

## PETER'S PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN *PRODIGAL SON* NOVEL BY DANIELLE STEEL

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to find out Peter's Psychosocial Development stages in the novel *Prodigal Son* by Danielle Steele. The design of this research is qualitative. The data were taken from the novel itself. After the data were collected, then they were interpreted by using Erikson's theory. Further, after being analyzed there were three stages of psychosocial development that appeared in Peter, they were, school age, young adulthood, and middle adult as the result of this research. Thus, the researcher concluded that Peter's psychological development cannot be interpreted as single entity, yet it is understanding as multiple psychological developments.

**Keywords:** psychosocial development, *Prodigal Son* novel, Peter

### ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui tahapan-tahapan Perkembangan Psikososial Peter dalam novel *Prodigal Son* karya Danielle Steele. Desain penelitian ini adalah kualitatif. Data diambil dari novel itu sendiri. Setelah data dikumpulkan, kemudian ditafsirkan dengan menggunakan teori Erikson. Selanjutnya, setelah dianalisis ada tiga tahap perkembangan psikososial yang muncul di Peter, yaitu, usia sekolah, dewasa muda, dan dewasa menengah sebagai hasil dari penelitian ini. Dengan demikian, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa perkembangan psikologis Peter tidak dapat diartikan sebagai entitas tunggal, namun dipahami sebagai perkembangan psikologis ganda.

**Kata kunci:** perkembangan psikososial, novel *Prodigal Son*, Peter

### A. INTRODUCTION

One of the literary works which usually describes the issues in a more complete and complicated ways is novel. According to Abram, novel is "distinguished from the short story, its magnitude permits a greater variety of characters, a greater complication of plot (or plot), ampler development of milieu, and more sustained exploration of character and motives than do the shorter, more concentrated modes" (2). Novel is divided into two forms fiction and nonfiction. Fiction is a work that is created based on the author is imagination, while nonfiction means a real story that is written by author and is usually on true stories.

One of the fiction novels is *Prodigal Son* which was written by an American author named Danielle Steel in 2015. It was a fantastic novel that presented the serious life issues, such as;

illness, death, loss, family crises and relationship. In this novel, the characters are depicted to have unique story life. Another thing which is interesting about this novel is the conflicts that happen between characters especially about the psychosocial conditions of the characters.

One of the psychosocial theories which will be used in this research is Erik Erikson's theory. Erikson's stages of young adulthood, and the middle and later years, are well developed and offer many insights into the kinds of tasks presented to each of us by life itself as mature people (Fleming 9-3).

In this research, the researcher chooses the main character named Peter, because he is the important character in the novel *Prodigal Son*. Peter plays a significant role in this novel. He is an amazing character because his character development changes unpredictably throughout the story of the novel. From Peter's life stories, the researcher is interested to know more about his personality and how his psychosocial development affects his life from school age to middle adulthood.

## **B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory revolutionized developmental thought Hoare. He was one of the first to propose a life-span model of human development which included eight successive psychosocial stages. Each stage is associated with an inherent conflict or crisis that the individual must encounter and successfully resolve to term crisis "in a developmental sense to connote not a threat of catastrophe, but a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential" (Erikson 96). The eight stages of psychosocial development were could be seen below:

### **1. First stage is infancy**

The basic result is feeling trust versus mistrust. This age started from birth to eighteen months. The basic virtue of this age was eating, crying and feeding. In this stage, a baby would be trust with his mother. If this stage failed, the baby got mistrust feel. This stage also called the oral-sensory; because the baby always putted everything into her/his mouth. In this case, mother as a significant relation was an important figure of infant psychosocial development.

### **2. Second is early childhood**

In this stage, a baby started from age eighteen months to three years old. The basic virtue of child feels autonomy versus shame and doubt. Autonomy means believe in yourself or stand alone, while Shame and Doubt when they adapt with the around when they want to know about all in the around, and this conditions the children's ability to express them self. In this phase the children develop their ability to doings everything that they want. This stage also called the anal-sensory, because the child was learning the first skill, for example toilet training. In this case, parent was a significant relation of early childhood psychosocial development.

