

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this chapter, the writer discusses more about the analysis of identity vs. identity confusion of Jesse in *Bridge to Terabithia* movie. The writer discusses and explains the factors that influence identity vs. identity confusion of Jesse. As the writer has explained earlier, the writer uses theory written by Marcia about identity status. Canadian developmental psychologist Marcia refined and extended Erikson's model by primarily focusing on adolescent development. There are four identity statuses explained by Marcia in *Development and Ego-Identity Status* (1966) and *Identity in Adolescence* (1980) which are four in this movie:

4.1. Identity Diffusion

Identity diffusion is the status in which the adolescent does not have a sense of having choices; he or she has not yet made (nor is attempting or willing to make) a commitment. In this stage, the teenagers have not considered their identity at all. They also have not set any goals in their lives. The life they live tends to be passive, and they obviously do not know where to go.

Identity diffusion in the movie happens before Jess meets Leslie in his life. In this stage of life, Jess does not have a sense of having choices, so he goes through life like a normal routine; the routine that can be boring. Jess has not had goal in his life. Jess does not know how long he will do something and why. What he knows is getting up early, going to school,

studying, and filling his spare time by drawing. Jess chooses to have fun with his world by drawing, one of his hobbies. Through drawing a picture, he can explore and express his imagination. It is true that Jess likes drawing, but he has no intention of becoming such a painter or an artist. He likes drawing because he can fill his spare time. The same occurrence also happens to Jess' hobby of running. Jess likes to race, and he is the fastest student in his school. He is not particularly keen of pursuing his passion as an athlete.



Figure 4.1 When Jess do his hobbies; racing and drawing
(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 09:15)

It can be inferred here that Jess at this stage does not have any purpose in his life. He is still confused about what he has to do, whether it is his duty or because he is already used to do it. Jess' attitudes are in accordance with Marcia (1980) who said that teens in this stage had not determined their life goals and did not consider their identity at all. They only do what they usually do. It is also means that they do not have commitment to do things seriously.

Jess' identity diffusion, where he does not know what to do, is worsen by his passive character. Jess seems not to have any spirit of doing anything to reach his goal but to go with the flow passively. The lazy face at his breakfast time shows he prefers to dwell silently and pays attention to the object in

front of his eyes. He chooses not to speak with his other sisters or with his mother.



Figure 4.2 Jess sits on the dining table, and he falls silent

(Bridge to Terabithia, 2007, 03:33)

Even when he takes a school bus with other students from his school, he does not want to interfere with other people's business. He prefers to sit alone near the glass window and see the outside road.



Figure 4.3 Jess always sits alone near the window on the bus

(Bridge to Terabithia, 2007, 05:42)

When in class he chooses to brood over, and he does not want to talk with any friends in his class. He prefers to be quiet and refuses to have any friends. In one occasion, Jess who is the fastest runner in his school is defeated by a new girl named Leslie. When Leslie approaches him to invite to befriend him, Jess refuses. Those attitudes show that Jess is a type of a boy who likes to be alone or is not easy to socialize with other people. He does

not want to deal with anyone and chooses to do everything by himself. Jess shows that he does not need a friend. As long as he can do it by himself, he will do it. Children of Jess's age usually hang out and play with other friends because teenage is the time the teenagers explore their surroundings and have as many friends as possible. However, Jess is different.



Figure 4.4 Jess loses his run race, and he refuses to get acquainted with Leslie

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 10:03)

Similar thing happens at home. When he arrives at home he goes straight into his bedroom and closes the curtain then he draws a picture as usual. He distances himself from the talk he considers less important. Even with May Belle, her younger sister who is one room with him, he rarely talks if it is not about a topic that is too important.

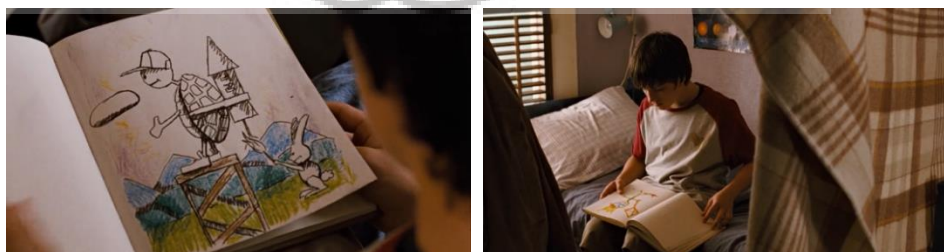


Figure 4.5 Jess on his bedroom and opens his drawing book

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 11:37)

Jess' isolating himself from others and going with the flow's kind of life prove that Jess is a passive character who has not had purpose in his life.

