spent years bouncing from one foster home to the next, once Pelzer reached the age of 18, He enlisted in the united Air force. Pelzer has Achieved many things throughout his life; Pelzer received the JC Penny Golden Rule Award in 1990, in 1993 Pelzer was acknowledged as one of the ten Outstanding Young Americans and went on to be the only American to be named as one of the Ten Outstanding Young Persons in the world. (http://www.suite101.com/content/a-child-called-it-a213253)

Here, Jaymen Revermann talks about Dave Pelzer as a main character and the author of the novel *A Child Called ‘It’*. 
This study is different from the studies above, which focus on the plot of the novel, Dave Pelzer’s biography and the language style which is interesting and simple. This study focuses on the psychological subject in analyzing the main character’s premature adulthood.

B. Review of Related Theories

This part presents the theory of character and characterization, theory on Social Relationship in middle childhood, theory on family’s involvement in children’s education, theory on Post-traumatic stress disorder in abuse and neglected children grown up, and theory on adulthood.

1. Theory of character and characterization.

In An introduction to fiction, Stanton states that the term character is used in two ways; it designates the individuals who appear in the story; and it may refer to the description of attitudes, interests, desires, emotions, and moral principles of the individuals (1965: 17). He adds that character in a story can be categorized into two different types: main character and minor character.

Major character is a character that may dominate the whole story and is frequently presented in it. Meanwhile the minor character is presented in order to explain and help the other character, especially the major character (1965:17-18).
According to Murphy, there are nine ways to present the characterization of character in a literary work.

a. Personal description: The author can describe a character by using the appearance and clothes. The readers will get only a visible look of a character, like parts of body character and the clothes he or she wears (1972: 161)

b. Character as seen by another: The author can describe a character through the view, opinions, attitudes and comments of other characters. The reader will get a reflected image of the characters the author means (1972: 162)

c. Speech: The author can describe a character by giving readers an insight into the characteristics through the way he or speaks and the language he or she uses. Here the reader enables to analyze from the sentences the character uses (1972: 164)

d. Past life: The author can provide a clue to events that help to shape characteristics by giving the readers the character’s past life. This is quite helpful to analyze the motives that a character has when he has a particular characteristic or does something special (1972: 166)

e. Conversation of others: The author can also provide a clue about a character through the conversation of other people and what others say
about a character may reveal what kind of characters he or she is (1972:166)

f. Reactions: The author can describe characteristics by showing how a character responds to various situations and events. The reaction may give a clue to what characteristics a character has (1972:168).

g. Direct comment: The author may give comments and descriptions on the characteristics of the character directly to readers. This becomes the best way for the readers visualize the characteristics because they know what exactly the author wants to reveal (1972:171).

h. Thoughts: The author give readers direct knowledge of what a person is thinking about. There, he or she can tell readers what different people are thinking of. Such thing cannot be seen can be presented through the speech and attitudes. The readers then are in a privilaged position; They have a secret listening device plugged in to the inmost thoughts of a characters in a novel (1972:171).

i. Mannerism: The author can characterize a character through the mannerism, habits or idiosyncrasies. Those things may tell readers something about the character’s charateristics (1972:172).
2. **Theory on Kinds of Abuse and Neglect**

Theory of psychology is applied to answer the problem formulation in the previous chapter. This discussion focuses on kinds of child abuse. According to Colin Pritchard in his book *Child Abuser* (2004: 14), he states that there are 3 kinds of abuse and neglect namely physical, emotional and sexual. Physical abuse is the most commonly recorded type of abuse and it is easiest to define. It can be seen by frequent or severe hitting, beating, shaking, punching, and kicking. Neglect can be seen from the failure to provide regular and adequate food, warmth, clothing, and medical care. Emotional abuse can be seen from the threats to injure or kill; constant sneering/ sarcasm, throwing away or destroying toys; forbidden to speak or play, locked in room or confined space.

3. **Theory on Social Relationships in the Middle Childhood.**

According to Paul Mussen in his book *The Psychological Development of the Child* (1979: 106), youngsters (roughly ages 7 to 12) are strongly concerned with their “gang”, an informal group with a fairly rapid turnover membership. They begin to assemble together in a group of those at the same age. With their friends of the same age, these youngsters find themselves enjoy the friendship very well and feel pleased with their childhood. In their group, they share the same hobbies and the same likes which make it even solid.
4. Theory on Family’s Involvement in Children’s Education

According to Teresa M. Mc Devit and Jeanne Ellis Ormond in *Child Development*, family involvement in children’s education and activities is a good thing. For instance, parents and other family members may enhance children’s learning at school in a variety of ways; they might discuss school activities, assist with homework, lavish praise or give feedback about in-class projects and assignment, and confer with teachers about children’s progress (2004: 525).

Family involvement in children’s growth and development is essential. Parents must pay more attention and give more guidance to their children’s education. They have big roles in the development of their children’s education, whether at school or outside school.

5. Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Abuse and Neglected Children Grow Up

According to Cathy Spatz Widom PhD in her article, Post traumatic stress disorder in childhood abuse and neglect is really happened in our society. It will affect behavior of the abusive victim. Since much childhood victimization occurs in the context of multi problem homes, child abuse and neglect may be only one of the family's problems. Childhood abuse and
neglect may be markers for other factors that have an impact on the developing child or may share with Post traumatic stress disorder a common origin in a disrupted and disorganized childhood. (Cathy Spatz Widom PhD, www.wikipedia.com)

6. Theory on Adulthood

According to Richard A. Kasschau in his book, Understanding Psychology (1995:245), adulthood is a term of maturity from someone who is personally mature in intellectual development and physical. Adulthood can be a time when a person matures fully into what he or she is, or it can be a time when life closes in and what was once possibility is now limitation. How each of us reacts depends on circumstances and our general outlook on life.

