

THE PERSONALITY DYNAMIC OF JOHN MICHAELSON

3.1 John Michaelson's Characterization

John Michaelson is the main male characters in *Muallaf*. His father is a merchant seaman and his mother is a practice nurse. His parents' marriage was unhappy. At the age of three, his parents' marriage was falling apart. His father was often angry to his mother because of many things, therefore his mother was always timid. Finally, John's parents got divorced and then John and his mother live with John's grandparents for a while. John's father re-married with another

woman, Sara. At the age of seven, John's mother re-married with another man named Mike. Based on the story in the novel *Muallaf* by John Michaelson, the writer found some characterization that belongs to John. The first, characterization before John becomes a *Muallaf* is disbelief. The second, characterization after John becomes a *Muallaf* such as belief in God. The last, John's characterization which has contribution to shape him as a *Muallaf* and compatible with Islamic teaching those are: a dutiful man, an honest man, and a responsible man.

3.1.1 John Michaelson's Characterization before Becomes a *Muallaf*

3.1.1.1 Disbelief

Disbelief, as stated in [oxforddictionaries.com](https://www.oxforddictionaries.com/), inability or refusal to accept that something is true or real. In the other word, disbelief is lack of faith. In the story, John is a disbelief in God. He is an agnostic.

'From what I can see, it encourages a lot of other things too. Like acts of terrorism and oppression of women and intolerance of other people's beliefs.'

'This is not from God, this is from interpretation.'

'Well, why would He reveal a book that was so ambiguous?'

'It is not for me to question.'

'How convenient.' (Michaelson 226)

From the question above, John disbelief with The Holy Quran what Karim tells to John. John denies the truth. John considers that The Holy Quran is a book full of ambiguity.

Another evidence when George asks John about his belief. “‘*You were an atheist?*’ ‘*Probably more of an agnostic.*’” (Michaelson 294). John is an agnostic which is lack of claim to knowledge about the possible existence of god and he does not think that there is not enough evidence to prove or disprove God’s existence.

Therefore, John disbelief in God and he is an agnostic who claims to have no knowledge of whether or not a god exist.

3.1.2 John Michaelson's Characterization after Becomes a *Muallaf*

3.1.2.1 Belief

Abdul Rashid says that belief is the acceptance of something as true on other grounds than personal observation and experience. A belief may be secular or spiritual in the other words, religious in nature. In religious terms, belief or conviction is called faith. It is the belief of a person that moulds his or her thinking that, in turn, motivates the behavior in a certain way. The Islamic view is that the human being, to be at peace with himself and with the rest of creation, must know about his Creator, the purpose of his creation and his relationship with the Creator as well as with His creation. However, these matters are outside direct human observation. Similarly, there are realities beyond the reality of our world such as life after death whose metaphysical nature is impossible to conceive.

In the story, John starts to belief in God. John converts his belief from an agnostic to be a Muslim. John tells his conversion to his friend, George.

'Well, conversion suggest that I went from one religion to another. But really, I just went from not believing to believing.'
'What changed your mind? But why Islam?'
'Well, first there was The Holy Quran. People talk about Islam as being something ancient and evil, but you'd be surprised at how egalitarian it is.' (Michaelson 294)

It can be concluded that John belief in God and John convert his belief be a Muslim because he interests in Islam and he believe that everything that happens in this life is governed by God.

3.1.3 John's characterization which has contribution to shape John as a *Muallaf*

According to Blass, obedient is taking orders from others. Obedient occur in any form, as long as the individual demonstrates obedient behavior toward something or someone. For example adherence to social norms (957).

At the age of eleven, I was in my final year at junior school. I sat and passed my exams and was accepted into the only grammar school in town, but my father wanted me to have a private education. This would cost a lot of money and would take me away from my mother, and she tried to object but only succeeded in making my father angry. He said he would take her to court to get custody, and in the end it was decided that I would stay with him and Sara. (Michaelson 10)

From the evidence above, it can be seen that John is an obedience man. He obeys everything what his parent ask for although John feels unhappy and hurts.

John's obedience can also be seen when he works in the dockyard. Bert Baxter is John's mentor, he obeys everything what his mentor ask for.

'We're not working on anything until you go to the stores.'

