

**PUBLICATION ARTICLE**

**THE INFLUENCE OF ENVIRONMENT ON PERSONALITY  
DEVELOPMENT IN *EASY A* MOVIE (2010) DIRECTED BY WILL  
GLUCK A BEHAVIORIST PERSPECTIVE**



by:

**DYAH TRISNAWATI**

**A 320 060 384**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

**SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

**MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA**

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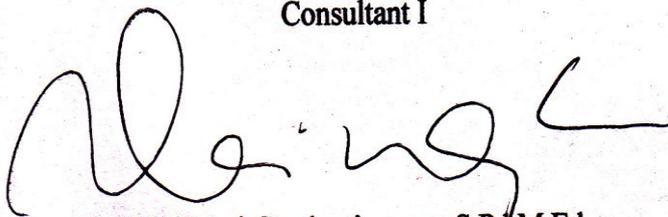
**RESEARCH PAPER**

by:

**DYAH TRISNAWATI**  
**A320 060 384**

Approved to be Examined by the Consultant Team

Consultant I



Dr. Phil. Dewi Candraningrum. S.Pd.M.Ed.

Consultant II



Nur Hidayat, S.Pd.

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A BEHAVIORIST PERSPECTIVE**

*Dyah Trisnawati (Student)*

*Dr. Phil. Dewi Candraningrum S. Pd M. Ed (Consultant I)*

*Nur Hidayat S.Pd (Consultant II)*

**(School of Teacher Training and Education, Muhammadiyah University of  
Surakarta)**

dyachubby@gmail.com

**SUMMARY**

In this study, the researcher attempts to explore the influences of the environment on the major character Olive Penderghast in the *Easy A* movie. The objective of the study is to analyze Olive Penderghast in *Easy A* movie based on the structural element and to analyze the major character behavior based on the psychological approach, especially behaviorist perspective.

In analyzing Olive Penderghast the writer uses behaviorist approach and qualitative method. The object of the research is the behavior of the major character derived from *Easy A* movie published in 2010, directed by Will Gluck and was shot at Screen Gems studios. The data are literary data that consist of primary and secondary data. *Easy A* movie itself, meanwhile the secondary one includes references and materials related to the study picking up from the books or internet. The methods used for collecting data are library research and documentation. The technique of data analysis is descriptive analysis.

The result of the study reveals the life of Olive Penderghast who gets some influences from her new environment after she lied about losing her virginity to her friends. *Easy A* represents Will Gluck's response to the role of environment in influencing and shaping someone's behavior

**KeyWords: Easy A, influence, environment.**

## 1. Introduction

Will Gluck an American film director, screenwriter and producer was born in New York. Will's career started off writing for *The John Larroquette Show* and then he went on to write and produce for shows like *Grosse Pointe, Luis* and *Andy Richter Controls the Universe*.

His next film was 2010's *Easy A*, starred by Emma Stone, Thomas Haden Church, Patricia Clarkson, Stanley Tucci, Lisa Kudrow, and Penn Badgley among others, which he also rewrote and produced. It grossed over \$75 million worldwide and was nominated for a People's Choice Award, Golden Globe Award (for Emma Stone), Critics Choice Award for Best Comedy, GLAAD award, A.C.E. award, among others.

*Easy A* is a 2010 teen comedy film written by Bert V. Royal, directed by Will Gluck, and starring Emma Stone which the running time is about 92 minutes. Partially inspired by the novel *The Scarlet Letter*, the film was shot at Screen Gems studios and in Ojai, California. Screen Gems distributed with a release on September 17, 2010. It was released on DVD and Blu-ray Disc December 21, 2010.

The story of this movie begins when Olive Penderghast lies to her best friend Rhiannon about going on a date in order to get out of camping with her and her hippie parents. The following Monday, pressed by Rhiannon, Olive lies about losing her virginity to a college guy. Marianne (Amanda Bynes), a girl at their school who is a zealous Christian, overhears her telling the lie and soon it spreads like wildfire.