There are some terms in adulthood that human being passing in life; physical changes, intellectual changes and social and personality development. In physical changes human being will experience the changing such as in the middle age appearance changes; the hair starts to turn gray, the skin becomes somewhat dry and inelastic; wrinkle appear, etc. in intellectual change human being will be easy to learn new skill, information and solving problem. The last is social and personality development; personality is
flexible, so people can change so fast become more mature and responsible with new tasks.

C. Theoretical Framework

There are two main problems in the previous chapter in order to discuss the traumatic experiences of the main character in the novel of *A Child Called ‘It’*. The first problem is about Dave Pelzer’s abuse. The writer uses Murphy’s of character and characterization and the child abuser to support the answer.

The second problem is about the traumatic experiences that explain the condition the main character who develops to be a premature adult. The analysis takes a theory on Social Relationship in middle childhood, theory on family’s involvement in children’s education, theory on Post-traumatic stress disorder in abuse and neglected children grown up, and theory on adulthood to answer the problem proposed in the problem formulation.

The theory of character and characterization is used to answer the first question in the problem formulation about the major character which is described. By applying the theory, we learn about Dave’s personality from his characterization. His personality reveals how the traumatic experiences shape him. Theories on social relationships in the middle childhood, theory
on family’s involvement in children education and theory on adulthood will be used to examine how traumatic experiences in his past life help him contributes to the development of his premature adulthood.
CHAPTER III
METODOLOGY

A. Object Of The Study

The object of this study is a novel entitled *A Child Called ’It’* by Dave Pelzer. The Novel *A Child Called ’It’* was first published in 1995 in USA. It consists of 184 pages. The book’s sequel, *The Lost Boy*, was written by Dave Pelzer on 1997. It consists of 324 pages. *A Child Called It* is Dave’s first book and it was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. This book is National and International bestseller celebrating more than 6 years on the New York Times Bestseller list.

This novel tells us about the abuse that is experienced by a young child, named Dave Pelzer who gets the bad treatment from her mother. Before he was 5 years old, he was very happy with his family. He gets full of love and care from all members of the family. However, the happiness that he felt disappears. His mother becomes a bad mother. The impact of bad treatment comes to Dave Pelzer. He must live in his awful life. Dave must survive in his mother’s games. He follows his mother’s abusive treatment. It aims to remain alive. Because he wants to still survive in his awful life, he changed his mind to fight his mother abusive treatment. He always tries to find the way save his life from his mother’s evil. From this way, He has motivation to get free from his mother’s treatment and he grows up become a premature adult.
B. Approach Of The Study

In this study, Psychological approach will be applied to analyze the problem because this approach is suitable in analyzing the traumatic experiences of child abuse that is experienced by the main character. According to Guerin, The proponents of this approach insist that the psychological approach is an excellent tool for “reading beneath the lines” (1999). It is used to analyze Dave Pelzer’s mental condition, as the subject of the study. It involves pattern of behaviors, thought, and feeling.

The Psychological approach is the most appropriate approach because this paper will examine the psychological aspect that is experienced by the main character. The psychological approach will help to interpret the psychological aspect of the main character in the novel.

C. Method of the study

The writer used the library to collect the data. The source to support this thesis used primary source and secondary source. The primary source was novel itself. The secondary sources were taken from many sources such as internet and books.

There were some steps that the writer used to find the answers the problems in this thesis. The first step was Reading the novel several times. The aim of reading the novel is to understand the stories in A Child Called ‘It’, which focuses on the bad treatment which was received by the main
character. The second step the writer did was finding some information, references and collecting the data. The data were used to analyze the problem formulation deeper. The writer browsed the internet and searched some books that related to the analysis in the library. The third step was to analyze the novel. In this step, the writer answered the problems in the problems formulation using the references related to the study. The first problem formulation is about the character and the characterization of Dave Pelzer as a main character in the story. Second, the writer used the others theories of adulthood, theory on Social Relationship in the middle childhood, theory on family’s involvement in children’s education and Post traumatic stress disorder in abuse and neglected children grow up to answer the second problem formulation. The last step was making the conclusion of the study. After answering the questions in the problem formulation, the writer made conclusion of the study. The conclusion was the findings of the analysis.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the writer tries to answer the problem formulation that has been formulated above. Based on problem formulation, this chapter will be divided two parts. The first part is about the character and the characterization of Dave Pelzer, who becomes the main object of this study. The second part focus on traumatic experiences in his past life helps him contribute to the development of his premature adulthood.

A. The Characteristics of Dave Pelzer Revealed Through his Traumatic Experience

Dave Pelzer is the major character of A Child Called ‘It’ who appears from beginning until the end of the story. Below are some of Dave Pelzer’s characteristics in a child called it, which later develop into his traumatic experiences.

1. Having low self esteem

Being isolated has turned Dave into a boy with low-self esteem from his family’s member and his friend’s school. Dave actually feels that he is in the situation where people do not care to him. His mother does not give more attention to him, therefore he feels in uncomfortable situation.
My long sleeve shirt has more holes than Swiss cheese. It’s the shame shirt I’ve worn for about two years. Mother has me wear it every day as her way to humiliate me. My pants are just a bad, and my shoes have holes in the toes. (p.6).

Dave Pelzer is an isolated person who always tries to do what his mother says to avoid the trouble. Even though he must wear the same uniform every year and never change it with the new one, he follows his mother’s will. Dave actually wants to have a new one, but he cannot do anything. It is not about the shirt that Dave wears but it is also about the shoes. He has bad ones. Dave has shoes with holes in everywhere.

“Get one thing straight, you little son of a bitch! There is nothing you can do to impress me! Do you understand me? You are a nobody!! An it! You are nonexistent! You are a bastard child! I hate you and I wish you were dead! Dead! Do you hear me? Dead (p.140).

As a mother she should not tell like this to her son. It absolutely hurts his heart and he is very disappointed with his mother words. Dave only wants to show off his happiness because he is elected from school to give the name of the school magazine. Dave will always remember his mother’s words that it really hurts his feeling. An ‘it’ word makes him feel nothing in his family therefore he becomes a boy having a low-esteem. ‘It’ here refers to the mocking.