'For what? Some fool's bloody errand?'

'Well, it's certainly an errand.' His cocked his head to one side. 'But only time will tell us whether you're fool or not.'

I left the workshop with a list of things he wanted. Hacksaw blades, a set of small files, some wire brushes, and several other items, the yard covered more than five miles of waterfront, and you could easily get lost in its maze of warehouse and workshops and administration buildings. I followed his directions, and ten minutes later I was at my destination. ' (Michaelson 57)

From the evidence above, it can be seen that John obeys everything which has been ordered and he does not refuse. He never leave his job to go back home before his job has done.

Another evidence of his obedience when his father asked him to work at sea that required the worker not consuming drugs.

'How would you feel about working at sea?'

'I'd be happy to give it a try.'

'Let me put out some feelers then.' He kicked a loose stone into the water. 'But be aware that they test for a drugs, so if you're on anything, you'd better get off it pronto.'" (Michaelson 102)

"I looked at myself in the bathroom mirror, and my eyes were shining and my skin was smooth and clear. And whether it was due to stopping the marijuana or being in contact with my father again, I was feeling more energized and optimistic than I had for many years. The only spanner in the work was the guilt I felt for walking out on Amy and y son. (Michaelson 105)

The evidences above shows when his father asks him to stop consuming drugs. Then he stops to consume drugs and he feels better.

It can be concluded that John is an obedient man and he will do everything that everyone asks to him which has an advantage for himself and makes him better.

Other fact that shows John's obedience is when Dave gave him books and asked him to read them.

I told her about Dave and how he had given me a parcel of books which he said I absolutely had to read. And how I had done as he asked, and how my appetite was now whetted, and how it felt like my mind was waking up after many years of slumber. (Michaelson 174)

From the evidence above John did what Dave asked him to read the books. John's knowledge became wider after he read many books and he became open minded.

One day, the company run into layoff where John works as mechanic, then John is laid off by the company. Therefore, the company will pay for a year's retraining as part of the redundancy package. During John studies in the university, he does not only study but also he works in part-time at ACE as English teacher to foreign students who come across during their summer holidays. Sometimes, John works as a mail sorter, an insurance salesman, and a painter and decorator which those jobs are no employment befitting his degree. One day, John goes to job center because he gets some job offers. Arriving in Temp Power, the job center, he meets with Kathryn Daniels who also gets some job offers. In Temp Power, they have to fill the form, then take a placement test.

Finally, John and Kathryn get the job as an English teacher in the same place in Indonesia. They live in Indonesia and they should follow the rules in accordance with Indonesian culture which Indonesia has totally different culture from western culture. At the first time he comes to Indonesia, he stays with Kathryn. John does not know that in Indonesia, a couple is forbidden to live in the same house if they do not have official relationship such as husband and wife. After John gets some information from Nurul about Indonesian's culture which is most of them are Muslim, as a Muslim who obeys the command of Islam that a couple is forbidden to live in a house if they do not have official relationship such as husband and wife.

As an obedient man, John obeys the rules and follows Indonesian culture and the law. He separates with Kathryn. He moved into another house.

Eight days later, I was in the car with Nurul and the driver Yuda. We were heading for a housing area on the outskirts of the town, where one of the previous teachers had been staying. Since Kathryn and I were no longer able to live together peaceably, the school had to find new accommodation for one of us. And it was decided that I would move out here and would commute into town each morning by of an ojek. (Michaelson 254)

From the quotation of John's obedience above that John obeys the rules in Indonesia. John separated with Kathryn and the school had to find new accommodation for him.

It can be concluded that John is an obedient man. He obeys the rules with purity heart. He relents and never dispute. John shows obedient behavior towards something or someone.

Jaya. They are talking about Islam. This conversation starts by Jaya asks to John.

'For sure.' I look a bite of my braised tripe. 'It has a pretty bad reputation in the west.'

'Well, yeah. But considering a fifth of the world is Muslim, there doesn't seem to be a whole lot of terrorism. Our western media just rattles on about it, as if Islam is unimaginably evil.'

