

## Juvenile Delinquency in Educational Environment in the series *The End of The F\*\*\*ing World* Season 1

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### Abstract

This study aims to explore how trauma affects the personality development of James and Alyssa, and the factors influence their juvenile delinquency in the series *The End of the F\*\*\*ing World* season 1. The researcher used Erikson's Psychosocial Development theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of needs theory. The data were collected from the script of the series as primary source of the analysis. The findings show that trauma causes confusion in personality growth, reflecting the most dominant stage: Identity vs Role confusion. Their delinquent acts are driven by unmet basic needs such as physiological needs, safety, love, and esteem. These are reflected in actions like running away from home, stealing, and accidental killing. This study also shows that the educational environment, such as family, school, and community influence their emotional and psychological growth. This series can also be used as a learning tool in English education, especially through critical reading, to help student understand character development and real-life issues.

**Keywords:** Psychology of literature, Trauma, Juvenile Delinquency, Psychosocial Development theory, Hierarchy of Needs theory.

## INTRODUCTION

Literature has long been recognized not only as a medium for language learning, but also as a tool for exploring deeper human experiences and social realities. Hall (2015) explains that there is no fixed boundary between literary and everyday language. Literary texts often include language that reflects real-life speech and thought, making them more engaging and relevant for learners. This connection between literature and real-life communication makes it possible to use literature in educational context. Islam (2024) introduces eduliterature as the integration of literary concepts into education, allowing students to actively apply them to real-world situations as part of their learning process. Although this study does not directly apply the concept of eduliterature, it supports the idea that literature encourages learners to engage with characters' experiences, and develop empathy through active reading.

In English education, literature helps students develop critical reading skills. Lazar (2013) explains that literature gives students a chance to explore language, culture and human experiences through interesting stories. Bland (2018), supports this by stating that literature in English classrooms does more than just build language skills but also helps students explore

social issues, understand different cultures, and develop empathy. Samsudin (2025) explains that reading instruction is not only about recognizing words and pronunciation but also about developing critical thinking and comprehension skills to understand more complex meanings. When students have critical reading skills, they can analyse social problems in a thoughtful and reflective way. This shows how literature when used in education, can be a material to understand social issues such as juvenile delinquency.

Juvenile delinquency refers to behaviors by minors that violate social norms or laws (Shoemaker, 2009; Kennedy et al., 2020). Several factors contribute to these behaviors, including trauma, lack of emotional support, and family environment (Spaletta et al., 2020; Roberson & Azaola, 2021). In addition, Bronfenbrenner's bioecology theory (in Berns, 2010) highlights that family, school, and community in microsystem structure as educational environment have strong influence on children's behavior.

This issue is vividly illustrated in *"The End of the F\*\*\*ing World"*, a British television series directed by Jonathan Entwistle and adapted from Charles Forsman's graphic novel. The series portrays the lives of two troubled teenagers, James and Alyssa, who struggle with psychological trauma and commit various forms of delinquent behavior. James believes he is a psychopath and fantasizes about killing someone. He also witnessed his mother's suicide and stated that he was unable to feel anything after that. Meanwhile, Alyssa is a rebellious girl who struggles with emotional abandonment and neglect from her parents. The series shows how their traumatic experiences shape their personalities and lead them to commit delinquent acts in society. Although the school setting in the series is only briefly shown, the scenes reflect their lack of connection to the school environment and peers. This shows how trauma and dysfunctional family environment can affect young people's action, which makes this series useful to study juvenile delinquency because the story is close to real life and shows the psychological struggles of teenagers.

Because of its complex narrative and psychological depth, the series can also be viewed as a literary work. Alfisumah (2024), states that examining human behaviour in literature requires analysing characters' psychology, including emotions, traits, thoughts, and actions. In line with that, Manalu (2024) stated that literature has evolved into a dynamic visual form in the digital era. Based on the idea, analyzing a series as literature in the context of education provides a new perspective in applied literature studies, especially in English language education where students are getting used to different types of texts, not just printed novels such as script series.

