

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Growing and changing is a natural part of life, and it happens in all sorts of ways: physically, emotionally, socially, and psychologically. A big part of this growth involves how our minds and personalities develop, including our thinking, feelings, and how one relates to others. This mental and emotional growth is what psychologists call psychological development, and the field of developmental psychology studies exactly how these changes happen throughout our lives.

Within the broader field of developmental psychology, there is a branch called psychosocial development. Psychosocial development studies the interaction between psychological processes and social influences in shaping a person's identity and behavior (Erikson, 1993:30). Scholars state that this development is a complex interaction between an individual's personality and the socio-cultural environment in which they grow up, which shapes the individual throughout their life. For example in today's society, someone who grows up in a supportive environment and is used to facing challenges with the support of those around them tends to be more confident in making decisions in the future. In contrast, individuals who experience frequent failures without emotional support may feel afraid to face similar situations in the future. Thus, life experiences and social relationships play an important role in shaping one's emotional and social skills.

This concept is not only seen in real life but also reflected in literary works. One example is the character Nina Riva in the novel *Malibu Rising* written by Taylor Jenkins Reid. The novel tells the story of the Riva family, focusing on Nina Riva as the eldest daughter of a famous musician, Mick Riva. It sets a whole day during Nina's annual summer party, and also shows several flashbacks of her past. A significant focus is placed on Nina's personal struggles, particularly her role in raising her siblings following the death of their mother, who died by suicide in front of Nina, and the repeated abandonment by their father. Moreover, Nina endures emotional pain from her husband's infidelity as he chooses to be with another woman. Despite these hardships, Nina ultimately chooses to leave her old hurting life behind, symbolizing her personal growth and decision to finally prioritize her own well-being.

As the main character, Nina faces various challenges which reflect the stages of identity against role confusion and intimacy against isolation in Erikson's framework. Amidst family responsibilities and societal pressures, she struggles to find her identity and build meaningful relationships.

This research thesis is not only relevant in the academic realm but also provides a new perspective on interpreting fictional characters as representations of real human experiences. The selection of Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Malibu Rising* as the object of the research thesis is based on the complexity of Nina Riva's character, who experiences various emotional and social challenges that reflect the psychosocial journey of individuals in the real world. In addition, the novel offers an in-depth

exploration of family dynamics, social pressures, and the search for identity themes that remain relevant in various life contexts. This research thesis is expected to contribute to enriching the understanding of how psychosocial development influences character development in literature, as well as open up a wider discussion on the relationship between psychology and literary studies.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the stages of psychosocial development that Nina Riva experienced in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Malibu Rising*?
2. What are the factors contributing to Nina Riva's progression through each stage of psychosocial development in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Malibu Rising*?
3. What are the resolutions in each stage of Nina Riva's psychosocial development in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Malibu Rising*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the stages of psychosocial development that Nina Riva experienced as portrayed in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Malibu Rising*.
2. To identify the factors contributing to Nina Riva's progression through each stage of psychosocial development in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Malibu Rising*.
3. To explore the resolutions in each stage of Nina Riva's psychosocial development in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Malibu Rising*.

1.4 Previous Studies

The writer has identified several relevant previous studies. The first one is an article titled “Post-Infidelity Stress Disorder Found in Taylor Jenkins Reid’s *Malibu Rising*” conducted by Laure Angelina (2023). Angelina’s study focuses on the character of June Riva, analyzing her experience with Post-Infidelity Stress Disorder (PISD) following her husband’s affair. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and a theory named PISD, the study examines June’s trauma, emotional struggles, and the resulting impact on her life and relationships, particularly with her children. Angelina highlights how June’s emotional distress influences her actions and shapes the family dynamic, particularly in terms of how her children, including Nina Riva, are raised.

The second relevant previous study is found in another article titled “Survival of Riva’s Children in Taylor Jenkins Reid’s *Malibu Rising*,” written by Elisa Reggita Cahyani (2023). In this article, Cahyani focuses more on the Riva siblings and how their dynamics are affected by their parents’ unbalanced relationship. In uncovering this, Cahyani uses narratology and existence theories.

The third previous study comes from a linguistic approach article, titled “Illocutionary Speech Acts in Taylor Jenkins Reid’s Novel ‘*Malibu Rising*’” by Silvi Hendriyani (2025). Hendriyani analyzes various types of illocutionary acts in the novel to reveal characters’ perspectives, plot, and emotions.

The fourth previous study is found in another linguistic approach article, titled “Stylistics in Novel *Malibu Rising* by Taylor Jenkins” by Hertaty Delima Banurea (2024). Banurea, in her article, focuses on unveiling the language style used in this

novel. The author uses classification types of language style from Gorys Keraf's theory to help in searching for the results.

Several previous studies use *Malibu Rising* by Taylor Jenkins Reid as the primary data. Upon reviewing these studies, the writer recognizes that most of them focus either on June Riva character or on all characters in general. Building upon these insights, this research thesis takes a slightly different approach by focusing on Nina Riva, June's daughter, as the main subject of analysis. The prior studies also uncover their analyses using different frameworks from this research thesis, which explores Nina's psychological growth through Erik Erikson's psychosocial development framework. Rather than solely emphasizing the impact of childhood trauma, this research thesis takes a broader approach by analyzing how Nina navigates key psychosocial stages. By doing so, this research thesis expands upon previous studies and highlights the long-term effects of early experiences on personality formation, resilience, and interpersonal relationships.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research thesis explores Nina Riva's character in *Malibu Rising* by analyzing intrinsic elements consisting of character, characterization, and conflict. The analysis of the character focuses on Nina Riva as the round character. Characterization, in addition, focuses on direct and indirect characterization which delves into how Taylor Jenkins Reid develops Nina Riva's character through narrative techniques, dialogue, and interactions with other characters, particularly her family

members. Furthermore, the research thesis also examines conflict, both internal and external, that helps to shape Nina Riva's psychological development. This research thesis also employs a psychological approach using Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory. It focuses on two of the eight stages, as these are most relevant to the character's age and experiences: the identity against role confusion stage, happening in adolescence, and the intimacy against isolation stage, occurring in young adulthood. This theory assists in uncovering the connection between Nina's early experiences and her progression through key psychosocial stages, offering insights into her personality development and relationships.

1.6 Writing Organization

The four chapters that compose this thesis are as follows:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains six sub-chapters, namely Background of the Study, Research Questions, Objectives of the Study, Previous Studies, Scope of the Study, and Writing Organization.

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHOD

The second chapter covers the theories used as tools of analysis and methods to conduct the research thesis. The Theoretical Framework is the first sub-chapter, and it contains the theories used in intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. The second

sub-chapter, Research Method, explains the research approach and method of data collection.

CHAPTER III RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The third chapter presents the results of the analysis of the research topic. This chapter focuses on the analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements as its sub-chapters.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

The final chapter summarizes the main points of discussion by reflecting on the analysis as a whole.

REFERENCES