I certainly didn't. The past few weeks had really opened my eyes and had confirmed me in my suspicions that the western public was once again being misled. And I felt deeply embarrassed that I hadn't read The Holy Qur'an sooner and that I had assumed it was just some irrelevant text which didn't have any place in the modern world. In fact, it was a relevant today, if not more so, as when it had originally been revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. (Michaelson 263)

In Islam, honest is the most important trait. Honest is very recommended to own by every Rosulullah SAW followers. This is in accordance with Allah commands in The Holy Qur'an surah Al-Anfal verse: 27 Allah says, "O you who have believed, do not betray Allah and Messenger or betray your trusts while you know [the consequence]." Honesty can lead to goodness. Someone who always be honest then he is called *shiddiq* (people who always be honest). Besides, honesty able to provide peace of mind. (definisiahli.com/pengertian-jujur).

'It's an English translation.' (Michaelson 260-261)

Finally, his interest made him want to become a *Muallaf*. He vows to become a Muslim in the Mosque in front of some people as witness. Bapak Haji Sulaeman asks a question to John before he vows.

[illegible]

Finally, he decides to become a Muslim.

3.1.3.3 Responsible

John is a responsible man. It can be seen in the story that he is a responsible man. First, he decides to live with Amy in the apartment, Waterloo, he works hard to fulfill their daily needs and pays their apartments rent even though they are not married.

Based on the quotation above, as a sense of responsibility on his decision which he takes for lived with Amy, John is willing to work hard to suffice their need. John works hard to meet their daily needs and apartments rent payment. He

works in earnest with voluntary, dare to bear all the risks and be responsible for the decision he has taken.

Another evidence of John's responsibility, when John gets a job in Indonesia. John lives in Indonesia that the majority of the residents are Muslim. Over time, he has grown accustomed to the habits of the Muslims around him until he get guidance or *Hidayah* to become a *Muallaf*. As his accountability has decided to become a *Muallaf*, he carries out what Allah has commanded Muslims, such as declare by reciting the *shahadah*, reciting The Holy Quran, praying five times, and fasting.

The main requirement be a Muslim is *shahadah* and do other requirements. Based on the definition of responsibility that person's ability to carry out his obligations, John carries out his obligation to *shahadah* when he decide become a *Muallaf* and all of the rules in Islam. First, he declared by reciting the *shahadah* with Mr. Sulaeman who guided him to recite the *shahadah* well.

'Say after me,' He took my hand. 'Ash hadu anlaa ilaaha illallahu, wa ash hadu anna Muhammadar-rasulullah.'

I repeated the shahadah.

'Again.'

'Ash hadu anlaa ilaaha illallahu, wa ash hadu anna Muhammadar-rasulullah. (Michaelson 267)

From the quotations above, it can be seen that John is guided by Mr. Sulaeman to recite the *shahadah* well until his pronunciation is steady and eloquent in the presence of some witnesses.

Besides reciting *shahadah*, one of the requirement to be a Muslim is to learn about five pillars of Islam and do it. Then John learns about Islam gradually and Mr. Sulaeman guides him. Mr. Sulaeman tells him that he should come to Mosque each morning to pray *fajr*. “...*Pak Sulaeman told me to come the mosque each morning for Subuh and instruction, and we all shook hands and went our separate ways.*” (Michaelson 268)

...

'Actually, I'm going with Pak Laeman.'

...

The Mosque was busy, and I changed out of my work clothes in the little room tucked just behind the mimbar. A space in the second row, and he shook my hand and kissed my cheeks just like a long-lost brother. And a brother I was among many, and we prayed deep into the night, the fans turning lazy circles overhead, the lights down low, and our hearts ablaze with the love of God. (Michaelson 295 - 296)

The evidence above shows John's responsibility as a Muslim to fast and pray *tarrawih* during Ramadhan.

From those discussion above, the writer finds some characterizations of John, they are dutiful, honest, and responsible. The first, John is a dutiful man. He will do everything that everyone asked him as long as it is beneficial for himself and makes him better. John obeys with purity heart. He relents and never dispute. The second, John is an honest man. He always tells the truth and as the fact. The last, John is a responsible man. John decides to live with Amy and he is willing to work hard to suffice their need. John works hard to fulfill the daily needs and pays the apartments rent as a sense of responsibility of the decision he has taken. When he becomes a Muslim, he carries out what Allah has commanded Muslims, such as reciting *shahadah*, praying, and fasting.