Several previous studies have explored juvenile delinquency in literary works. The first, *"Analysis of Juvenile Delinquency in the Novel Vanishing Girls by Lauren Oliver"* by Pohan (2020), found that broken homes and lack of love from parents led to behaviors like drinking alcohol, drug abuse, skipping school and running away from home. The second, *"Huck's Juvenile Delinquency in the Adventure of Huckleberry Finn Novel by Mark Twain"* by Kusuma (2022), focused on how surrounding environment influence Huck's deviant behavior. The third, *"An Analysis of Juvenile Delinquency in Jay Asher's Novel Thirteen Reasons Why"* by Afangka & Purwarno (2021), showed how various forms of juvenile delinquency affected the character Hannah, leading to her suicide. The fourth, *"An Analysis of Psychological Impact on Juvenile Delinquency in JK. Rowling's The Casual Vacancy (2012)"* by Rachayu & Aprilia (2015), found that drug and cigarette use were dominant, caused by ego-driven behavior, and gave negative effects on adolescents. The fifth, *"Analisis Emotional Detachment pada Karakter James dalam Series The End of The F\*\*\*ing World Episode 1"* by Febrianto (2022) focused only on James's emotional detachment in one episode.

Based on the explanation above, juvenile delinquency is a common issue among adolescents in society. Most previous studies focused on the forms and causes of juvenile delinquency in novels, while one study explored the character of James from *The End of The F\*\*\*ing World* Episode 1.

This study uses a psychology of literature approach by Wellek and Warren (1956), especially the third category that analysis psychological types and laws present within works of literature by combining Erikson's psychosocial development and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theories to examine the effect of trauma on James and Alyssa's personality development and the factors influence James and Alysa committed juvenile Delinquency. This research explores character development and psychological depth through series and how it also supports English language education by showing how script-based materials can be used to encourage critical thinking, and discussion in the classroom. Furthermore, this study highlights the role of the educational environment in shaping adolescent behavior.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This research uses qualitative research. According to Cresswell (2014), Qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. This is relevant in analyzing psychological aspects reflected in the character's behaviors. In line with this, Flick (2023) highlights the importance of text in qualitative research. According to him, texts serve as the primary data, a tool for interpretation, and a medium to present findings. Based on this, the researcher uses the series script as the primary data source in this study.

### **Research Approach**

The researcher uses a psychology of literature approach by Wellek & Warren to examine this research. The data were analyzed using Erikson's Psychosocial Development theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, and Bronfenbrenner's bioecology as supporting theory to explore characters' environments influence their behaviour in the series "*The End of the F\*\*\*ing World*" season 1, directed by Jonathan Entwistle.

### **Research Instrument**

Instruments are tools needed to collect the data. According to Creswell (2014), the researcher is the main instrument in qualitative research. The researcher collects data by observing, analyzing documents, and other relevant materials. Moreover, the data will be interpreted based on understanding the context and participants' experiences. So, the researcher is the data collector and the primary tool for analyzing and understanding the data.

The researcher selected important dialogues from scripts in the series and scenes from the series that supported to answer the research questions. To support the analysis, tables are used as tools to classify and organize the data and were analysed through coding, which helped to identify important points related to the research focus.

Coding data based on Erikson's Theory

- PD : Psychosocial Development
- J1 : James's data number 1

- A1 : Alyssa's data number 1
- JA1 : Data involving both James and Alyssa number 1
- E1 : Episode 1

Coding data based on Maslow's theory

- HN : Hierarchy of Needs
- J1 : James's data number 1
- A : Alyssa's data number 1
- JA1 : Data involving both James and Alyssa number 1
- E1 : Episode 1

### **Data collection Procedures**

The data collection technique in this study involved analyzing the dialogue script, watching scenes in the series, and understanding the series to get an overview of its contents.