The school has a conservative church group run by Marianne who decides Olive will be their next project. The group's harassment, disguised as concern, comes to head at an English class taught by Mr. Griffith. The class is reading *The Scarlet Letter*, a novel about adultery and shame. When one of the girls from the church group makes a snide comment to Olive suggesting Olive wear a red A as well, Olive shoots back and Mr. Griffith sends her to the principal's office. During her detention she tells

her friend Brandon the truth, and he explains how others bully him because he's gay.

Brandon comes over later and asks Olive to pretend to sleep with him so that he will be accepted by everyone else at school. Brandon convinces Olive and they pretend to have sex at a party. After having a fight with Rhiannon over Olive's new identity as a "dirty skank", Olive decides to counteract the harassment by embracing her new image as the school tramp. She begins to wear more provocative clothing and stitches a red 'A' to everything she wears. Boys who usually have had no luck with girls in the past begin to give her gift cards and money to say they have had sex with her in order to increase their own popularity, which in turn increases her reputation.

Olive comes to short-lived understanding with Marianne, but it is ruined when Marianne's boyfriend Micah gets chlamydia and lies that Olive gave it to him. Olive sees Mrs. Griffith, the guidance counsellor and her teacher's wife, who tearfully confesses that she slept with Micah. Olive promises to take the blame to save Mrs. Griffith's job and marriage. Rhiannon, partly jealous of the attention Olive is getting, joins the church group and starts harassing her former best friend.

Olive soon realizes that, though everyone thinks she is sleeping around, no one was actually attempting to sleep with her. This changes when Anson comes up to her and asks her out. The date goes sour when Olive sees Rhiannon at the restaurant and remembers she has a crush on Anson. In the parking lot, Anson attempts to pay her off; Olive asks what they will say happened but Anson thinks he will actually get sex and tries to kiss her. She resists and he drives off. Todd, who works at the restaurant, sees her and offers to drive her home.

Olive goes to the boys that propositioned her and demands they admit that the rumors are all lies but they refuse and Brandon even ran off, leaving behind a note telling his parents he's gay. When she goes to Mrs. Griffith to make her come clean, she refuses and implies that no one would

believe Olive over her. Olive runs to Mr. Griffith and tells him the truth but immediately regrets it, realizing she just destroyed a marriage.

To get everything finally in the open, she does sing a song and dance number at a pep rally and pretends she will be doing a sex show via web cam with Todd. In actuality she confesses what she has done. She also makes up with Rhi, apologizing for lying. When she is finishing up, Todd comes by riding a lawnmower, holding a boombox and tells her to come out. She closes her web cam confession saying she really likes Todd and maybe she will lose her virginity to him in the future but at the end of the day it is no one's business but her own. She leaves the house to kiss him and they ride off from the neighbourhood on the lawnmower.

There are four reasons why researcher chooses *Easy A* movie. First, *Easy A* describes the character changing of the major character which is played by Emma Stone after she lied about losing her virginity to a college guy. It is interested to examine the process of character changing in this movie because in the beginning the major character is described as a good girl changes her new identity as a "dirty skank". The Second, *Easy A* has received many wins and nominations. The third interesting part of this movie is the setting. The setting of this movie was taken from America. Though set on the California. The school actually shot at Ojai High School. The fourth interesting part of the plot in this movie is the conflict between the major character with the people around her and also the conflict with herself.

**Problem Statement** in this research is, how is the influence of environment on personality development is reflected in Will Gluck's *Easy A* Movie.

**Limitation of the Study** in this research is, The writer focuses this research in analyzing the influence of environment on the personality development of the major character in Will Gluck's *Easy A* based on behaviorist perspective.

**Objectives of the Study** based on the problem statement above, the writer formulates the objective of the study as follows: (1) to analyze the structural elements of the movie. (2) To analyze the movie based on behaviorist perspective.

**Literature Review** *Easy A* movie is an interesting movie which is analyzed by the researcher by applying behaviorist perspective. The researcher interested with this movie after watching the movie. During conducting the research of this movie, the researcher does not find a previous research related with this movie in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta as the object of her paper.

