

**ESPERANZA'S PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT**  
**AS REFLECTED IN SANDRA CISNEROS'**  
***THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET***

**A Thesis Summary**

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## A. Introduction

It is interesting to talk about personality since one's personality is something that may differentiate somebody with another. Personality development is experienced by everyone and can be caused by many things. *The House on Mango Street* is a novel which tells about the life of Esperanza, a Chicana (Mexican-American) girl who experiences personality development. Living in Mango Street transforms the personality of Esperanza from an unconfident, pessimistic, and naïve girl into a confident, optimistic, and sophisticated person. Thus, this study aims to investigate the factors that influence Esperanza's personality development along with the process of the development.

It is an interesting novel since the main character is a girl named Esperanza is in early adolescence when the novel begins. Adolescence is a significant time in one's life since a person is known searching for identity in this period. The theory of personality is presented in general in order to gain basic understanding about the term personality. This study uses the theory of personality by Huffman and Vernoy also Hall and Lindzey. It is used to analyze the personality of the main character in the novel at the beginning until the end of the novel. Another theory which is significant toward this study is Hurlock's theory of personality development. The main character of the novel experiences personality development. Thus, Hurlock's theory of personality development is really suitable to conduct this study in analyzing the development as well as the influencing factors. The research question can be formulated as 1) What kind of basic personality does Esperanza possess? 2) What kind of personality development does she acquire? 3) What factors that influence Esperanza's personality development?

The theory of personality and personality development are significant in analyzing the three problems. The objectives of the problem mainly aim to answer the three questions. The first objective is to identify Esperanza's basic personality which Esperanza possesses. The second objective is to identify Esperanza's personality development. The third goal is to reveal the factors that influence Esperanza's personality development in accordance with the process.

It is hoped that the research findings contribute the literature field, especially for the novel writing. Hopefully, it can encourage people to read this novel and get advantages, experiences, and values which can affect their behavior and attitude.

## **B. Literature Review and Research Method**

This study observes the personality development of Esperanza, the main character in the novel, who has personality as a unconfident, pessimistic, and naive girl at the beginning and turns into a confident, optimistic, and sophisticated person at the end. Huffman and Vernoy (2000:464) define that personality is an individual's unique and relatively stable pattern of thoughts, feelings, and actions that defines you as a person: how you are different from other people. The theory of personality is used to analyze Esperanza's basic personality and her personality development. Moreover, Hurlock (1976:19-20) explains human's personality development itself is influenced by two factors. The first is human's early experience within family, and the second is important events happening outside the home. Hurlock's theory is used to analyze the factors that influence Esperanza's personality development in accordance with the process.

This research is a qualitative approach focusing on the background and individuality holistically and using a content analysis research. This technique is used in analyzing novel since the essence of this technique is to analyze a document in order to understand the content and the meaning. The researcher in doing data collecting took two steps in this research, those were reading and note taking. The data were rearranged according to the categories and the researcher uses a table.

## **C. Findings**

Esperanza, in the beginning of the story, is depicted as a girl who has a weak personality. She often feels ashamed of her poverty. She feels doubtful about seeing her future. She also lacks of knowledge and is inexperienced. Esperanza can be identified as unconfident, pessimistic, and naive girl. At the end

of the story, Esperanza is portrayed as a mature girl who is well developed and becomes a better person. She is so confident to do what she really wants. She is being optimistic about her future and build up her dreams by making some efforts. She is no longer being naïve understanding some cases, but she becomes a sophisticated person. Two main factors that influence Esperanza's personality development are early experience within family and important events outside the home.

Esperanza's experience within family includes her supportive parents and family's financial difficulty which give her the motivation to improve her life. Esperanza's parents who are hard workers and caring give a significant influence toward Esperanza. She is unconfident and pessimistic at the beginning but she is supported and encouraged by her parents so she turns into a confident and an optimistic person. The good effect and encouragement influence Esperanza's personality which is basically weak into strong. For example is Esperanza sees what her father do to support the family and she starts to think to help the family too. Learning from father's hard working, Esperanza tries to find a job to help the family because she wants to continue study. The family's financial condition certainly affects Esperanza which may cause development in her personality. Living in a small house and facing the fact that the family is poor makes Esperanza feeling inferior. At the beginning of the story, it is portrayed how her poverty conducts her into weak personality. On the contrary, along the story Esperanza shows her development. Family's financial difficulty, instead of making her unconfident, becomes a motivation for Esperanza to move on. The condition even tends to strengthen Esperanza's willpower and desire. It shows that family's poverty does not end up being a bad influence for Esperanza, but it motivates her to develop and shape her goals. For example, she starts to develop her self-confident and to be optimistic in focusing her goal, that is having a nice house.

Besides, many events and people outside the home also give contribution toward Esperanza's personality development. Esperanza's neighborhood is fundamentally one of the main factors in her personality development. She lives

around Mexican-American people. Esperanza lives in a poor neighborhood which mostly the people are ignorant. The people in the neighborhood are uneducated, having a low self-esteem and many issues related to woman-marginalized. Woman marginalization in her neighborhood makes Esperanza think that she does not want to end up like any women in her neighborhood being subordinated. Her experience with Sally also turns her into a sophisticated lady by being aware and not easily believes what people say. Alicia who goes to college also inspires her to continue study and not to give up school even she is poor. Here, Esperanza optimistic in seeing her future. Esperanza eventually becomes a better person at the end of the story. She develops into confident, optimistic, and sophisticated person.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The beginning of the story shows how fragile the personality of Esperanza, but later on the story, her personality develop as Esperanza observes the condition around her. She develops her personality not only because of the incidents which happens to her but also because she learns from someone else's mistake. The main factors that influence Esperanza's personality development are some events that happen in her family and in her neighborhood. Within family, Esperanza has supportive parents who always encourage her. Family's difficulty becomes a motivation for her to move on and strengthen her desire. Important events outside home also give contribution toward Esperanza's personality development. At the end of the story, Esperanza turns into a confident, optimistic, and sophisticated person. In this study, the significant point is that people may develop because of having many experiences in life. In this study, the significant point is that people may develop because of having many experiences in life. In Esperanza's case, the experience within family and outside home become the significant factors. Furthermore, the result of personality development depends on the people itself. It can be bad, or it can be good. In this study, despite the fact that Esperanza lives in a neighborhood which mostly are ignorant people, Esperanza is the example of a person who develops into a better and strong person.

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