

AN ANALYSIS OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF MARILYN MONROE AS SEEN FROM BLONDE (2022)

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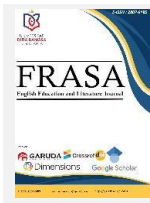
Abstract

This study aims to analyse psychosocial development of Marilyn Monroe in Blonde (2022). This study uses the theory of psychosocial development by Erik Erickson (1972) that explore eight stages of human's psychosocial development to examine eight stages of psychosocial development experienced by Marilyn Monroe character. A difficult childhood and lack of parental support impact Monroe's identity confusion and cause ongoing problems with self-esteem and emotional stability. The film shows her struggling to form important relationships and portrays her as a person trapped in isolation and suffering. The researchers use qualitative research methods by collecting the data through captured the scenes of the movie, organizing the data based on the stages, and analysing the data using theory of psychosocial development. Research result shows that Marilyn Monroe has experienced six of eight of the psychosocial development stages which are Identity vs Role Confusion, Intimacy & Isolation, Generativity vs Stagnation. The purpose of this research is to understand the psychosocial development found in Marilyn Monroe character in Blonde (2022). This study enriches how movie influences the perception of historical figures and human experiences.

Keywords: Marilyn Monroe, Blonde, Erik Erikson, Psychosocial Development, Intimacy vs. Isolation

INTRODUCTION

People grow through experiences that shape their brains, relationships, and sense of purpose. From birth to death, they modify how they see themselves and connect with others. Psychotherapist Erik Erikson proposed eight stages of human development in his book, *Childhood and Society* (1972). Erikson explained that each stage connects to the one stage before it. So, success early will make later growth easier, but unresolved problems can cause struggles later.



This study applies Erikson's psychosocial theory to the film *Blonde* (2022). Erikson's stages are usually examined in psychology, pedagogy, or clinical research, but studies that use films, especially biographical films, as a framework for examination are rare. Unlike *Elvis* (2022), which is another great biopic about a famous person who focuses on the singer's career, music, and legacy, *Blonde* (2022) centred on Monroe's struggles with identity, intimacy, and belonging. The primary reason this study concentrates on *Blonde* (2022) is that disparity. The movie focuses so much on her inner troubles that it helps us connect her life to Erikson's theory and understand how problems that aren't treated can affect a person's whole life. This study links Monroe's psychosocial development to cultural representation, providing a new perspective on her life and showing how films can bring psychiatric concepts to life. This approach demonstrates how flexible Erikson's theories are and how films can be used to promote learning and critical thinking.

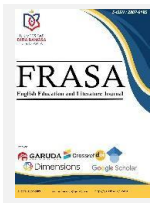
People still talk about and use Erikson's concept today. For example, Maree (2021) applies it to education and career planning. Wijaya (2022) uses this to explore their role in children's growth and parental support. While Teague and Jones (2023) show how a positive father figure during childhood and adolescence shapes trust, autonomy, hope, and willpower. These studies highlight the adaptability of Erikson's theory. However, much of this new research still focuses on psychology and education. There is currently a lack of research linking Erikson's stages to culture, such as how narratives in films can similarly reflect human development.

Scholars highlight the universality of Erikson's framework. Poole and Snarey (2011) claim that everyone goes through Erikson's stages sequentially, but cultural, social, and individual influences affect when and how each stage manifests. Barzoki et al. (2015) say social ties and the mind affect these stages. People who can't get over a breakup frequently have relationship issues or are unhappy. Erikson's thesis isn't just a set of ideas; it explains how prior achievements or failures can affect a person's entire life.

Cinema provide a good method to learn about psychosocial development outside of school or therapy. Movies teach us about people, social conventions, and culture, as well as entertain us. Movies may teach individuals about diverse cultures and real-life events, according to Natasya (2021). According to Rahmi and Fanani (2023), highlight films can portray psychological and social difficulties. Films that depict how people handle change and problems can inspire Erikson. Movies help us think about how we handle life transitions and issues.

Andrew Dominik's *Blonde* (2022) illustrates this well. The film blends recreation of historic pictures, rebuilt movie scenes, and staged situations to give a more impressionistic view of Marilyn Monroe. Haslem (2023) says the film uses real sites and photos to authenticate Monroe's narrative. It explores her memories, identity, and trauma issues. This makes *Blonde* more than a biography. Monroe is also remembered and thought of today.

Monroe's childhood as Norma Jeane with a mentally ill single mother opens the story. Her father was absent, and her mother's instability left her bewildered, insecure, and alone. After her mother was hospitalized, Norma was placed in an orphanage. This increased her isolation. Loss and instability affected her entire life and made it hard for her to find her place. With age, she managed to gain acting gigs and became one of Hollywood's top stars,



but her terrible childhood never left her. Even though she was popular and accomplished, her early scars shaped her.