**Research Method** In this research, the writer uses a qualitative research. It is library research while data sources are using literary data. It purposes to analyze the movie using behaviorist approach. The steps to conduct this research are (1) determining the type of study, (2) determining the object of the study, (3) determining the data and data source, (4) determining technique of data collection, and (5) determining technique of data analysis. The object of the study is *Easy A* movie directed by Will Gluck and published by Sony Picture Entertainment, Columbia Pictures, and Sony Picture Television, 2010 USA. It is analyzed by applying Behaviorist Perspective.

There are two data sources that are needed to do this research (1) Primary Data Source, the primary data source is *Easy A* movie which was released in 2010 and written by Berth V. Royal and directed by Will Glucks. This film was distributed by Columbia Pictures. (2) Secondary Data Source, the secondary data sources are from other data related to the research such as movie script, internet and other relevant information.

The method of collecting data that is done by the researcher is note taking and also image capturing. Note taking here the researcher tries to find the subtitle or dialogue that include in this movie. Finding out the articles or books which related with the movie also important to complete the data. While image capturing the researcher find out the image which

describe every scene of this movie. The data analyzing technique of this research is descriptive, qualitative analysis of content analysis. The analysis is started from the structural analysis of the work and finally the behaviorist analysis of the literary work.

## **2. Behaviorist Theory**

### **a. Notion of Behaviorism**

Behavior is a branch of psychology that learns about personality so it means that if we want to know about someone's personality we have to learn first about their behavior because behavior is a study about human life (Helms and Turner, 1981: 72). Here we know that human behavior is complex. Behavior appears or arises not only from the personalities but also from the relation or connection with the environment where the people live (Pervin, 1984: 5). Behavior can be shaped depends on the events that happen in the environment. Behavior cannot shape without other influences and reinforcements from the event that happen in the environment (Hall and Lindzey, 1985: 404)

The pattern of someone's behavior can be shaped and also modified. Martin and Pear (1999: 7) show that there are seven characteristics of behavior modification, there are: 1) A strong emphasis on defining problems in terms of behavior that can be measured in some ways. 2) The treatments techniques are ways of change the individual's environment in order to help them function more fully. 3) The methods and the reason can be described clearly. 4) The techniques are often applied in everyday life. 5) The techniques largely based on the principles of learning. 6) A strong emphasis in scientific demonstration that a certain technique was responsible for a certain behavior change. 7) A strong emphasis on accountability for everyone who involved in a program of behavior modification.

## **b. Behaviorist Perspective**

Many behaviorists have their own assumption or perspective about behavior itself. One of those behaviorist is B. F. Skinner who is the most popular behaviorist who is very influential because of his theory about behavior itself. In his theory Skinner believes that the difference of individual's personality is a result of different kind of learning experiences that experienced by them and also the interaction of behavior and environment over time (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992: 301).

## **c. Major Principle of Behaviorism**

### **1. Environment**

Environment plays an important role in influencing someone's behavior. Environments consist of family, peers, culture and community and also the physical environment. Each of them has their role or contribution in influencing the pattern of our behavior (Pikunas, 1976: 58). The effect of the environment here is to emerge behaviors which already learned and it can teach the new behavior that might be appears in the environment because there are many kinds of behavior that exists in environment (Watson and Trap, 1985: 13).

### **2. Learning Process**

Behavior is also shaped through learning process. It does not appear by itself without a process (Skinner in Helms and Turner, 1981: 75). Experience is a part of learning process that can influence and shape the behavior (Helms and Turner, 1981: 12). Children will learn anything from their surroundings to improve their behavior. They will acquire behavior from what they are seeing and in this case parents play an important role in shaping their behavior (Hurlock, 1985: 494) Learning theories find the key to a person's nature in the way that he or she is shaped by learning. According to this theory most behavior is acquired, and it is acquired by learning (Craig, 1992: 30).