He is isolated from his classmates, which is seen in the following quotation.

Upon entering the room, all the students plug their noses and hiss at me. The substitue’s teacher, a younger woman, waves her hand in front of her face. She is not used to my smell. At arm’s length she hands my test to me, but before I can take my seat in the back of the class by an
open window, I’m summoned back to the principal’s office. The entire room lets out a howl at me—the reject of the fifth grade. (p.9)

In his class mate, his physical appearance is rejected by his friend. He is not accepted kindly at his school environment. Dave smells bad and he has bad physical appearance, so his friend does not like him. From his physical appearance, it is seen that he gets no attention from his parents. Not only his friend but also his substitute’s young teacher does not like him. Therefore, Dave is isolated from his classmates at school.

Besides that, he is also discriminated from his siblings, as what can be seen from following quotation.

The searches continued for months and finally, I was the only one singled out to look for her things.(p. 31)

Dave is an unlucky boy; his of being unlucky is seen when his mother asks him to look for her things. Dave is the only one who still searches her mother things even though it is never found. His siblings do not help him to find them out in his mother anger to him; Dave always tries to find them to make his mother happy. Dave has tried to search them himself but he could not find it. Another example that Dave is an isolated person is shown with the new uniform and new lunch pail. Dave cannot wear his new uniform to school. His mother does not allow him to wear his new uniform and use his new lunch pail to school. Dave does not get the explanation from his mother about
this. He only follows his mother words to avoid his mother punishment. So, Dave still wears the old one and uses his bad lunch pail.

The month of September brought school and bliss. I had new clothes and a shiny, new lunch pail. Because mother had me wear the same clothes week after week, by October my clothes had become weathered, torn and smelly. She hardly bothered to cover my bruises on my face and arms. When I asked, I had my ready-made excuses mother brainwashed into me. (p.47)

Dave still experiences horrible things in his life; no food will be part of his days. He only can eat something if his mother allows him to eat. He can have breakfast before going to school if his mother is in her good mood. It is only leftover cereal portions of his siblings after washing the dishes.

By then, mother would “forget” to feed me any dinner. Breakfast wasn’t much better. On a good day, I was allowed leftover cereal portions from my brothers, but if I performed all of my chores before going to school.

Besides experiencing terrific mistreatment from his mother and always feels his hunger, Dave must face another difficulty in his life. After his effort to get some food from stealing is caught, he is not part of the member of his family any longer. No time to have dinner together with his family, no time to play with his siblings, and his area is only outside the house. He can come inside if his mother allowed him. Basement is the place that suitable for him. After finishing the chores, he must return to the basement again. Stealing is the last way he does to get some food. He only can do this because his mother gives him nothing to eat.
At the house, the dual punishment of hunger and violent attacks continued. By this time, for all practical purposes, I was no longer a member of the family. I existed, but there was little or no recognition. Mother had even stopped using my name; referring to me only as the boy. I was not allowed to eat meals with the family, play with my brothers, or watch television. I was grounded to the house. I was not allowed to look at or speak to anybody. When I returned to the house from school, I immediately accomplished the various chores mother assigned me. When the chores were finished, I went directly to the basement, where I stood until summoned to clean off the dinner table and wash the dishes. It was made very clear that getting caught sitting or lying down in the basement would bring dire consequences. I had become mother’s slave. (p.50)

Being isolated and discriminated has developed Dave into a boy with a low esteem because of his mother’s abusive treatment. From the quotation above we can see that Dave is isolated by his mother and his friends. It can be seen from the skirt and shoes Dave wears and the lunch pail he brings.

2. Being Quick-Witted

Dave becomes a quick-witted young boy who reacts to various situations that arise from his mother’s abusive treatments. Although he gets many abusive treatments, he learns some skills to save his life from his suffering. One day his mother forces him to eat defecation of the baby. Dave rejects so hard when his mother asks him to eat the defecation. He tries to find the way out of his mother forces. Dave is playing with the time; Dave tries to fight his mother and take control of his mother’s punishment. Dave feels he does not do the wrong thing and
it is very cruel for him. He might win for a while from his mother. Dave feels so satisfied because he can control it.

“I said eat it!” she sneered.
Switching tactics, I began to cry. “Slow her down,” I thought to myself. I began to count to myself, trying to concentrate. Time was my only ally. Mother answered my crying with more blows to my face, stopping only when she heard Russell crying.

Even with my face covered with defecation, I was pleased. I thought I might win. I tried to wipe the crap away, flicking it onto the wooden floor. (p. 55)

His mother almost never fed him. He is really hungry every day.

As usual, his mother asks him to wash the dishes. He is not allowed to have a meal that day. He can eat something if he finishes washing the dishes that night on time. Dave suddenly has an idea to eat something that night. It’s very disgusting but it is the only way to have a meal and still alive.

After dinner, it was mother’s habit to scrape the leftovers from the dinner plates into a small garbage can. She would summon me up from the basement where I had been standing while the family ate. It was my function to wash the dishes. Standing there with my hands in the scalding water, I could smell the scraps from dinner in the small garbage can. At first my idea was nauseating, but the more I thought about it, the better it seemed. It was my only hope for food. I finished the dishes as fast as I could and emptied the garbage in the garage. My mouth watered at the sight of the food, and I gingerly picked the good pieces out while scraping bits of paper or cigarette butts away, and gobbled the food as fast as I could. (p. 62)
3. Being A Strong Boy

Being a strong boy causes him not to give up facing a lot of pressure from his mother; therefore Dave tries to respond the situation that happened in his life. It can be seen from the quotation below:

Since I was still under punishment, on Christmas day I had to change into my work clothes and perform my chores. While I was cleaning the bathroom, I overheard an argument between mother and father. She was angry with him for ‘going behind her back ‘to buy me the paintings. (p.39)

Dave is a strong boy facing the reality that he receives the punishment when other people celebrate Christmas day in happiness. Dave must pass his day with the gloomy moment. He never stops receiving the punishment from his mother. It is so ironic for a young boy like him but he does not give up facing horrible moment. As a child like him, it must be so hard to a little boy facing the situation and the problem. Dave is actually the same like others, even though he is forced to face the horrible life he never gives up to get up. Because his suffering that he receives day by day, it makes him to be a strong young boy, Strong in receiving other bad treatment from his mother.