### **Data analysis procedures**

The data were analyzed adapted Erikson's Psychosocial Development and referred to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theories to identify trauma affects James and Alyssa personality development and the factors influence them committed juvenile delinquency. Bronfenbrenner's bioecology theory was applied to understand how family, school, and community environments contribute to their delinquency. Relevant dialogues were categorized and interpreted to explore trauma, motivation behind their delinquent behavior.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Finding**

The findings are presented based on the two focus areas of this research:

#### **1. The effects of trauma on the personality development of James and Alyssa in the series The End of The F\*\*\*ing World season 1.**

James and Alyssa both experienced emotional trauma during childhood. Refers to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, trauma in early life can affect how a person grows, especially in forming identity and trust during adolescence.

##### **a. Difficulty Trusting Others as a Result of Childhood Trauma**

The effects of trauma on both James and Alyssa is emotional distrust. Due to the lack of emotional support and unstable family situations, they struggle to trust the people around them.

*Alyssa: " My mom used to be nice but then she divorce my dad."*  
(PD-A2E1-00:02:57)

Alyssa said how her mother changed after remarried with tony, her stepfather. The changed in her mother's behavior makes Alyssa feel emotionally unsafe. Her need for emotional connection is not met, so she grows up with doesn't easily trust people and defensive toward others.

*James : " She lives in Japan."*  
(PD-J7E1-00:09:12)

Alyssa asked James about a photo of his mother. James lies by saying that his mother lives in Japan, even though she is actually dead. This shows that James cannot trust others with the truth and chooses to protect himself emotionally with lied. James hides his pain, indicating mistrust developed from early trauma.

According to Erikson, the stage of Trust vs Mistrust happens in infancy, when children first learn whether they can feel safe and loved by the people around them. If these emotional need are not meet, the effects can continue and influence later stages of development. These early problem do not disappear but continue to shape their personality and behaviour. The family and community play a key role in supporting or failing their development.

#### **b. The Development of Inferiority Due to Lack of Emotional Support**

James grew up without emotional support from his father after his mother passed away. This lack of warmth and encouragement caused him to feel different and uncertain about himself. Instead of developing confidence, he started to believe he was not good enough, showing the early signs of inferiority shaped by trauma.

*James: " I was eight when realized I didn't have a sense of humor."*  
(PD-J2E1-00:00:43)

The flashback showing James as a child sitting at the dinner table with his father. The statement reveals that James sees himself as different or lacking. He becomes self-aware of not fitting in and begins to believe he is incapable of developing normal emotional skills like humor. This shows feelings of inferiority forming in his childhood.

This situation reflects that early trauma, especially emotional neglect in the family, does not only affect how children trust others, but also how they see themselves, leading to feelings of insecurity and inferiority in later development.

#### **c. Trauma Causes Confusion in Personality Growth**

James and Alyssa face confusion in building their identity, which is an important part of growing up. Instead of knowing who they are, they feel unsure and act in ways show emotional struggles. This shows that their trauma has affected the normal process of forming identity.

*James: " and I'm pretty sure I'm a psychopath."*  
( PD-J1E1-00:00:22)

James calls himself psychopath, which shows that he doesn't understand who he truly is. Instead of exploring his identity, he gives himself a negative label. This confusion is a key sign of identity crisis.

*Alyssa : “ What the fuck am I doing.”*  
(PD-A8E5-00:17:55)

She questions herself after doing something wrong or stealing underwear. This shows guilt and confusion, a sign that she doesn't know what kind of person she wants to be. She is lost in figuring out what is right or wrong.

Trauma in the form of emotional neglect and lack of guidance causes James and Alyssa to experience identity confusion. The failure of educational environment, including their family, school, and community to provide emotional support and moral direction contributes to this condition.

## **2. The factors influence James and Alyssa committed juvenile delinquency in the series The End of The F\*\*\*ing World season 1**

Refers to Maslow's theory people act based on their needs, like food, safety, love, and self-worth. If these needs are not fulfilled, especially during adolescence, they may act out in negative ways.