3.2 The Factors that Influence John Becomes a *Muallaf*

John went to Indonesia because he got a job as a teacher there. He went to Indonesia with Kathryn as his partner job in Indonesia. At the first time, John is unusual with the culture and habits of Indonesian society. As time goes by, John is

getting familiar with Indonesian's habit including the people around him who are predominantly Muslim. Eventually, John starts to like Muslims' habits and he gets a guidance to become a Muslim.

In this section, the writer finds some of the factors that influence John becomes a *Muallaf*. There are three factors, they are (1) Islam attracts John; (2) Muslims in Indonesia: John's neighbors and John's partner.

3.2.1 Islam attracts John

The first factor is Islam attracts John through his friend Karim. He often talks and discusses about Islam with Karim. Karim is his French-Algerian's friend in the university and he is a Muslim. John talks with Karim before he went to Indonesia. In their conversation, Karim asked some questions to John and Karim gives him enlightenment with Islamic doctrines in in The Holy Qur'an.

'I don't know why you drink?'

'...To drink seems an expensive way for losing your dignity.'

'Anyway, there's no point trying to persuade me not to.'

'I have a duty to do so. The Holy Quran encourages us to speak for what is right.'

'From what I can see, it encourages a lot of other things too. Like acts of terrorism and oppression of women and intolerance of other people's beliefs.'

'This is not from God, this is from interpretation.'

'Well, why would He reveal a book that was so ambiguous?'

'It's not for me to question.'

‘... some parts of The Holy Quran have the ambiguity, so it is not a big surprise for any serious Muslim to know this. But the most important parts are very clear, and the parts that are not so clear are not the most important.’

'He had reminded everyone of the Prophet Muhammad's words, that a person should be free to enter Islam without obstacle or prejudice, and I was grateful for such a kindly intervention.'
(Michaelson 271)

From the evidence above, John is grateful because the kindness intervention of Islam to everyone who will become a Muslim without being suspected.

It can be concluded that those information which he gets about Islam is the factor that influence John to become a *Muallaf*. Islam attracts John to convert Islam. For John, Islam is an honorable religion.

3.2.2 Muslims in Indonesia

3.2.2.1 John's Neighbor

In Indonesia, John lives in West Java. Most of John's neighbor are Muslim and his place is near Mosque. He sees that his neighbor's life is peaceful and neat. His neighbors are enthusiast with new people who live there even though they are non-Muslim people. In his recognition, although he often visits many beautiful places in several countries, he loves Indonesia better.

I was still there half an hour later, and some of my neighbors were coming back from the mosque, and they greeted me with warmth and enthusiasm. (Michaelson 259)

... That most of the Muslim living around me led such clean and peaceful lives that I often felt unworthy in their presence?
(Michaelson 266)

Based on the quotation above, John feels that Muslims in Indonesia are enthusiast and clean. For him, Muslims in Indonesia have tolerance with non-Muslim. It makes John realizes that his life is meaningless all along, live in

obscurity which is most of his activities is spending time for drunkenness, doing free sex, and consuming drug in the past life.

Besides, John is increasingly fond of his life as a Muslim. John feels comfortable to live with the Muslim society around him. John said that to Jaya when he met with him.

'You're looking so happy today.'

'Well, it's the weekend.'

'Did you study at the Mosque in this morning?'

'Of course.'

‘ ...

'Actually its nice there, peaceful and friendly with all my neighbours.' I called the waiter over and gave him our order form. 'They've made me feel so welcome.' (Michaelson 271)

Based on the quotation above, John feels that Muslim society around him are peaceful, friendly, and he feels so welcomed by the society around him. It makes him feel at home in Indonesia.

Another factor that influence John to become *Muallaf* is he likes with a Muslim woman who she is an Indonesian. She is Nurul, John's Indonesian counterpart in the course institute. John ever said it to Nurul about his feeling.

... Whenever I was far away, I wanted to be back home, and whenever I was back home, I wanted to be far away again. And only since coming to Indonesia had that feeling finally started to diminish.

'You think you will stay here when your contract ends?'

'You've got so much experiences.'

‘And?’

'You've been to so many places.'

'None of which had you in them.' I reached across and touched the silken skin where her jaw became the side of her neck. 'Didn't I just say how much I like it here?'