### **3. Modelling**

Behavior is also acquired through modeling. People often observe others behavior that becomes their model that guide them for their actions. They have their own model to be imitated like a child imitates what their parents do (Bandura in Helms and Turner, 1981: 343). Many behaviors are learned by observing someone else when performs an actions and then they imitated it. This kind of learning allows you to develop wholly new behaviors and to modify the previous ones. Actually by simply observing a model we can learn others behavior (Watson and Trap, 1985: 106).

#### **d. Environmental Influences**

##### **1) Maturation of Hereditary Potentials**

Maturity provides stimuli for familial and communal improvements, because a mature individual acts as a corrective influence in his broad environment” (Pikunas, 1976: 298). Mature person will acts differently with immature person. Mature person tends to be more advisedly before doing something than immature person.

##### **2) Model of Personality Pattern**

The second important way in which the environment influences the forming of the personality pattern is by providing models for the individual to follow (Hurlock, 1979: 83). Just as people learn directly from experiencing the consequences of their own behavior, they also learn by watching another person’s behavior and its consequences (Bandura in Craig, 1992: 35).

##### **3) Provision for Learning**

The third important way in which the environment influences the molding of the personality pattern is by providing opportunities for learning and pressure to motivate the person to take advantage of these opportunities. The shaping of the personality pattern from the hereditary potentials comes from learning (Hurlock, 1979: 84). Learning, then, refers to the acquisition of new skills, meanings, and

orientations, including avoidances and simple not doing what one has once done (McCandless, 1967: 178)

### **3. Finding Research**

#### **1) Olive Old Environment**

##### **a. Lesson Learned From the Old Environment**

In her old environment mostly Olive spent her time in home with her family. Because of that reason the lesson that she learned is mostly comes from them.

Olive : “You guys know that I was here all weekend, right?”  
Mother : “Yeah. Yes, you were upstairs”  
Olive : “You would testify to that?”  
Father : “Yeah. I would take a bullet for you. You know that. Right between the eyes. Man, I would slit my throat...rather than say something to someone..that you didn't want me to say.”  
(EA, Disk 1, 11:23)

From them she learned many things that is important in her behavior. For example she learned how to be autonomous and respect another people. Her parent also teaches her to have a good manner in society.

##### **b. Olive's Old Behavior**

###### **a) Autonomous**

In her home Olive is accustomed to do anything by herself. Her parents teach her to be autonomous and independent.

Olive : “Can you not see that I'm a mess?”  
Olive's Mother : “No, you're not, Olive.”  
Olive's Mother : “You're wonderful. And you'll handle this the same way I did. With an incontrovertible sense of humor. But you're much smarter than I am... so you'll come out of this much better than I did.”  
Olive : “Thank you, Mom.” (EA, Disk 2, 25:56)

Beside that the environment where she lives also demands her to acts autonomously. Her parents always implant her not to be spoiled and not to rely on other people.

###### **b) Smart**

In her old environment Olive have good education from her parent's. Both of her parents are well educated and this influenced them to give a good education for her daughter.

Olive : "According to my watch, you have 382 of them."  
 Todd : "How do you do that?"  
 Olive : "What?"  
 Todd : "Add so fast. And you also talk like a grown-up."  
 Olive : "Don't worry, I'm not nearly as smart as I think I am."  
 (EA, Disk 1, 10:36)

Olive didn't only get the education from her school, but also get education from her parents and the quality of education that she gets is not less good with the formal one. Here her parents succeed making Olive become smart and well educated.

#### c) Well Mannered

During at home Olive always spent her time with her parents. Here her parents not only taught about the common knowledge but they also taught Olive how to acts and respects other people. That is why Olive always acts politely and gives a good respect to other people.

"Whatever happened to chivalry? Does it only exist in '80s movies? I want John Cusack holding a boombox outside my window. I wanna ride off on a lawn mower with Patrick Dempsey. I want Jake from Sixteen Candles waiting outside the church for me. I want Judd Nelson thrusting his fist into the air... because he knows he got me. Just once, I want my life to be like an '80s movie."  
 (EA, Disk 1, 45:20)

#### d) Honest

This is the other character that is influenced by her parents in her old environment. During living with her parents Olive never lies and always follows her parent's advice.