4.2. Identity Foreclosure

Identity foreclosure is the status in which the adolescent seems willing to commit to some relevant roles, values, or goals for the future. Adolescents in this stage have not experienced an identity crisis. They tend to conform to the expectations of others regarding their future (e. g. allowing a parent to determine a career direction). As such these individuals have not explored a range of options. In this second stage, teenagers do not actively try to determine what is considered important to them. They passively accept the identities given by people around like parents or teachers. Indirectly they do not question why they have to do such a thing nor do they consider any alternative decisions.

Jess experiences identity foreclosure almost at the same time with his experiencing identity diffusion. In the movie, Jess, as a passive character, has the tendency to conform the expectations of others in their lives since they have not had their own identity. In Jess' case, he tries to conform his parents' expectation. Identity foreclosure can be seen when Jess as the only son at home, always obey what is ordered by his parents, especially his father. At this stage, Jess has no choice but to obey and do what is ordered by his parents, no matter how difficult it is sometimes for him.



Figure 4.6 Jess is forced to obey his father's will

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 04:23)

One of the most interesting scenes about identity foreclosure is when the parents force Jess to wear pink shoes once belonged to his sister. In this movie, Jess has a running match that requires him to use sneakers. However, his shoes have been discarded by his mother because they are very worn out. As a change, his mother has prepared shoes that are in better condition than his previous one. Unfortunately, the substitute shoes his mother provides are women's shoes, his sister's old shoes.

In the beginning, Jess is a bit reluctant to wear his sister's shoes. His father who senses Jess' discomfort offers to buy him new sneakers. However, Jess' mother rejects the idea by stating that they cannot afford buying Jess new shoes because of their financial constraint. To ease the matter, the father exclaims, "Aren't all the shoes the same?" Since Jess as an obedient son, who always approves his parents' choice for him, no matter how reluctant he is, he agrees to wear the shoes.

Jess does not challenge his mother's idea to wear his sister's pink shoes, but he tries to cover the pink color of the shoe with a black marker. He knows

that he will become the target of bullying when his friends find out that he is wearing pink shoes, but he agrees with this parents' decision anyway.



Figure 4.7 Jess is repainting his sister's shoes with black marker

(Bridge to Terabithia, 2007, 04:54)

On the day he is wearing the pink shoes, is true that one of his friends finds out that he is wearing women's shoes. As a consequence, he gets bullied by his schoolmates, Scott Hoager and Gary Fulcher.



Figure 4.8 Jess gets bullied by his school friends because he is wearing girl's shoes

(Bridge to Terabithia, 2007, 06:42)

Jess is very embarrassed by the bullying, but he seems not to have other alternatives. It can be seen in the scene that Jess lets his friends make fun of him; he does not care what his friends say.

4.3. Identity Moratorium

Identity moratorium is the status in which the adolescent is currently in a crisis, exploring various commitments and is ready to make choices, but has not committed to these choices yet. Unconsciously they let their options open at this stage. Teenagers are in a "crisis" decision which encourages them to explore indirectly and experiment, but at this third stage, they have not made the final decision about what beliefs and values are most important to them. Thus they have not committed to a particular identity.

Identity moratorium happens in Jess's life after he meets Leslie. It is the time when Jess gets inspiration from Leslie to change his current life. In Marcia's identity theory, this stage is called a 'crisis' identity where a person leaves his or her comfort zone and prepares for other situation. Entering this stage Jess begins to open himself to receive new things in his life, Also, in this stage, Jess begins to decide although he is not ready to commit to the decision he makes. The proof that Jess' has experienced identity moratorium are discussed below.

Identity moratorium happens starting when Jesse meets Leslie in a run race. Leslie Burke beats Jess in the race. Knowing that fact, Jess feels quite surprise that a woman can defeat him because Jess has never been defeated by anyone before. At the end of the event, Jess is approached by Leslie who introduces herself to him. Jess refuses Leslie invitation and leaves Leslie alone. The scene shows that Jess is not ready to commit to have new friends in his life.