### **3. Third stage is play age**

The child started from age three to five years old. The basic virtues of this stage are initiative versus guilt. Initiative is about positive response to the world, Guilt feeling when they do not care who they step on to achieve their goals. In the phase are the child learns to feel guilty about his or her feelings. The child began to explore her or his mind and play. In this age called golden age, because the child had a good memory that can remember lifetime. The significant relation of this stage is friend and family.

#### 4. Forth stage is school age

In school age stage, a child starts from age five to twelve years old. This stage also calls latency, because a child just shows his or her physical growth. The psychosocial result is feeling industry versus shame and inferiority. In school age, the children must tame the imagination and decide themselves to education and learning the social to learning the social skill. The children also want to know about study and also adapt with new friend in the school. In the phase the children likely to get a game, create the way to do something, and so create the way out. In this case, school and social environment (neighbor) was a significant relation of school age of psychosocial development.

#### 5. Fifth stage is adolescence

A teenager starts from age twelve to eighteen years old. This stage also called puberty stage, because a teenager learns about love. The basic virtue of this stage is identity versus role confusion. It is telling about adolescence that achieve ego identity and avoid role confusion. In this stage tells about relationship between the friend and change they body to mature also. In this case, a significant relation of school age of psychosocial development was peers, groups and peer models, and parents must to control her or his child.

#### 6. Sixth stage is young adulthood

In young adulthood stage, a person starts from age eighteen to forty years old. The psychosocial results are feeling intimacy versus isolation. A person tries to find her or his identity, fight in social interaction and moral issue. The negative effect, if a person fails in this stage is confuse and chaos role. In this case, lover, friend and work connection were a significant relation of psychosocial development.

#### 7. Seventh stage is middle adulthood

This stage started from age forty to sixty-five. The psychosocial development result is felling generality versus self-absorption or stagnation. This stage also calls generality, because the power is attention from other people. In this stage explains more about need children and work a lot to get a lot of money or collect property. In this case, children (house hood) and community were a significant relation of psychosocial development.

#### 8. The last stage is maturity

This stage starts from age more than sixty-five years old. The psychosocial development result is feeling wisdom versus despair. Erikson explains the Intimacy When the older become old their duties as parents ending and their input no longer requested and required then there is a sense of Biological uselessness, as the body no longer does everything it used to (qtd in Fleming 9-17).

### C. RESEARCH METHOD

#### 1. Research Design

The researcher uses qualitative method “qualitative research is characterized by its aims in understanding the aspects of social life and through its methods in generating words rather than numbers as data analysis” (Patton and Cochran 2). Qualitative does not give the numeral or statistics, but the knowledge of the research in analyzing data (Miles and Huberman 1).

This research uses qualitative method, because this research repetitive will focus on the words, phrases and sentences specifically in the novel *Prodigal Son* by Daniel Steel. This

research also classified in descriptive research, where the researcher describe and analyze about Peter's stages of psychosocial development.

## 2. Data and Source of Data

The research uses some data such as; words, phrase, clause, sentences and paragraphs in the novel *Prodigal Son* that can be seen about the stages of psychosocial development by Erick H Erikson.

## 3. Data Collection

In this research, there are some techniques that the researcher uses to get the data. The techniques are reading the *Prodigal Son* novel by Danielle Steel and understand about the psychosocial development ideas that occur in the story. This step also includes some quotes or paraphrase some parts that is needed in drawing some possibilities about psychosocial development aspects appear in order to support the analysis. Then classifying the required data which is taken from the novel based on psychosocial development aspects for example like the desire, basic conflict, or repressed memories on each character and also from previous research, related literature or journal.

Data collection include in the library research, because this research takes of the document without a record. Library research uses some books and other references to support this research.