### **a. Lack of Physiological Needs**

Physiological needs are the first and most basic level in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. After running away from home James and Alyssa struggle to fulfill basic need, which influence their behaviour and choices.

*James and Alyssa: “ Did you bring money with you?”*  
(HN-JA3E2-0003:10)

Alyssa says this while they are in a restaurant and realize they have no money to pay. Although it is Alyssa who says it, this moment involves both characters working together. They eat, can't pay, and choose to run away.

James and Alyssa commit delinquent actions to meet their basic needs. This behavior happens because their physiological needs are not fulfilled in a healthy or safe way. Without support from the community environment, they try to survive on their own. This shows how unmet needs can influence young people to commit juvenile delinquency.

### **b. Lack of Safety Needs**

Based on Maslow's theory, safety is the second basic human need after physiological need. This includes both physical safety like protection from danger and emotional safety, such as feeling secure at home or in society.

*Alyssa: “Last week, he said he thought I need a bigger bra.”*  
(HN-A1E1-00:03:03)

Alyssa says this about her stepfather, Tony. This inappropriate comment is a form of emotional and sexual harassment. It shows that she feels unsafe in her own home. According to this, if a child cannot feel protected in their family, their development will be affected. This can push a teen like Alyssa to act out or run away to seek control or escape.

*James and Alyssa: "Is breaking and entering the best way of lying low?."*  
(HN-JA1E3-00:03:19)

Even though James who said this but they were doing it together. They broke into a house that was temporarily empty without permission. This shows they were looking for a safe place to hide, even if it meant doing something risky. It reflects their unmet safety needs, as they felt unsafe in the outside world.

*James: "I was there when she did it."*  
(HN-J4E5-00:03:48)

This line refers to James goes to the police, possibly to confess, but suddenly has a flashback of his mother's suicide. Instead of talking about the murder, he says this line. His mind brings up a traumatic memory linked to fear and emotional pain.

James and Alyssa do not feel safe, either in family or in the community. They are surrounded by fear, trauma, and lack of protection. This condition leads them to break rules, commit delinquent acts, and take control situation in dangerous ways.

### **c. Lack of Belongingness and Love needs**

People need love and a sense of belonging from their family, friends, or closed relationships. Where these emotional needs are not met, teenagers may feel lonely, unloved, and disconnected. This can lead them to act out or break rules in an effort to feel noticed, accepted, or supported.

*James: "I tended not to feel things."*  
(HN-J2E3-00:09:12)

James before meeting Alyssa, he had no emotional connections and didn't feel attached to anyone. This shows a lack of love and belonging, because he never formed strong bonds. The absence of emotional support may led him to became emotionally shut down.

*Alyssa: "You shouldn't just make people if you are going to abandon them."*  
(HN-A10E8-00:15:29)

Alyssa expresses anger and disappointment toward her father. This line shows deep emotional pain caused by being abandoned, which strongly affects her ability to trust and connect with others. Her words reflect deep emotional pain, she feels like mistake or someone who was never truly wanted.

James and Alyssa struggle with forming emotional connections due to painful family experiences. James begins to fulfil this need through his bond with Alyssa, while Alyssa continues to seek love and acceptance from her parents. These unmet emotional needs affect how they behave and make decisions. Their educational environment, especially family and community play a significant role in either failing or supporting their emotional development.

#### **d. Lack of Self-Esteem Needs**

In Maslow theory, self-esteem is an important needs that includes feeling confident, capable, and respected by others. When James don't receive support from his family or their environment, they may struggle with low self-worth. This can lead them act out in order to prove himself or to feel important.

*James: "Taught myself."*  
(HN-J1E3-00:05:29)

Alyssa asks how James learned cooking and he answers that he taught himself. This moment shows James trying to feel capable and independent. James had to learn things on his own because since his mother dead , his father can 't take care of him properly and gave him unhealthy food. This reflects his need esteem, desire him to feel respected and able to do things well. When the family fails support a child's growth, teens like James build their own confidence in unusual ways.