After finishing my chores that day, I rushed downstairs. I had been ordered to wash my ragged clothes and another heap of smelly rags. But that day, father’s leaving had left me so sad that I buried myself in the pile of rags and cried. I cried from him to come back and take me away. After a few minutes of self- comfort, I settled down and began scrubbing my “swiss cheese” clothes. I scrubbed until my knuckles bled. I no longer cared about my existence. Mother’s house had
become unbearable. I wished I could somehow manage to escape the place I now called the “mad house” (p.103)

Dave feels so sad when his father leaves him at the mad house. But Dave is strong enough to face and pass the difficult event for him. His father is his friend at that house. He tries to be strong and get up because only Dave can save his life from the suffering. He realizes that Dave may not be weak in every condition; he must do something to make his life free.

On Christmas day, my spirit was drained I received a pair of roller skates. I was surprised to get anything at all, but as it turned out, the skates were not a gift given in the spirit of Christmas. The skates proved to be just another tool for mother to get me out of the house and make me suffer. On weekends mother made me skate outside when the other children were inside because of the chilly weather. (p.120)

Dave is like a foolish boy who plays his roller skates outside when the other children inside. He follows what his mother says to him although it hurts him. Dave is not weak from the situation. He tries to be strong playing outside in the chilly weather. His effort is to make his body stay warm even though it is not possible.

Mother had another new game for me while father was away. She sent me to clean the bathroom with usual limits. But this time, she put a bucket, filled with a mixture of ammonia and Clorox, in the room with me and closed the door (p.107).

It is also the crazy thing that Dave got from his mother game. His mother asks him to clean the bathroom and filled with a mixture of
ammonia and Clorox in the room. Dave is really shocked by his mother’s game for him but he does not give up. Dave fights to survive from such a crazy thing.

4. Disaffected

Given too many tasks by his mother makes him feel discontented and resentful against his mother in heart. Dave does not have power to against his mother therefore he keeps his angry feeling in his heart and his father is the only one who wants to help him. Dave is actually missing the love from the people around him when the traumatic experience happened. It can be seen from the events in his past life.

Sometimes as I dried the dishes, I felt a new ray of hope. I knew father probably wouldn’t do anything against mother, but when I stood beside him I felt safe. (p.102)

His father is the only one who makes him feel comfortable when he is at home. Dave really needs the love from people around him. Father always gives more attention to him before he left Dave alone at home. He can talk much with his father while finishing the dishes. Dave really enjoys his limit time with his father; sometime his father helps him finishing the dishes. He totally misses the situation like before he gets the abusive treatment from his mother. He misses when mother gives him the attention like his brothers. Dave is too young to lose his family attention
and love. Dave should be given more love along his childhood. His parent
should be guiding his life in his childhood. He should not be let running
his life without his parent’s eyes.

When Father was home, it became his habit to help me with the
evening dishes. Father washed and I dried. While we worked. We
talked softly so neither mother nor the other boys could hear us.
Sometimes, several minutes would pass without us talking. We
wanted to make sure the coast was clear.
Father always broke the ice. “How ya doin’, tiger?”
Hearing the old name that father used when I was a little boy, always
brought a smile to my face. “I’m okey,” I would answer.
“Did you have anything to eat today?” He often asked. I usually
shook my head in a negative gesture.
“Don’t worry,” he’d say. “Someday you and I will both get out of
this madhouse.” (P.1020)

When his father helps him finishing the dishes, his father starts a
little conversation with him. It makes him really miss the old moment his
father calls him “tiger” because it is a lovely name. A small attention from
his father makes him happy. He has lost his happy moment with whole
member of family therefore he really misses that moment. His father
always promises Dave to make him free from the madhouse, even though
he does not know when exactly the time is. Dave misses the happy
moment with his family return. He hopes someday he will experience it
no more. Now, his father is his only hope of getting the love from his
parents. Dave feels save when his father besides him.

The most memorable trip to the river for me happened the year I was
in kindergarten. On the last day of school, Mom asked that I be
excused a half-hour early. As father honked the horn, I rocketed up
the small hill from the school, to the waiting car. I was so excited
because I knew where we were going. During the drive, I become fascinated at the seemingly endless field of grapes (Dave Pelzer, 1995: 25)

It is the beautiful moment to him along his kindergarten. He has happy time every weekend with his family. Dave misses that happened again in his family. It is so different condition like now happen in his life. No cheerful, no happiness, no harmful time day by day. When the memorable time is coming to him, Dave is so missing it. His past life before experiencing traumatic events actually very impressed him. He loves his family at that time. Dave lost his happiness with his family and he hates his life now.

5. A boy who is full of hatred

Being full of hatred makes Dave wish someday something bad happened to his mother and some of his friends. It is because of what they have done to him. It can be seen through the way he speaks from the following quotation.

I hate my mother most and wished that she were dead. But before she died, I wanted her to feel the magnitude of my pain and my loneliness for all these years. During all the years when I had prayed to God, he answered me once. (Dave Pelzer, 1995: 133)

He wants God answers his wishes to punish his mother because of the entire treatment from his mother. He prays that something bad happened to mother because he is being full of hatred to the bad treatment he receives. His mother power makes his life is going worst day by day. His mother’s bad treatment sometimes makes him hate himself. He feels
he is so stupid because let all happened to him. Dave keeps on mind about everything from his mother. He is really sure that his mother must pay everything she does to him one day. He swears not to let his mother destroy his life more and more.