Olive : "I got sent to the principal today."  
 Olive's Mother : "Did you win a medal or something?"  
 Olive : "Not exactly. I used inappropriate language in English class. Although we're reading a book that I personally deem... inappropriate for our age group, so I actually felt it was quite apropos."  
 Olive's Mother : "What did you say?"  
 Olive : "Let's just say it was an inappropriate word."  
 Olive's Father : "Well, what did it start with?"  
 Olive : "A snide comment from a snotty girl in my class."  
 (EA, Disk 1, 18:18)

Her parents always placed reliance on her because they believe that her daughter will not misuse the trust that they have given to her.

#### e) Socially Awkward

This movie describes that Olive's spent her time just with her family. This condition makes her becomes socially awkward and out of date. In her new environment which is a lot of people in there Olive is forced to adapts with this condition.

"I used to be anonymous, invisible to the opposite sex. If Google Earth were a guy...he couldn't find me if I was dressed up as a 10-story building. Pretty cutting-edge stuff, huh? A high school girl feeling anonymous, Who am I? What does it all mean? Why am I here? Blah."  
(EA, Disk 1 01:04)

## 2) Olive's New Environment

### a Lesson Learned From the New Environment

#### 1. Lesson Learned from Marianne

Marianne is a girl in Olive's school who brings influence for the girls there includes Olive. She is very obedient and religious in her school but actually she is only a bad girl who does anything with her pleasure without regards someone's feeling. From Marianne, Olive learned how to be obedient and religious like her .

Olive : "Never underestimate the power of extremists like Marianne. I was used to being by myself, but I had never felt more alone. I thought I should look into what they were running around thumping about. Do you have a religion section?"  
Shop Keeper : "It's over there. Can I help you with something?"  
Olive : "The Bible."  
(EA, Disk 2, 07:23)

#### 2. Lesson Learned From Rhiannon

Rhiannon is Olive's best friend in Ojai High School before Olive act straight as a tramp. From Rhiannon, Olive learned how to become popular like her. Olive also learned that friendship is very important. Here Rhiannon is her best friends before olive act straight as a tramp. But since olive act straight as a tramp she joined with Marianne to drop out olive from school. Because of this events Olive realizes that looking for a friend is more difficult than looking for enemy.

Olive : "Why are you doing this?"  
Rhiannon : "I'm trying to make this school a better place."  
Olive : "Start a petition to get rid of the lead paint."  
Rhiannon : "You're a slut. You're going down, Olive."  
Olive : "If this is because I'm more popular than you, then I think what you're..."

Rhiannon : "Let's not mistake popularity for infamy. You don't wanna burn, do you? I'll be praying for you."

(EA, Disk 2 06:35)

#### 4) Lesson Learned From Mr. Griffith

Mr. Griffith is the English teacher of Ojai North High School. As a teacher Mr. Griffith always gives her attention for her students including Olive. Here Mr. Griffith gives a great attention for her because she is one of the best students in his class.

Mr. Griffith : "And by that, I assume you mean?"

Olive : "The stable and self-perpetuating end stage... in the evolution of a plant community. Right... Why, what were you thinking?"

Mr. Griffith : "The same. But I don't say it out loud lest someone get the wrong idea. I think you know innuendo is attached to everything these days."

Rhiannon : "Innuendo? What...? Whatever do you mean?"

Mr. Griffith : "Rhiannon, Olive, go hit the books. They don't hit back. Also, hugs not drugs. Mess with the bull, get the horns. And any other clichés you can come up with."

Olive : "Bye, Mr. Griffith."

(EA, Disk1 02:21)

#### 5) Lesson Learned From Todd

Tod is a kind of man who does not like talk too much. He is cool and calm. From Todd, Olive learned how to believe and trust friends in her life.

Todd : "Do you wanna talk about it?"

Olive : "What's to say? Everybody thinks I'm a whore... and for the first time, I'm starting to believe it."