## 4. Research Instrument

In this present research, the researcher participates as the instrument. The researcher focused on psychosocial development and discussing *Prodigal Son* novel (2016) by using the psychosocial development theories of Erik H Erikson.

## 5. Trust Worthiness

Triangulation refers to use more than one approaches to the investigation of the research question in order to enhance the certainty of the result of the findings (Denzin qtd. in Rugg 13), there are four common types of triangulation developed, they are data triangulation, methods triangulation, investigator triangulation, and theory triangulation. This type of triangulation is the use of multiple theories or hypotheses when examining a situation or phenomenon. The intention is to look at a situation/phenomenon from different perspectives, through different lenses, with different questions in mind.

## 6. Data Analysis Technique

There are three parts to collect data based in Miles and Huberman: data reduction, data display and drawing conclusion. The first step is data reduction. The researcher is selecting, focus, simplify and abstract of the raw data. Second step is displaying the data. The researcher organizes the information and maps the data that related to a theory of psychosocial development by Erik H Erikson. Third is drawing conclusion.

## D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Stages of Peter Psychosocial Development

#### a. School Age

School age was the first stage of Peter's psychosocial development in the *Prodigal Son* novel. It was consisted image five until twelve years old. The psychological result for this stage was industry versus inferiority. From two results, inferiority was the dominant result

that happened in Peter's life based on his age. For this stage, the researcher found five evidences that showed the inferiority that Peter felt.

“His mother had packed them a picnic basket, and they had sat in the boat all day, catching one fish after another. Peter figured he must have been about **eight** at the time. It had been a real victory when he had caught more fish than Michael, who was usually the better fisherman, but when they got home Michael had claimed the larger number for himself. **Peter had tried to correct him, and his father winked at him, giving him the message that the truth was their little secret and to let Michael have his day of glory, yet again.**” (p.56)

The statement above was the first evidence that Peter was in the school age stage as it showed from his age which is 8 years old. The word “yet again” means that not just once Peter felt it but for many times, and it had been a crushing disappointment to him.

“**It was always Michael who was protected and never Peter. Their father had always had a soft spot for Michael and talked about what “a good boy” he was, with the implication that Peter was the “bad boy,” and often enough he was.**” (p.56)

Based on the statement above, it was the other evidence that the psychological crisis that Peter had was inferiority in his family. Michael knows how to take his father's heart. He said he wanted to be a doctor who was exactly like his father, making him flattered.

“One of the worst incidents Peter remembered of his childhood happened when they were **twelve.**” (p.13)

The statement above was the second evidence that Peter on his school age, it showed from his age. In this age Peter felt the inferiority from his family.

“Peter had been every parent's nightmare, a bright handsome boy who did abysmally at **school** and was constantly in trouble, suspended or on probation, either for his behavior or for his appalling grades. Undiagnosed dyslexia had nearly destroyed his youth. **His classmate called him stupid, teachers got frustrated with him and eventually gave up**” (p.8)

The other evidence that showed this stage of Peter psychosocial development was the statement above that explained the condition of Peter in school. Not only at home, he also felt the inferiority in his schools because of dyslexia.

“**Michael had seen to it that Peter was viewed as the “bad guy” by everyone who knew them, and even by their parents.**” (p.16)

Michael had been entrenched, too determined to cut Peter out of everything, and most particularly out of their parents' hearts. Michael put too much energy into it for too long. And the effect of the bold statement above was all Peter had ever been was a disappointment and problem to his father.

“**Their lack of faith in him** made him even more determined to succeed once he graduated from college, and show them once and for all what he was capable of.” (p.10)

The statement above Peter said when he got help from an English professor who becomes his mentor for four years, and the results had been remarkable. From that case, he motivated himself to give the proof to his parents and the others that he had the ability to be succeeded. He was determined to show all his abilities because of the inferiority which is he achieved in the past.