Time spent outside the classroom was at least better than mother’s “hell house”. Because I was an outcast of the entire school. My classmates at times took over where mother left off. One of them was Clifford, a school-yard bully who would periodically catch me when I ran to mother’s house after school. Beating me up was clifford’s way of showing off to his friends. All I could do was fall to the ground and cover my head, while clifford and his gang took turns kicking me.(Dave Pelzer, 1995 :137)

Not only his mother, but he also hates his friends at school and his brother. He always quiet when those people around him disturb or hurts his heart. Dave is full of hatred to his friend at school who always hurts him. Clifford is one of his friends who always show off his power to others by kicking or blowing him. Dave cannot against Clifford because he is so big. Dave really hates him.

I didn’t like Aggie very seriously; not until a fifth-grade field trip to one of fransisco’s clipper ships. As I stood alone on the bow of the ship, looking at the water; Aggie approached me with a vicious smile and said in a low voice,” jump!” she startled me, and I looked into her face trying to understand what she meant. Again she spoke, quietly and calmly.” I said you should go ahead and jump. I know all about you Pelzer, and jumping is your only way out.” (Dave Pelzer, 1995 :138)

As a children and a Dave’s friend, Aggie should not tell like that to Dave. Dave feels so disappointed and very sad having a friend like Aggie. What Aggie tells to him asking him to jump make him really hate Aggie. Dave feels he is not useful for his own life.
The boys who lived upstairs were no longer my brothers. Sometimes in years past, they had managed to encourage me a little. But in the summer of 1972 they took turns hitting me and appeared to enjoy throwing their weight around. It was obvious that they felt superior to the family slave. When they approached me, my heart became hard as stone, and I am sure they saw the hate etched in my face. (Dave Pelzer, 1995:135)

Dave also shows his hatred to his siblings. His brother does not support or help Dave when he is in his suffering time. Dave actually needs somebody to help, but because he hates them so much he does not need anything from them. In his growing time, he needs someone to share, brothers to play with, and parents to guide him, friends to having fun, but he feels live alone.

**B. The contribution of Dave’s traumatic experience to the development of Dave’s premature adulthood in his traumatic experience.**

Based on the analysis above about the characteristics of Dave, then we continue about the development of his premature adulthood in Dave’s traumatic experience. In experiencing traumatic experiences, Dave actually learns something about his life. Even though he feels disappointed with his mother’s bad treatment to him, he can learn something to be strong and brave in facing every single problem in his life. Throughout his traumatic experiences, Dave molds his disorder behavior. It shows that he is affected by his mother’s horrible treatment. In order to discuss Dave as a premature adult, although we know that he is a boy, below is the analysis which shows that Dave has a premature adulthood personality.
B.1. Dave is premature adult

According to Richard A. Kasschau, adulthood can be defined as “a time when a person matures fully into what he or she is” (Richard A. Kasschau, 1995:245). Furthermore, he explains that maturity can be seen not only in someone’s intellectual and physical changes, but also in his social and personality development. Meanwhile, according to the new oxford American dictionary premature is occurring or done before the proper time (The oxford American Dictionary, 2001). So, from definitions above, we can infer that premature adulthood is a maturity that comes or occurs before the proper time.

B.1.1 Intellectual changes

Kasschau further argues that, when people are mature they are are better at learning new skills and information, solving problems that require speed and coordination, and shifting from one problem-solving strategy to another. (Richard A. Kasschau, Ph.D)

Based on the quote above, generally someone can be considered mature if he is able to solve his problems quickly with his own mind and actions. Besides, the experiences in someone’s life may also contribute to his maturity. In relation to intellectual changes, Dave has developed himself to be some steps ahead of his peers. Having to handle a lot of pressures and being able to stand the pressures has helped develop his intelligence. He is forced to be intellectually developed faster than his peers. It is proven from his capability, as if he is already an adult, with adult intellectual capacity.

“I said eat it!” she sneered.
Switching tactics, I began to cry. “Slow her down,” I thought to myself. I began to count to myself, trying to concentrate. Time was my only ally. Mother answered my crying with more blows to my face, stopping only when she heard Russell crying.

Even with my face covered with defecation, I was pleased. I thought I might win. I tried to wipe the crap away, flicking it onto the wooden floor. (Dave Pelzer, 1995 : 55)

Dave is able to face his mother’s bad treatment by thinking fast and concentrating to what he has to do to fight against his mother’s bad treatment. His own experiences in facing his mother’s treatment over and over again has made him learn how to think fast and do something correctly in order to solve his problem. In this case, Dave performs himself as if he were an adult, who can solve his own problem.

B.1.2 Social and personality development

Researchers are also convinced, however, that personality is flexible and capable of changing as an individual confronts new tasks. (Richard A. Kasschau, 1995 : 248)

Someone can be considered mature if he is able to responsible for the given task and able to finish it well. In Dave’s case, he turns out to be a story child, as can be seen in the following quotation.

Mother had another new game for me while father was away. She sent me to clean the bathroom with usual limits. But this time, she put a bucket, filled with a mixture of ammonia and Clorox, in the room with me and closed the door (p.107).
Dave has shown an accelerated personality development the result of the process of overcoming and managing the abuser. He become more mature, for more mature than peers.

As a young boy who is treated very badly by his own mother, Dave can be categorized as a tough boy in dealing with his mother’s bad treatment. From the example above, we can see that Dave tries to not give up. He tries to think how he can survive from his mother’s bad treatment. This infect, has developed his personality into not only a strong boy but also a fighter, as shown in the following quotation.

