Adelina's Development

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Development is something everyone must endure emotionally, cognitively, and physically. There are also many theories on what occurs within individuals while they are developing. These theories help to explain the changes emotionally, physically, etc. that each person must go through to become functioning adults. For this assignment, I will be discussing a book character and how they develop throughout the book or series. I have chosen to do this assignment on Adelina Amouteru from the trilogy The Young Elites.

Adelina Amouteru is the main protagonist of The Young Elites series. The Young Elites is about a dystopian renaissance period society. An illness called the blood fever has devastated the land. Those who caught the illness and survived were left with physical abnormalities. They were outcasted from society and were seen as abominations. A few of these people developed unique abilities as a result of the blood fever. These young people were heavily sought after by a group called The Daggers, who helped to protect those who had abilities or had just been affected by the blood fever. Society dubbed this group The Young Elites.

At the beginning of the series Adelina is around sixteen years old. She is physically affected by the blood fever and develops the ability to create illusions. At the age of sixteen, most adolescents have gone through the majority of development, but every individual is different. At this time Adelina may have been going through Ericksons theory of Identity vs. Role Confusion. Erik Erikson has several psychosocial stages that span all through the lifetime. Identity vs. Role confusion occurs from around the age of twelve to eighteen years old. During this time adolescents are trying to figure out who they are and where they fit into the world. For Adelina, at the beginning of the book she has no idea where she fits into society, especially since she is considered an outcast. Her father wants to find her a husband who will purchase her from him so that he does not have to deal with her any longer. However, Adelina wants no part of this

plan. She ends up running away from her father's plan and wants to find her own identity. This is her first big step into adulthood and to becoming who she wants to become. There is some role confusion as Adelina is unsure what is the correct path to take. She is unsure that running away from her father and trying to make it on her own in a society that despises her is truly the correct thing to do. When she is finally discovered by the Daggers, she feels as though she has found a group to which she belongs. However, this feeling does not last throughout the trilogy.

Although Adelina is under the age of eighteen, I think that she also experiences another of Erikson's stages: Intimacy vs. Isolation. There comes a point in the book where Adelina cannot control her powers and is seen as unpredictable and unreliable. She had formed a relationship with one of the leaders of the Daggers, Enzo, and they had grown close. However, there came a point where he was concerned about where her loyalties lied. She majorly begins to struggle with wanting to remain close to Enzo, but also not wanting to cause any problems for the Daggers. She feels that isolating herself from them will help her control her powers, keeping the people she cares about safe from herself. Due to the circumstances of the book and Adelina's development, this stage may have come a bit early compared to normal developing adolescents.

Another theory that I think applies to Adelina is Bandura's social learning theory. Observational learning is when children observe their parents or other significant adults in their lives and they may imitate their observations later in life. Growing up, Adelina was only treated with resentment and abuse due to her physical differences from the blood fever. People like her were often killed because they were seen as different. Society was always in fear and people were killed on the streets or burned at the stake because society viewed these individuals as abominations. Towards the end of book two, Adelina gathers her own alliance of Young Elites. She uses these elites to overthrow the monarchy and take the throne for herself. Because of how

she was treated as a child, she took it upon herself to do the exact same to those that persecuted those similar to her and her alliance. She saw people be killed, and she herself was even tied to a stake staring at the face of death at one point, and she takes the things she saw and learned and applied it to her own monarchy. She started murdering those that went against those who were affected by the blood fever, just as they had gone against her.

Throughout all three books, Adelina struggles with morality. She does many things that, in our society, are not morally acceptable. Kholberg developed three main stages of morality and moral reasoning: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. Because of the society that Adelina was raised in, she did not learn proper moral reasoning. She never really understood that although what society did to the outcasts was wrong, it was also wrong for her to do the same to them. She never went through the levels of moral reasoning, and it shows as she develops and in her character. She often has memory flashbacks of situations that happened to her as a child. Her father always favored her younger sister over Adelina because Violetta had no physical flaws, unlike Adelina. Adelina was always reprimanded for things her sister would do because of this favoritism. Her main adult role model was a poor example of correct moral reasoning. The first level was never properly taught and thus the next two levels were not developed correctly. The actions she was shown were just considered social norms. She never fully understands abstract moral concepts, such as the value of the human life. She had been taught that life was something that could easily be taken away by whomever had the power to do so. To her, the lives of those that went against her had absolutely no value, and she made it known by executing anyone that went against her rulings.

Adelina is a complex character when it comes to her development. She often knows what the right thing to do is but so many times she ends up doing the opposite. I would consider her a

morally grey character. I find myself sympathizing with her pain and her actions although what she is clearly morally wrong. She tries to do what she thinks is right but in the wrong manner. I heavily relate to her development of identity. As an adolescent, my parents put a lot of pressure on me to do exactly what they thought I should be doing. I was in sports and was always pushed to be the best. My parents pushed me to do activities that I didn't necessarily want to do because they wanted me to find identity in them. After high school, I gave up on a lot of what my parents wanted me to do and started doing things that made me feel confident in who I was as an individual. Morals were also instilled in me from birth, especially within my religion. Compared to Adelina, I think that I know what is right from wrong. Some things that I grew up believing, however, have changed. I have discovered what I truly think to be morally correct regardless of what I was taught growing up. Many of the morals I was taught are still with me even though some of them have changed. I also understand her wanting for intimacy. As a child, my parents were never the most affectionate people, which I think has caused me to crave intimacy in my relationships. I used to often feel that people would be better off not as close to me because people often left after I would get close to them. I started not seeking out new friendships or relationships because of this. It is still something that I struggle with when meeting new people and making friends. Even though I do not completely relate to Adelina's development, we do have some similarities that we share.

References

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