'I guess so.' (Michaelson 290 - 291)

From the evidence above, John has been accustomed and fond by living in Indonesia including toward Indonesian Muslim people, especially Nurul. Even though John has already visited many countries, he prefer to live in Indonesia and he will live in Indonesia although his contract had been end in the institute course.

From those the evidences above, John very happy and so in love with Indonesian Muslim people. He is happy because Indonesian people included Muslims in Indonesia is very kind and tolerant. They are so welcome to John. Besides, for him, Indonesian Muslim people live is neatly, friendly and peacefully. He had plan to live in Indonesia and he wants to marry a Muslim woman

3.2.2.2 John's partner

Another effect that influence John to become a *Muallaf*, he wants to marry Nurul, an Indonesian woman and a Muslim. In Islam, a Muslim should marry with a Muslim. In The Holy Quran surah Al-Baqarah verse: 221 Allah says, “And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry polytheistic men [to your women] until they believe. And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you. Those invite [you] to the fire, but Allah invites to Paradise and to forgiveness, by His permission. And He makes clear His verses to the people that perhaps they may remember.”

According to Muhammad Ali Ash-Shabuni, Do not wed your women to mushrik men unless they believe to Allah and His Prophet; a slave man who believes is better than a free man who does not, even though he may be very pleasing you. These mushrik people invite you to the fire while Allah by His grace invites you to the Garden and His pardon, and He makes His revelations plain to the people so that they should learn a lesson and follow the admonition (287).

At the first time before John became a Muslim, he is an Agnostic since childhood. After John comes to Indonesia which the majority of the society is Islam, John has been interest with Islam after a few months he lived in Indonesia, and then he decided to become a Muslim. In Indonesia he meets Nurul who is his Indonesian counterpart and she is an Indonesian Muslim woman.

We were greeted at Soekarno-Hatta airport by a woman in her late twenties named Nurul.” (Michaelson 235)

“From time to time, I spoke with Nurul about the school and the town and the details of our contracts. She told me that she would be our liaison and would help us with anything we needed, and she also touched on the local culture and explained what we shouldn’t do with regards to politeness. (Michaelson 236)

From quotation above, at the first time, John meets Nurul in Soekarno-Hatta airport, Indonesia. In their conversation, Nurul said that she would help John and Kathryn with anything they need and Nurul would be their liaison.

John has known that Nurul is a Muslim, when John is looking for Nurul at office and he has seen Nurul was praying. John saw Nurul was kneeling on the prayer mat.

She wasn't at the reception desk, and I noticed that one of the office doors was ajar, so I went across and opened it to see if she was inside. And I got quite a surprise, for she was kneeling on a prayer mat in a soft white robe with a string of beads in her hand. She looked so serene there, an ivory statue, and before I could back away, her eyes snapped open. (Michaelson 240)

Based on the evidence above that at the first time John is quite surprised that noticed Nurul when she is praying and kneeling on the prayer mat. That is the symbol of a Muslim when they are praying. John feels calm during see Nurul praying.

Another evidence that John falls in love with Nurul, when John feels calm every he sees Nurul and he is nearby Nurul. It is told in the novel how his feelings for Nurul.

I texted Nurul again and told her we would meet her at the doctor's surgery, then we climbed onto my motorcycle and headed into town. The streets were busy, and the sun was high in the sky, and George held on to me far too tightly, and I was glad when we had finally arrived and I was free from his sweaty grasp. And I was gladder still to see Nurul, her gentle smile and the graceful wave of her hand as she greeted us and ushered us inside. (Michaelson 273-274)

Based on the evidence above, it shows that how John feelings to Nurul at the first time. In worry condition at the doctor, Nurul come in front of John with smiling and he loves to see her smile. For John, Nurul has gentle smile and make him feels calm and glad.

The more days, the more visible that John fell in love with Nurul. Besides John respects Nurul, he also protect Nurul from anything bad things which on her, include George saying about bad thing to Nurul.

'Nurul is not one of Muslim KTP, right?'

'Definitely not, she's an adjective through and through.'

'It's a pity really.'

'What do you mean?'

'Well, you know. . .' He made a gesture like he was fondling her breasts. *'No red-blooded male would say no to a bit of that.'*

'Dear me, George, talk about lowering the tone.'