After dinner, it was mother’s habit to scrape the leftovers from the dinner plates into a small garbage can. Then she would summon me up from the basement, where I had been standing while the family ate. It was my function to wash the dishes. Standing there with my hands in the scalding water, I could smell the scraps from dinner in the small garbage can. At first my idea was nauseating, but the more I thought about it, the better it seemed. It was my only hope for food. I finished the dishes as fast as I could and emptied the garbage in the garage. My mouth watered at the sight of the food, and I gingerly picked the good pieces out while scraping bits of paper or cigarette butts away, and gobbled the food as fast as I could. (Dave Pelzer,1995:62)

From the excerpt above, we can see that Dave’s idea to survive is quite disgusting, but that is the only thing he can think about to get himself out of his distressing hunger. Dave tries so many ways and fails several times, but he never gives up. He does it by himself in order to survive and keep alive.

The summer mowing plan turned out no better for me than the one during Easter vacation. Going from door, I asked people if they cared to have their lawns mowed. No one did. (110)
Dave initiatively tries to work cutting the grass in his neighbor’s house’s garden. Although his effort does not result too satisfying for him, but it shows that Dave is able to do things that belong to people above his age. He does it because he needs money to buy food since his mother seldom gives him food to eat. He does it as if he were an adult who must earn his own money to feed his necessity.

The comparison of the characteristics of Dave’s premature adulthood with the characteristics of the children at his age in general can be based on the theory about family involvement in children’s education and activities (family’s involvement in children’s education, 2004:525). According to this theory, the children get interference of their parents in the development of their education and activities, both at school and outside school. For instance, parents and other family members may enhance children’s learning at school in a variety of ways: they might discuss school activities, assist with homework, lavish praise or give feedback about in-class projects and assignments, and confer with teachers about children’s classroom.

In contrast to the theory above, Dave as a child is unlike the other children who can get much attention from their parents on their education and activities. Dave’s parents have never given him any attention; they never discuss about Dave’s activities at school, nor even praise or give feedback about his project or assignment at school. Aside of his school, Dave prefers to do his house works and do all his mother orders. He often does the things,
like cleaning the house, which he does not deserve in order to get food. As a result of that situation, Dave becomes an independent boy.

I finish the dishes, then my other chores. For my reward I receive breakfast –leftovers from one of my brother’s cereal bowls. (Dave Pelzer, 1995 : 4)

The quote above shows Dave’s daily activities. He is given tasks everyday to clean the house and he must be responsible for every house work he does.

According to Paul Mussen in his book entitled The Psychological Development of the Child (1979:106), “youngsters (roughly ages 7 to 12) are strongly concerned with their ‘gang’, an informal group with a fairly rapid turnover membership”. This theory shows that children at the age of Dave should assemble together with his friends of the same age, to find themselves enjoy the friendship very well and feel pleased with their childhood. In his group, Dave might share the same hobbies and the same likes with his friends which make their friendship even solid. On the contrary, Dave cannot gather with his friends and play with them. He even is treated badly by his mother and must do all the house works alone.
B.2 Post traumatic stress disorder behavior

Dave is experiencing horrible treatment from his mother, so by his experiences, he experiences some post traumatic stress disorder in his life.

1. Stealing

Soon after I had begun to dream about food, I started stealing food at school. My stomach coiled with a combination of fear and anticipation. Anticipation because I knew that within seconds, I would have something to put in my stomach. Fear because I also knew that at any time, I could get caught stealing. I always stole food before school began, while my classmates were playing outside the building. I would sneak to the wall, right outside my homeroom, drop my lunch pail by another pail and kneel down so nobody could see me hunting through their lunches. The first few times were easy, but after several days, some students began to discover twinkies and other desserts missing from their lunches. (Dave Pelzer, 1995:48-49)

Dave who is experiencing his traumatic experience is actually in ironic condition running his own life. His traumatic experiences affect him become a child in disorder behavior. We know that, his mother mostly does not feed him. Dave must try to follow his mother willing first so that he can get something. He eats from the leftover his family, searching some food from the garbage’s can that we know it is not hygienic at all. Stealing is the only one way to eat; it is actually not good for children who try to steal something from his surroundings. He steals some food from his friends at school; Dave doesn’t care also the effect of what he does. He lets it happened because he is starving. He really needs some food, because his mother does not feed him. Not only stealing some foods from his friends but he is also stealing some
food from the store near his school. Dave makes a plan how to steal perfectly so no one knows what he does. Lying to the people around him to avoid his mother’s anger is also what he does. He does not want to tell the truth what his mother has done to him. He is not sure if he tells the truth later on he will save from his suffering soon. So, he is still lying and creates the story about his condition if other people ask him.

As I came near the school I hid my possession under my shirt, on the side that didn’t have any holes, as I walked through the schoolyard. Inside, I ditched the food in the garbage can of the boys’ restroom. Later that afternoon, after making an excuse to the teacher, I returned to the restroom to devour my prize. I could feel my mouth begin to water, but my heart sank as I looked into an empty trash can. (Dave Pelzer, 1995: 61)

He always tries to get the way to eat. After he stole some food, Dave hid it in the garbage’s can. Dave really needs it because he is so starving. He is so poor boy, his effort is not complete. He gets nothing. The food which he hiding in the garbage can is lost. The garbage can is empty. So he is not lucky that day.

During the Easter vacation from school the spring before, mother had sent me out to mow. She had set a quota on my earnings and ordered me to return the money to her. The quota was impossible for me to meet, so in depression, I once stole nine dollars from the piggy bank of a small girl who lived in our neighborhood. Within hours, the girl’s father was knocking on the front door. Of course mother returned the money and blamed me. (Dave Pelzer, 1995: 109)

Dave is forced by his mother to get some money. He must work outside and go home bring some money, if Dave does not back home bring
some money, his mother will punish him. Dave just follows what his mother’s words to get some money from outside. One day, in his depression he decides to steal the money from his neighborhood. He hopes he can bring that money to his mother and he is free from the punishment from his mother. But, the fact he is not lucky that time. He is still get the punishment.

2. Lying to people around

Because I am so late, I have to report to the administrative office. The gray-haired secretary greets me with a smile. Moments later, the school nurse comes out and leads me into her office, where we go through the normal routine. First, she examines my face and arms. “What’s that above your eye?” she asks.