#### **b. Young Adult**

Young adulthood was the second stage of Peter’s psychosocial development in the *Prodigal Son* novel. It was consisted of eighteen until forty years old. The psychological result for this stage was intimacy versus isolation. In this case, lover, friend and work connection were a significant relation of psychosocial development.

After all inferiority that he achieved, in high school he took on an attitude of difference, hostility, and arrogance to cover the sense of failure and incompetence he felt.

“...since he hitched his wagon to the star of Whitman Broadbank fresh out of business school when he was **twenty-five**.” (p.4)

After he finished from business school, he started doing business in Whitman Broadbank at the age of twenty-five. More than anything, Peter wanted to impress his parents and win all the approval that had belonged only to his brother for so many years. But when Peter started to doing his business, he decided to go far away from his family because he had given up trying to change his parents’ opinion of him.

“**Peter hadn’t been home, nor had contact with his brother, in fifteen years, and he didn’t miss it.**” (p.16)

Michael was the nemesis of Peter’s youth, since the day they were born so for years Peter had hated him, and he had no desire to see him again. Peter just took off, and made his way in an entirely different world. When Peter isolated himself from his family, he had succeeded in his business at thirty years old.

“They had been married for fifteen years. He had met her right after his parents’ death, and married her a few months later, dazzled by her beauty. **And he had already been a huge success at thirty-one when they married.**” (p.18)

The experiences of Peter’s childhood had made him determined to make it on his own, with no help from anyone. When he had succeeded in his business, he married to Alana, who is the only child of Gary Talon, one of the biggest music producers in Hollywood.

In this stage, the decisions that he made was caused by several factors above, one of which was because of the unfair treatment from his family. Yet, he found a new family, his wife, Alana as well as his partners in his work.

### c. Middle Adult

Middle adult was the last stage of Peter's psychosocial development in the *Prodigal Son* novel. It was consisted of forty until sixty-five years old. The psychosocial development result is felling generality versus self-absorption or stagnation.

After Peter had a big success in the young adulthood stage before, he was a success in his business and had a happy life with his family in several years. But this happiness did not last long because after Peter's company was bankrupt.

**“Now he was forty-six, virtually broke, and out of a job, and so was almost everyone he knew, with the exception of the lucky few who had survived the tidal wave of the past month.”** (p.4)

When Peter was forty-six, he ended his career as a businessman at Whitman Broadbank, which he had been working with since he was twenty-five years old with a bankruptcy he had never imagined before.

When Gary, Alana's father, knew that they were lost everything, he asked them to go and live in L.A. But it was a foreign land to him, too far from New York, which had always been the center of his career. Alana persuaded him to stay at L.A by offering Peter to work together with Gary.

Finally, he agreed to fly out to L.A, a month after they left. Gary offered Peter to stay at L.A, with reasons to work with him and made Alana was happy. After Peter worked with Gary for three days, he realized that he was not really needed by Gary. Although he had expressed his feelings to Alana that he could not stay at L.A, but Alana instead agreed if he continued to work with his father.

**“I'm staying, Peter. If you don't want to live here, then maybe we have a decision to make. My father getting older, I want to be out here with him. We're all he has”** (p.42).

His bankruptcy actually also led to another big event in his life, Alana divorced him. Alana is a woman spoiled by Gary with all the luxuries he has. When she married Peter for fifteen years, she was still a spoiled little girl.

**“You don't have any choice,”** Alana said as she stood up, and looked at him. **I'm not staying here in these conditions, with no money, nowhere to live, no prospects, and you out of a job, maybe for a hell of a long time.”** (p.27)

The statement above was the reason why Alana divorced Peter. She decided to go to L.A after she knew that Peter's company was bankrupt.