‘ ...

'Oh sorry.' He laughed. 'I've gone and made you blush.'

I wasn't embarrassed in the slightest, I was offended. Nurul was one of the most respectable women on the planet, and to see George salivating over her made my stomach twist. I spent much of the afternoon unsettled and only started feeling better when Maghrib came and it was time for breaking fast. (Michaelson 295-296)

From the quotation above John shows his feeling to Nurul and he much respect of her. As if John does not accept if Nurul is treated by George like that. For John, Nurul is the best woman ever in this world and she is a respectable woman who does not deserve to be treated like that.

The time of marriage has come. John married with Nurul in Indonesia. They had been married in an Islamic. This is one of the factor that influence John become a Muslim.

'I accept her hand in marriage, Nurul Dwi Halimah, daughter of Bapak Budiarmo, with the dowry mentioned above in legal tender.'

'Bismillah hir-Rahman-nir-Rahim.' The religious officer let go of my hand and issued forth an elegant stream of Arabic. 'Ash hadu anlaa ilaaha illallaahu, wa ash hadu anna Muhammadar-rasulullah...'

I looked across at Nurul, her eyes so warm and bright and lively, and a wave of elation came crashing over me. Along with becoming a Muslim, this was the finest day of my life, a chance to swear before God that I would be her devoted husband and her comforter and protector forever more. And I knew she felt exactly

the same, and when we had finished signing our marriage books, I took her by the hand and led her away from the group.
(Michaelson 306)

From the quotation above, marrying Muslim women is one of the factor that influenced John to become a Muslim. He fall in love with Nurul who an Indonesian Muslim woman. Indirectly, John gradually respected, cared, and cherished Nurul. At last, John marry with Nurul.

From those the evidences above, the writer find three factors that influences John becomes a *Muallaf*. The first, John Interests about Islam's teaching. The second, Indonesian Muslim People. John feels comfortable live with the Muslim society around him. The last, John married with an Indonesian Woman, Nurul.

3.3 The effects to John's personality after he becomes *Muallaf*

As has been discussed in the previous chapter that dynamic personality is every person's personality which is divided into three agencies, they are id, ego, and superego. The id, ego and superego are not persons, places or physical things, they are the names given to certain motivational forces these agencies has its own highly specific role in maintaining normal personality functioning (Hall 22).

Related to this study, the dynamic personality of the main character can be seen from the discussions below.

Before John converts to Islam, he did some deviant deeds such as John broke the rules in the school, he consumed drugs, and he became a heavy drunkard.

Since John wants to escape from his bad experiences, such as his parent divorce, betrayal, and inequity in his life, he starts to consume marijuana and LSD, even he becomes an addict and a seller of drugs. He becomes an addict of beer and cigarette because he wants to fulfill his desires and make him forget all of unpleasant things of his life. Therefore, John keeps continue to smoke and drunk until he got dehydration and an infection in his bladder.

I lit another cigarette and drank another beer and repeated the cycle until the bar was almost empty and it was almost three in the morning. Then I stumbled to my cabin and fell asleep with all my clothes on. And my body was so dehydrated from the journey and from the alcohol that an infection was slowly taking hold of my bladder. (Michaelson 139)

[illegible]

John realizes that all his bad deeds are harming himself. He is regretting his bad deeds and he begins to repair himself gradually through many things, such as stop consuming drug, smoking, and drinking alcohol.

I looked at myself in the bathroom mirror, and my eyes were shining and my skin was smooth and clear. And whether it was due to stopping the marijuana or being in contact with my father again, I was feeling more energized and optimistic than I had for many years. (Michaelson 105)

Based on the quotation above, John's superego when he does self-correcting. He feels better, more energized, and optimistic because he stops to consume drugs and contact with his father again.

Finally, when John gets job in Indonesia and lives there, he finds The Holy Quran in his place. Then he reads The Holy Quran in English translation to understand it. After he understand and realizes that The Holy Quran is relevant with this life and true, John gets a guidance. It makes him decide to become *Muallaf*. Moreover, by becoming *Muallaf*, John gets some extraordinary effects in his personality. He becomes wiser and more respectful to others, from the way he speak or from his attitude.