On their way home, when Jess and May Belle get off the bus, Leslie goes down too. Jess asks her, "Are you following me?" To which Leslie replies, "Oh no, I live over there". Jess finds out that Leslie is his new neighborhood.



Figure 4.9 When Leslie asks Jess about his idea of having fun

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 18:49)

The conversation between Jess and Leslie on their way home is the time when Jess starts to have identity crisis. When Leslie asks Jess, "What is your idea of having fun?" Then Jess answers, "I do not know." Leslie asks again, "Well, you want to do something?" Then Jess replies that he does not know for the second time. Although twice Jess answers that he does not know what he is and what he knows, Leslie's question instigates Jess to think about his life and his choice. So one day when they come home from school, and Leslie invites Jess to run from the end of the field near her home to the forest, Jess follows Leslie. It is the forest which becomes central to Jess' life later on. Jess and Leslie finally call the forest, Terabithia.



Figure 4.10 Jess begin to smile little bit and opens himself with something new

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 21:14)

While they arrive at the forest, Jess also begins to talk with her. He begins to open up himself with other people. He becomes a character which can accept the presence of others. Gradually Jess's life starts to change. He can smile and tries to open himself to new friend. In this step, Jess begins to enter or explore new stages in his life and starts to make new decisions in his life in that he decides not to confine himself and close himself to any association. What happens to Jess reflects Marcia's theory of identity moratorium when an adolescent starts exploring some commitments as they are ready to make choices, but they have not made choices. Besides, Kendra (2018) states that children who are not allowed to explore and test out different identities might be left out.



Figure 4.11 Leslie tries to convince Jess about kingdom and opens his mind

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 33:16)

In Jess' identity moratorium stage, the role of Leslie, his new friend, is very essential. Leslie can be said as the catalyst of changes happens to Jess. Leslie tries to open up Jesse's mind and makes him try to imagine things never been thought by Jess before. Leslie tells Jess that bees in Terabithia are not common bees. All of them are small troops or small warriors' in large numbers which are ready to help Jess and Leslie to defeat the Dark Master, the darkness who has mastered Terabithia all this time. Upon hearing this, initially, Jess is a little confuse as in reality it is impossible for bees to become warriors which defeat the dark master in Terabithia. Jess thinks what Leslie talks about is nonsense. It is a game played by Leslie. Jess does not understand what Leslie means and tries to tell Leslie that he does not understand what is explained.



Figure 4.12 Jess does not know what Leslie is talking about

(Bridge to Terabithia, 2007, 26:09)

Leslie convinces Jess that what she explains is not a game, but it is for real. Leslie says that they should be able to conquer the Dark Master in Terabithia, with the help of the warriors', the bee crowds. Eventually, Leslie manages to convince Jess to get involve in her imagination.



Figure 4.13 Jess and Leslie repair the tree house in Terabithia

(Bridge to Terabithia, 2007, 28:17)

After school, they head straight to Terabithia and bring the materials needed to repair the tree house. Both of them work together to make the condition of the tree house decent enough to be meeting place. Jess looks happy during the process because he can do activities he has never done before. Jess has begun to understand what he has to do even though sometimes he is still hesitant or uncertain.



Figure 4.14 Jess smiles for the first time in the class

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 28:40)

Usually, Jess is pensive and refuses to get involved in any activities. However, Leslie and all their new activities changes Jess' personality. For example, Jess looks all smiles during music lessons although he does not sing or play any musical instruments. In short, after knowing Leslie, Jess begins to open up himself to accept friendships from other people. He begins to change himself step by step and tries to open something new and positive in him.



Figure 4.15 When Janice accuses Jess

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 29:39)

As explained earlier, identity moratorium is, in a way, a transitional stage when an adolescent changes but has not confirmed the identity. Therefore, although Jess has changed to become more open and more acceptable, he still keeps his old self. Like when Jess is blamed by his bullying friend, Janice Avery, he still does not try to defend himself. He does not tell Avery that he

is not the one who tripped her on purpose. Jess accepts the charges made by Janice Avery. Then, when the school bus driver asks Jess to get off the bus, Jess walks home. Up to this point, it can be seen that still has not had a firm identity. His identity is a mix between his old self and his new self.