I nod sheepishly, “Oh I ran into the hall door..... by accident.”

Again she smiles and takes a clipboard from the top of a cabinet. She flips though a page or two, and then bends down to show me, “Here,” she points to the paper, “You said that last Monday. Remember?”

I quickly change my story, “I was playing baseball and got hit by the bat. It was an accident.” Accident. I am always supposed to say that. But the nurse knows better. She scolds me so I’ll tell the truth. I always break down in the end and confess, even though I feel I should protect my mother. (Dave Pelzer, 1995:5-6)

To cover his frightened feeling, he does not want to tell the truth about what he experiences along his days. Dave is so worry if he tells about his condition; he will get the punishment from his mother. It is just enough for him. He is really suffering from his mother treatment so he will not let his mother happy with the entire her bad treatments later on. Dave chooses keep his mouth off about the condition that happened to him. He honestly wants to tell it to other people about what happened, but he is not sure they can save his life sooner. Dave will not tell this to the people to avoid the big problem happened to him.
3. Fantasizing

In the darkness of the garage I closed my eyes, dreaming I was a king dressed in the finest robes, eating the best food mankind had to offer. As I held a piece of frozen pumpkin pie crust or a bit of a taco shell, I was the king, and like a king on his throne, I gazed down on my food and smile. (Dave Pelzer, 1995: 79)

Starving is part of his life day by day. Eating some food is a miracle for Dave, because he is never fed by his mother. In his hunger, Dave sometimes imagines something or fantasizes about the food. His imagination about the food makes him feel peaceful. His mind is full of food. It actually makes him become a poor boy. His imagination is so beautiful but it actually hurts himself because it is contrary to the reality, as can be seen from the following quotation.

I began fantasize that I had found her missing item. I imagined myself marching upstairs with my prize and mom greeting me with hugs and kisses. My fantasy included the family living happily ever after. But, I never found any of mothers’s lost things, and she never let me forget that I was an incompetent loser. (Dave Pelzer, 1995: 32)

His mother asks him to look for her items. Dave always tries to find his mother items which actually do not know what that is. Dave sometimes asks to his mother what kind of items that should be searched but his mother always angry. He always tries to search them and Dave must find his mother items. Dave always imagines he can find his mother’s items so his mother will appreciate his effort. Dave becomes so hopeless and sometimes he creates his own fantasy.
4. Eating leftovers from the garbage’s can

After dinner, it was mother’s habit to scrape the leftovers from the dinner plates into a small garbage can. Then she would summon me up from the basement, where I had been standing while the family ate. It was my function to wash the dishes. Standing there with my hands in the scalding water, I could smell the scraps from dinner in the small garbage can. At first my idea was nauseating, but the more I thought about it, the better it seemed. It was my only hope for food. I finished the dishes as fast as I could and emptied the garbage in the garage. My mouth watered at the sight of the food, and I gingerly picked the good pieces out while scraping bits of paper or cigarette butts away, and gobbled the food as fast as I could. (Dave Pelzer, 1995:62)

Eating leftovers from the garbage’s can is the other ways he also does. It is really disgusting but he has no idea how to get food to eat. He knows only his self who can save his life. He has done everything to still alive. He only needs food. He hopes he can get some food from his mother. He will do everything and he has done all the way he can. If this disgusting way is the only one way, Dave will do. The life which must he is running is really hard. No one exactly wants to live like his Dave’s life.
B.3 How Dave’s traumatic experiences contribute to the development of his premature adult.

B.3.1 The contribution of Dave’s traumatic experience to his premature adulthood.

Researchers are also convinced, however, that personality is flexible and capable of changing as an individual confronts new tasks. (Richard A. Kasschau, 1995 : 248)

As quoted from Richard A. Kasschau theory, the factor that makes personality can be changed is when an individual confronts new tasks. Because of his mother, Dave must handle almost all adult tasks. That should not be done by him. Even though it is hard for Dave, he always tries to do it. Dave tries to be responsible for the tasks that his mother gives him. If he does not complete the tasks from his mother, he knows what he will get later on.

In Dave case’s, the “new tasks” as pointed out by Kasschau are the responsibilities to wash all the dishes, clean the bathroom, and make some money, which parents usually would not demand from a 10 years old boy. The traumatic experiences he got are the inevitable consequences of having to take responsibilities beyond his capacity as a child, and also the punishment and suffering resulted from his failure in accomplishing his tasks. As Dave learns from his trauma he gets from his punishments, he also learns to do his “new tasks” better, therefore propelling his premature adulthood.
B.3.1.a Washing the dishes.

I finish the dishes, then my other chores. For my reward I receive breakfast-leftover from one of my brother’s cereal bowls. (Dave Pelzer, 1995: 4)

Dave realizes that if he wants to eat something he must finish all chores from his mother. Every day, he never stops doing his routines. Dave experiences his abusive treatment about 4 years old up to 12 years old. Dave also receives his mother command about those years. As a young boy, Dave should get his mother love. Dave actually does not pass his childhood like other children; playing ball outside with other, laughing at with his siblings, walking around with parents. Every day he must responsible only with the chores. Children at five should enjoy their time with lovely family and friends. Every day he must responsible with entire tasks that mother command.

When I finished the dishes, I began cleaning the bathroom. Mother sat on the toilet as I scoured the bathtub. While I was on my hands and knees scrubbing the tile floor, she calmly and quietly stood behind me. I expected her to come around and kick me in the face but she didn’t. As I continued my chores, my anxiety grew. I knew mother was going to beat me, but I didn’t know how, when or where. (Dave Pelzer, 1995: 71)

Dave Pelzer always does the daily chores at his house and he must arrange his routines. Dave receives many adult tasks that he must do. He must accountable with all the chores to avoid something bad happened. After washing the dishes, he moves to bathroom and clean the bathroom. Dave
attempts to do all the chores on time. He does all chores on his hand. It aims
to avoid the punishment from his mother and to get some food. Dave is still a
young boy. It should not be done by him. He should enjoy his time with his
friend and his siblings. All tasks what he does every day make him to be a
responsible person.