Todd : "What?"

Olive : "Don't act like you don't know what people are saying about me."

Todd : "I know what people are saying. Doesn't mean I believe them."

Olive : "Who told you?"

Todd : "No one."

(EA, Disk2 36:21)

### b Olive's New Behavior

#### 1) Hypocrite

This is the bad behavior that Olive got from her lies to her friends in her new environment. Indirectly she learned how to be popular like Rhiannon and Marianne. Marianne is a girl who is very hypocrite and always says anything which is contended with the reality. For example when Marianne spreads a gossip about Olive it is just her project to drop out Olive from school. Here she also influenced to do the same act too. It

is when she lies to her friend about her virginity and act as a dirty skank like her gossip but it is just to increase her popularity.

“Remember how I told you Google Earth couldn't find me... if I was dressed up as a ten-story building? Well, the next day it could find me if I was dressed as a crack on a sidewalk. That's the beauty of being a girl in high school. People hear you had sex once and, bam, you're a bimbo. I really didn't mean for the lie to put me on the map... but I gotta admit, I kind of liked being on the map.

(EA, Disk 1, 12:39)

## 2) Ambitious

This behavior is influenced by Marianne. Almost her behavior influences Olive's personality direct or indirectly. As a girl with their perfection Marianne and Rhiannon are also ambitious in getting something that their really wants. This behavior also influences Olive. Here Olive has a great ambition to be popular like them. She lied about her virginity and act as a dirty skank in order to get popularity like them.

“I don't know why I did it. I guess maybe it was because it was the first time... I had sort of felt superior to Rhi. But I just started piling on lie after lie.”

(EA, Disk 1, 06:34)

## 3) Wise

Here Mr. Griffith gives a great attention for her because she is one of the best students in her class. From Mr. Griffith Olive learned how to be a person who is brave to confess her fault. She also learned how to be wiser in facing her life.

“Mr. Griffith, if you ever see this... just know that I was wrong to tell you that in that way. At all. I shouldn't have done it. And I don't even feel bad for lying for your wife. But I hate myself for telling you the truth. I am so sorry. With my words, even though they were true, I ended a marriage. Looking back, that's the thing I regret the most.”

(EA, Disk 2, 24:36)

## 4) Mature

In her environment Olive learns and observe a lot of things that happens in her surroundings. Here she meets and interacts with several people who has different character that have their own influence for her. During with them Olive has some experiences that is influential in her maturity. Because of those experiences Olive becomes more mature in

facing her various problems. The role of her parents also helps her to be wiser and more mature in facing her life.

Olive : "Can you not see that I'm a mess?"  
Olive's Mother : "No, you're not, Olive."  
Olive's Mother : "You're wonderful. And you'll handle this the same way I did. With an incontrovertible sense of humor. But you're much smarter than I am... so you'll come out of this much better than I did."  
Olive : "Thank you, Mom." (EA, Disk 2, 25:56)

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis in the previous chapter and the problem statements of the research that is reflected in *Easy A* movie, the researcher draws conclusion as follows.

First, based on the structural analysis *Easy A* is a good movie that reflects the teenager's life style with their problems in their surroundings. Through this movie the reader can see that the major character has several new friends that contribute in forming her new character. The influence that major character gets here can be good and bad in her behavior depends on how she responds it.

Second, based on the behaviorist analysis, this movie criticizes the social problems associated with teenagers and the problems that occur around them. Here Will Gluck wants to show to the audience that environment has a great role in shaping someone behavior. Through the major character Olive Penderghast, this movie describes about a girl who changed her behavior after she lied about her virginity in order to become popular in the new environment. Her new environment helps her to develop her behavior through several stimuli which comes from its member. The stimulus which is given by her environment can give such effect in her behavior neither good nor bad.

Third, this movie describes how environment can cause several problems for someone. In this case Olive gets a big problem which is caused by her new behavior. Will Gluck wants to show how the major character tries to solve her problem that is caused by her with her own way. In this case Olive succeed to draw a lesson from the events that happen around her.

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