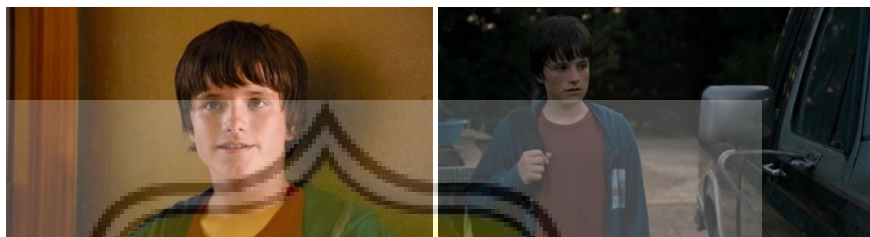


Figure 4.16 The difference in Jesse's face at Leslie's house and at his house

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 49:00-50:00)

Another example of Jess' old self can be seen in this scene, when Jess meets Leslie's father, Bill Burke. Jess is told to come to Leslie's house and help Leslie's parents to paint the wall. There, Jess sees that Leslie family looks so different from his family. While Leslie's father is very close with her, Jess's father is distant. When Jess comes back home and sees his father, instantly his face turn grim. Jess is back to be his old self who is unloved by his father.

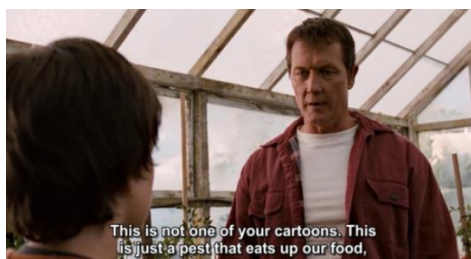


Figure 4.17 Jess' father tells that he should not think like a cartoons

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 39:44)

Identity moratorium stage is not only mix between one's old self and one's new self, but also a stage where an adolescent need to choose their firm identity. Confirming identity is not an easy deal for the adolescent-like what happens to Jess. In one of the scene, Jess sees that there are fruit-eating pests in his house in green house that tries to eat the plants. Jess releases the animals and tells the animal that they shall never return to green house again. When his father finds out about this, Jess tries to explain what has happened. Instead of understanding him, his father scolds him. He tells Jess not to think like fairy tales but to think rationally. His father says that animals do not understand what the human says. His father tells not to repeat that ridiculous thing. In here, Jess's position is difficult. In one side, he should listen his father's words not to think like a fairy tale, but in the other side, he remembers Leslie is telling him to have an open mind and try to think with his imagination.

As they transition from childhood to adulthood, teens may begin to feel confused or insecure about themselves and how they fit into society. Teen behavior often seems unpredictable and impulsive, but all of this is part of the process of finding a sense of personal identity. Parents and family members continue to exert an influence on how teens feel about themselves, but outside forces also become particularly important during this time. Friends, social groups, schoolmates, societal trends, and even popular culture all play a role in shaping and forming an identity (Kendra, 2018). As can be seen in the

discussion, Jess' parents still direct him to do things, while at the same time Leslie has already influenced Jess' life.

4.4. (The Second) Identity Diffusion



Figure 4.18 Jess looks Leslie's house when he wants to go into art museum with his music teacher
(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 01:07:07)

According to Marcia (1966), stage one until stage four do not flow smoothly, but sometimes it can go back to the stage one again. In the case of Jess, he had passed stage one through three. Unfortunately, because of Leslie's death, everything changed, so he had to go back to the first stage. The day changes and time passes. In the morning Jess is called by his music teacher, Ms. Edmunds, and Jess is invited by his teacher, to the art museum. Unlike usual who invites Leslie, on that day he does not go with Leslie. When his teacher asks Jess "do you forget something?" Jess says no (while looking Leslie's house). He does not know what he should do and sometimes he is still under the influence of other people's talk. Jess does not realize if that is the last chance in his life to meet Leslie. Unpredictable with his habit, he always takes Leslie wherever he goes, but not this time.