James tries to build his self-worth alone because no one supports him. This lack of support for his self-esteem becomes one of the reason behind his rebellious actions.

### **Discussion**

The findings reveal that trauma affects the personality development of the main characters James and Alyssa, in *The end of The F\*\*\*ing World season 1*. Referring to Erikson's theory which consists of eight psychosocial development stages but in this study only three stages are found relevant to James and Alyssa's character development, which are adapted into: difficulty trusting others as a result of childhood trauma (Trust vs Mistrust), developing of inferiority due lack to lack of emotional support (Industry vs Inferiority), and trauma causes confusion in personality growth (Identity vs Role confusion). The most dominant stage is trauma causes confusion in personality growth (Identity vs Role confusion). As seen in James's character. He called himself a psychopath and engages risky behaviour to feel something, which suggests he is unsure of who he really is. His struggle is shaped by the absence of emotional support from his family, which shows how a poor educational environment can worsen identity problems during adolescence.

The factors that influence James and Alyssa committed Juvenile Delinquency were analyzed using Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory that consists five levels of human needs but the findings show four levels of need are not fulfilled in both characters: lack of physiological needs (food and shelter), safety needs (emotional and physical security), belongingness and love needs (emotional connection), and self-esteem needs (confidence and respect). Those unmet needs lead them to commit acts such as running away from home, stealing, breaking into a house, threatening others, and accidental killing. Of these unmet needs, the most dominant is the lack of



belongingness and love needs, as reflects in Alyssa character. She expresses anger and disappointment toward her father after being abandoned and emotionally neglected by both parents. This make her feel unwanted and unloved, and her deep emotional pain supports to her rebellious actions. Her behaviour is shaped by a broken family environment, where the absence of parental bonds leaves her struggling to trust others and positive connections.

Compared to previous studies, this study build on previous studies about juvenile delinquency, which mostly analyzed novels and used sociological or psychoanalytic theories (Pohan,2020; Kusuma, 2022; Afangka & Purwarno, 2021, Rahayu & Aprilia, 2015). Those studies discussed the forms and cause of juvenile delinquency, they don't explored how unresolved trauma affects personality development and behaviour. Most of them used written texts with American cultural settings. Only one study by Febrianto (2022) examined the same series, but focused in a single episode and only discussed emotional detachment in one character.

This study offers a broader understanding of juvenile delinquency by combining the effects of trauma on identity with the role of unmet needs. It also supports to the study of literary works by using the full- season of a visual narrative. The findings highlight how the educational environment including family, school, and community influence adolescents' development and behavior. Among these, the family and community environments are shown to be the most influences, particularly when emotional needs are ignored or unmet. This study also has implication in English language education. By analyzing the script of the series, students can practice reading comprehension, and understand how characters are shaped by trauma. It helps students explore psychological aspects through dialogue and improve their critical reading. This activity can support literature-based learning in English classes.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that trauma experienced during childhood plays a major role in the personality development of James and Alyssa, as seen through three stages of Erikson's theory and the most dominant is trauma causes confusion in personality growth (Identity vs Role confusion). James and Alyssa struggle to understand themselves, feel emotionally unstable, and show confusion about their identities through rebellious and risky behaviour. Several acts of juvenile delinquency such as running away from home, stealing, and accidental killing are driven by unmet needs. In this study, accidental killing is not viewed as a planned crime but as a part of their psychological struggles.

Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, James and Alyssa lack of fulfilment in four areas and the most dominant is belongingness and love needs, as both characters suffer from emotional neglect. This study offers a new perspective by combining Erikson 's and Maslow's theories in analyzing a full- season audio visual narrative. It also highlights the lack of support from the educational environment, especially family and community are the most influence and plays a role in shaping James and Alyssa behaviour. This suggest that the environment around young people can either help or worsen their psychological struggles. In the context of English education, using a series script as literary material not only helps students build language skills but also encourages them to engage with real-life issues while developing their critical reading.

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