B.3.1.b Cleaning the bathroom

Morning while cleaning the bathroom, I looked in the mirror to inspect
my burning tongue. Layers of flesh were scraped away, while
remaining parts were red and raw. I stood, staring into sink, feeling
how lucky I was to be alive (Dave Pelzer, 1995: 76).

Even though Dave attempts to do all his routines chores, Dave
sometimes still get the punishment from his mother. His mother wants to
make him down. Dave actually does not realize that behind his suffering, it
affects his maturity. He gets something good in his life because he dares to
face his life.

B.3.1.c Working to earn the money.

One day, after I had completed all my morning chores, she sent me out
to mow lawns. This wasn’t an altogether new routine. During the
Easter vacation from school the spring before, mother had sent me out
to mow. She had set a quota on my earnings and ordered me to return
the money to her. The quota was impossible for me to meet. (Dave
Pelzer, 1995:109)

This is not the first time his mother asks him to mow lawns. Dave has
done it in his previous holiday. Dave must mow the lawn of his neighbor and
bring some money to his mother. His mother set a quota on his earning but
unfortunately he cannot make it. This is actually an adult work that should not be done by Dave. It is not exactly his obligation to earn some money but Dave must undergo his suffering during his childhood. Dave is used to the adult’s tasks, so he can handle it like an adult. From all his tasks that mother command to him, it becomes usual to Dave how to arrange the time and understand about his routines.

**B.3.1.d Surviving to live under severe punishment**

During one period of time when father was away, mother starved me for about ten consecutive days. No matter how hard I tried to meet her limits time, I couldn’t make it. (Dave Pelzer, 1995: 104)

Logically Dave would not survive because his mother did not feed him for ten days. Consecutively, other children may not have the power to survive, but Dave is different. During those ten days, he also must to do his chores. She is very cruel mother. She lets his son in starving.

I was used to going without food for periods up to three days, but this extended time was unbearable. Water was my only means of survival. When I filled the metal ice cube tray from the refrigerator, I would tip the corner of the tray to my mouth. (Dave Pelzer, 1995:104)

Even though he is used to not eat anything for 3 days, Dave is just a kid who needs some food to grow up and to be healthy. To survive, Dave tried to at least give himself some water from the ice cube tray. It was how he survived. This, at the same time, had forced him to develop strong mentality. Unlike other children of his age who still dependent on other adults, he must
depend on himself. He must have his own strategy to face his hardship. Consequently, intellectually and mentally he was forced to develop faster.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that new tasks which are not supposed to be done by children have resulted in Dave’s ability in developing personality to become more mature from his age because he is charged by many responsibilities as he were. During his traumatic experiences in his childhood, Dave is able to finish the tasks that are not deserved for a child at his age. Given bad treatment by his mother, Dave learns how to solve his own problem and also to overcome his mother’s cruelty. As a conclusion, Dave is a child with premature adulthood.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

In this part, the writer will conclude the findings from the answers. The answers of the problems will be directly provided and summed up from the discussion.

Based on the analysis, Dave Pelzer is the major character of this story. He appears in the story as a boy experiencing the abusive treatments from his mother.

Dave’s characteristics are described into 5 characteristics; they are isolated having many minds, strong, revengeful and thirsty for love. Isolated can be seen from the story that he isolated from his family member, his school environment. It makes his life running so dramatic. He lost his warm relationship to people around him. Dave is also a many minds person, who tries to find a way to save his life from his mother’s abusive treatments. The other characteristic is strong. Dave is a strong person who receiving bad treatment from his mother. Even though he is strong person, Dave is revengeful. He actually hates with the entire suffering that he receives. Dave is so revengeful with his mother abusive treatment. Because his mother always hurts him, Dave is actually missing his mother love and care. He becomes a boy who thirsty for love.

As long as Dave Pelzer is running his life with his entire mother’s abusive treatment, Dave experiences his post traumatic disorder behavior.
Some of his post traumatic disorder behaviors are stealing. Dave must steal some food to eat because his mother almost feed him. Lying to the people around is his way to avoid his mother anger. If Dave told his mother abusive treatment to people he will get the punishment from his mother. Fantasizing is also his post traumatic disorder behavior, which make him fantasize about the food. When he is starving he will fantasize eat delicious food. In his mind is full of food. The last of post traumatic disorder behavior is eating leftover from garbage’s can. It is the other ways to have food except stealing. Dave knows it is very disgusting but he still search the food from garbage’s can. The important point is in undergo his suffering life, it makes him grow to be premature adulthood which all tasks that should not be given to him, he must run his life with all routines chores along his life.

According to the analysis above, someone’s maturity can be seen from his intellectual changes, physical changes and also social and personality development. Someone is said to be mature if he is able to face and solve his own problem quickly with his mind and deed, and also learn from his life’s experience. The characteristics of adult person which can be seen in Dave is namely having many minds, strong and independent. Based on Dave’s traumatic experience in his childhood, he gets used to do things or works which belong to the adult person. As we know, Dave is a young boy who has traumatic experience since he was 4 years old until 11 years old. From that traumatic experience, the characteristics of adult person emerges in Dave. However, Dave is able to face his problem and find ways to solve it quickly.
with his mind and deed. In this case, Dave becomes a boy who has many
minds. Dave is also able to do things or works which belong to the adult
person, for example cleaning the house, washing the dishes, cleaning the
bathroom and accepting many cruel punishments from his mother. Besides
having many minds, Dave is also strong and is a fighter. He is a fighter
because he has to find a way in order to get food. He has to work cutting the
grass in neighbor’s garden so that he gets paid to buy food. Dave actually
does not deserve all of this treatment since he is just a small boy, but Dave’s
traumatic experience has helped Dave to develop himself into a boy with
premature adulthood characteristic.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