Figure 4.19 Jesse's father tells that Leslie's dead

(Bridge to Terabithia, 2007, 01:10:26)

While Jesse returns home all of his family gathered and Jess's mother, Mary Aarons, gets up from the couch and runs to hug Jess. While crying, Jess is asked where Jess had been this morning. He is shocked and says in this morning he had already licensed with his mother if he went to the museum art with his music teacher Ms. Edmunds. However, his sister, Brenda, let slip and say: they thought you were dead! Jess is confused and asks exactly what has happened. His father tries to explain that Leslie had died this morning when she wants to swing over with the rope by the forest there. Jess gets shock, and he does not believe, he says, "You are all lying! It cannot happen. It is not a rope like you talk about. You are lying!" Jess runs out of his house to Terabithia, and it is true that the rope has broken up. Jess also sees many police cars at Leslie's house that day. Jess depresses and confines himself in his room. He is still not believed that his friend, Leslie, left him alone.



Figure 4.20 Jesse hits his friend because he mocks Jess

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 01:15:27)

The death of Leslie changes everything. In Marcia's theory, identity moratorium is usually followed by identity achievement. However, because of Leslie's death, Jess' process does not go straight to identity achievement. Instead, he undergoes a sort of "identity crisis." He who is a passive and a loner person becomes emotional and temperamental person.



Figure 4.21 Jess cries because Leslie abandons him

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 01:17:16)

In his school too, Jess becomes an emotional person. Jess feels sad. Indeed when his friend punch him which he usually does not respond them, but now it is different. He hits his friend harder. He vents his anger and guilt with rude actions. As we can be seen in the picture above, Jess mourns the death of Leslie which a person who accompany Jess and tries to make Jess

feels more comfortable. Leslie tries to awaken the passion in Jess's and makes Jess more active so he can receive the circumstances around him. Unfortunately, Leslie has already gone. Jess becomes someone who vents his emotions to the people around him.



Figure 4.22 May Belle is pushed by Jess because she follows him
(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 01:19:45)

Jess also pushes her sister to the ground because she follows Jess into the kingdom without Jess's knowledge. Without realizing it, Jess becomes angry and cannot control his emotions well. He tries to cover up his sadness by releasing it to the people around him.

4.5. Identity Achievement

Identity achievement is the status in which adolescence has gone through an identity crisis and has made a commitment to a sense of identity (i.e., certain role or value) that he or she has chosen. This is the final stage in the identity status of teenagers according to Marcia (Identity in Adolescence, 1980). Teenagers have achieved their identity by actively exploring their lives and having a strong commitment. At this stage, teenagers have decided what goals and values are most important to them. In this stage also teenagers can choose which priorities are more important for them to do first. They will

experiment with many different values. They must be able to think positively and be confident in themselves.

In this last status of Marcia's, Jess has reached his final point, he has already through critical times in his life, and for example when he was left by Leslie forever. Jess had passed everything he had been through during his life. Jess has experienced with many different values, for example when he begins to accept the fact that he no longer blames himself for the consequences of not asking Leslie to go with him to the museum but instead he tries to get up and fight all his guilt by repairing the Terabithia and changing the conditions in Terabithia more better, such as replacing the existing rope in the river for the route to Terabithia with a wooden bridge that he built himself.

Identity achievement happens when Jess's father catches and hugs Jess in the forest when he is crying. Jess blames himself by saying to his father, "This is my fault for not taking her to the museum at that time. If at that time I invited her, she will not go to this forest alone and die like now". Hearing this his father tries to tell him that is not his fault and his father says that so Leslie can still be remembered and live in Jess's heart.



Figure 4.23 His father hugs to calm Jesse

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 01:22:19)

Remember those times when Leslie had introduced Jess about Terabithia kingdom, his father hugs and kisses his son's forehead to support Jess not to continue to be sad about Leslie's death.



Figure 4.24 When Jess invites May Belle to become a princess in Terabithia

(*Bridge to Terabithia*, 2007, 01:28:16)

From that moment Jess begins to rise from his sadness, and he chooses to become a person who is stronger and insoluble in continuous sadness. He also invited May Belle to become a new princess in the kingdom of Terabithia. It shows that Jess can through his “identity crisis” alone without Leslie’s help. He tries to arise from his sadness because Leslie’s death. The goal in his life is when Jess invites his sister, May Belle, become a new princess in Terabithia replace Leslie.