## 2. The Influence of Peter Psychosocial Development

### a. School Age

The first stage that appeared is the stage of School Age which is range from the age of 5 to 12 years old. This already proofed above from this following paragraph in the novel:

**“The scene that came to mind immediately was a summer day when he had gone fishing with his father and Michael, on one of the rare days his father had taken off to just fool around with them. His mother had packed them a picnic basket,**

and they had sat in the boat all day, catching one fish after another. Peter figured he must have been about **eight** at the time.” (p.56)

In the novel, this stage of Peter is not success as his father allowed Michael to boast about the large number of fish that he caught, when in truth Peter was the one who caught more than Michael. Peter tried to correct Michael but instead of letting him doing it, his father prevents him from saying the truth and made as it seems Michael is the winner when it was actually Peter.

**“It had been a real victory when he had caught more fish than Michael, who was usually always better fisherman, but when they got home Michael had claimed the larger number for himself. Peter had tried to correct him, and his father winked at him, giving him the message that the truth was their little secret and to let Michael have his day of glory, yet again.** It had been a crushing disappointment to Peter. It was always Michael who was protected and never Peter. Their father had always had a soft spot for Michael and talked about what a “good boy” he was, with the implication that Peter was the “bad boy” and often enough he was.” (p.56)

From the paragraph above it can be seen that Peter had been turned down when he actually achieve success. Michael who usually is the winner for once defeated by Peter, however his father did not acknowledge it and instead helping Michael to create a scene where he is the winner like it always been.

This might result into the shame and feel of incompetence that explained by Erikson above if this stage is fail. Not to forget the fact that Peter after that is always be referred as the ‘kid brother’ and ‘the screw up’ as the paragraph below:

**“Michael was so well behaved that he got all the dignity and praise, and privileges that went with the older brother’s role, and took it seriously when he called Peter his kid brother. And after all, Peter was the screw-up, the “baby” who had tantrums and couldn’t read. Their parents bought into it, and treated Michael like the responsible mature one, and Peter’s inability to read for a long time gave credence to the myth that he was younger. Their treating him that way just made him act out more and angrier at Michael.** (p 56-57)

What happened to Peter also resulted to become incompetence and could not read and throwing tantrums. Perhaps because he felt inferior caused by the treatment he received he become not only incompetence but also act out and angrier, especially at Michael who always win and treated way better than him.

**“Peter could still remember the crickets and the sound of summer, whenever they were at the lake house. It had been one of his favorite places to be, swimming, fishing, and playing in the woods. And being there in the summer meant that he didn’t have to go to school.”** (p.57)

The reason why he did not like go to school is become another result of how this stage is failed as the incompetence and inferiority appeared in him.

**“He punished the boys who made fun of him, with his fist.** It was common for him to come home from school with a torn shirt and a black eye, and having delivered worse, while in the lower grades. **In high school he took on an attitude of indifference, hostility, and arrogance to cover the sense of failure and incompetence he felt.”** (p. 8)

Based from these, it can be concluded that Peter failed in his development stage of School age which influence his life to him become incompetence and inferior.

#### **b. Young Adult**

The second stage is Young adult. This stage is from the age 18 to 40 years old. It already proofed from the earlier discussion but also can be seen from the following paragraph when Peter finally graduated from high school at the age of 18 years old.

**“By the time they finished high school.** His childhood tantrums had turned into adolescent rages, based on the intolerable frustration **he had lived with for eighteen years.** He couldn’t win his parents approval, or anyone else’s, so he had given up trying to win it or do anything he should. **He and his brother were staunch enemies by then.”** (p.9)

From the paragraph above it can be seen that the constant unfair treatment that received by Peter keep going on even way after the school age stage which is the young adult stage. It is also become clear that at this point Peter and his brother Michael has no longer in a good term and they have become enemies.

In this case the importance of lover, friend, and work connection is very important since it has a significant relation with psychosocial development. The first thing that happened which led into the success of this stage is when everyone is surprise that the troubled and bad boy Peter accepted in college.

**“And all of them were astonished when Peter got into college. He had one dedicated high school teacher** who had written an extraordinary recommendation for him, insisting that beyond his poor grades and checkered school career was a remarkably bright, creative young man **who would one day overcome his problems”** (p. 9)

From the above paragraph it can be seen that despite everything, Peter luckily has one good teacher who was not turning back on him but instead seeing the good side of Peter who was actually misunderstood and frustrated all of this year.

**“Like a specter in the mists that no one had previously suspected or seen, the dyslexia that had caused him so much pain emerged and was diagnosed.** The English professor who had sent him for tester become his mentor and tutored him personally for all four years. **The result had been remarkable, and Peter himself was astounded at what he was able to accomplish.”** (p. 9-10)

This stage of young adult also is the part where a person tries to find out their identity, fight in social interaction and moral issue. Therefore when Peter finally changed and accomplishes many things in college including getting good grades.

“Their lack of faith in him made **him even more determined to succeed once he graduated from college, and show them once and for all what he was capable of. Suddenly he burned with the desire to show everyone and be a “star”**, just as his mother had believed he could be, as a boy.” (p.10)

Because of this new identity and the support, he finally has from people around him has influence Peter’s life as he become very successful in his life.

“His **success in business school afterward and meteoric rise on Wall Street** came as no surprise to those who had mentioned him in college. They had found him to have overwhelming motivation and drive (p.10-11)

“His **success had been extraordinary for the past twenty years**, since he hitched his wagon to the star of Whitman Broadbank fresh out of business school when **he was twenty-five.**” (p. 4)

It can be concluded that Peter stage of development in the stage of Young adult from the age 18 to 40 years has influenced his life into becoming a very successful person that can change from a poor dyslexia boy who was misunderstood treated unfairly into a very successful man who was a star in his job as a business man.

### c. Middle Adulthood

The last stage of the development is the middle adulthood that started from the age of 40 to 65 years old. In this stage explains more about need children and work a lot to get a lot of money or collect property.

Peter has everything at this stage, although he lost almost everything after the crisis which later will influenced his life.

“**The stock** that Peter had gladly acquired in lieu of profits or salary on many occasions, and that comprised most of his personal fortune, was worthless paper now. **The house in the Hamptons was history, the time share of a plane, their penthouse on Fifth Avenue, private schools, credit cards, the Ferrari he played with on the weekends and the boys loved to ride in, Alana’s Bentley, and the brand-new Rolls. All were expensive unimportant toys and symbols of his success.**” (p. 3)

These shows how much hard work Peter has put that he accomplished a very great things and expensive even during these stages of development. In this stage the household is very important to the person. That is why even though such bad thing happened and the young adult stage of Peter is also success it does not make Peter giving up and continue to live.

“He was ready to do whatever it takes to clean up the mess, tighten his belt, and he knew that sooner or later he’d be back. And as soon as the New York apartment sold, he was going to have to figure out where they were going to love. **He knew that as long as the family stuck together, they’d be alright.**” (p .4-5)

Based from this it can be conclude that this stage influence Peter to not give to his condition even though he lost his things because he holds really close to his family and he believe he will be back again to be successful.

## E. CONCLUSION

For Conclusion in this chapter was written down to answer the research questions in the chapter I, based on the findings and discussion in chapter VI. For the first research question, which is what are the stages of Peter's Psychosocial Development, there are three stages that appear in the novel which are, the school age from the age of 5 to 12, young adult from the age of 18-40, as well as middle adult from the age of 40 to 65. For the second research question, which is how does the development influence his life, in this case Peter. The researcher has found that first, the school age has failed and influenced him to become incompetent and inferior as well as became a violent angry boy and hostile which is a result of being misunderstood and treated unfairly at the school age stage. Secondly the young adult stage fortunately is a success stage that influences him to become a better person and has led him to become a very successful man that is a star in his job and having a lot of expensive thing and property. Last, the researcher conclude that the middle adulthood has influenced him to be very positive and did not want to give up with his condition when he lost all of his property and bankrupt as long as he has his family.

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