Erikson's theory helps explain Monroe's fate in *Blonde* (2022). Each stage was a turning point with conflict to resolve. Monroe's turbulent background hampered her trust and independence, hindering deep relationships and purpose. Poole and Snarey (2011) say identity evolved from both inner drives and social influence. Monroe's struggles show that unresolved problems can return later and affect confidence, relationships, and happiness. Monroe's narrative in *Blonde* (2022) shows how individual experiences and surroundings influence development. Through Erikson's stages, her struggles with issues of belonging, intimacy, and identity are not just a sad story but a lesson on how unresolved problems can affect a person's whole life.

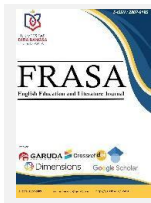
Several previous researches have been conducted related to this topic. First, is the study from Kintanti & Daulay (2020) entitled "Child Abuse Experienced by the Main Character in Rainbow Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*: A Psychosocial Analysis". This study discusses the psychosocial development in Eleanor as the main character which she has grown up whilst experiencing child abuse from her step-father. The authors use the eight steps of psychosocial development theory from Erik Erikson and found four of them in the research such as, Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt, Initiative vs Guilt, Industry vs Inferiority, and Identity vs Role Confusion. Not only focuses on discussing the psychosocial development only, the author also analyses about the abuse that Eleanor as the main character has experienced such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, and psychosocial abuse.

Second, is the study from Retnomurti & Hendrawaty (2022) entitled "Psychological Approach in Personality Development of Theodore Character in *The Goldfinch*". This study focuses on analysing the personality development of Theodore Decker and the authors also use the psychosocial development from Erikson. The authors found four of eight of the psychosocial developments which are Initiative vs Guilt, Industry vs Inferiority, Identity vs Role Confusion, and Intimacy vs Isolation.

Third, is the study entitled "Biopics of Female Hollywood Stars Speak to #MeToo Era: *The Case of Judy* (2019) and *Blonde* (2022)" from Diaz (2024). This study examines the new abuses in the film industry such as eating disorder, insomnia and substance abuse in *Judy* (2019) and examines Hollywood's open secret focuses on the portrayal of the casting couch in *Blonde* (2022). The author found that Monroe was being exposed as a fragile sex icon, desperately seeking love, attention, and approval.

Fourth, is the study entitled *Blonde: Redefining Marilyn Monroe as Digital Artifact* from Haslem (2023). This study analyses how *Blonde* shows the star image that Monroe had and analyses how screen persona as this film has Monroe in the frame which rarely shows things she sees., lenses, and flashes of light which parts of new digital technologies disembodied the image of Marilyn Monroe.

This research focuses to analyse what kind of psychosocial development stages are found in *Blonde* (2022) that focuses only on Marilyn Monroe character. The limitation of this study is limited to the one main character which is Marilyn Monroe in *Blonde* (2022) that the researcher will examine regarding the psychosocial development stages experienced by Marilyn Monroe. By examining the psychosocial analysis in film characters through Erik



Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, can enrich the research analysis of psychosocial development.

Psychosocial development theory was first introduced by Erik Erikson through his book entitled *Childhood and Society* (1972). Erikson constructed a theory of the human life cycle composed of eight stages, each representing a particular period in human development (Poole & Snarey, 2011). These stages describe how individuals deal with psychological and social issues in their lives, influencing how they see themselves and relate to others. Each stage is defined by a central conflict that must be resolved for healthy development. Those conflicts contribute to personal growth.

Each new stage is characterised by a period of development during which the child must resolve a psychosocial crisis or turning point to mature their ego identity and relate to the organic pressures (Poole & Snarey, 2011). The development of ego identity is influenced by organic pressure and social interactions. Organic pressure refers to a natural developmental drive, such as the need for attachment, the drive for autonomy in early childhood, and the search for identity in adolescence. The events in each stage are not isolated events but part of a continuous process. It contributes to the overall maturity of the ego identity. The explanation of each stage can be found below.

A. ***Basic Trust versus Basic Mistrust***

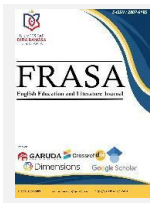
The first demonstration of social trust in the baby is the ease of his feeding, the depth of his sleep, and the relaxation of his bowel (Erikson, 1993). This trust is built through care from parents, especially the mother. Babies feel secure when they know milk will be there during feeding and comfort will return after sleep (Poole & Snarey, 2011). When carers consistently respond to a baby's needs by providing good food and nutrition when they are hungry, comforting them when they cry, and maintaining a stable environment, the infant begins to develop a sense of trust. These actions allowed and built the children to have confidence in their future relationship.

However, a sense of mistrust leaves a child feeling deprived, divided, and abandoned; the symptoms of mistrust include withdrawal or isolation (Poole & Snarey, 2011). If a carer is neglectful, unpredictable, or unresponsive, it can lead the child to develop mistrust. Mistrust can make children feel uncertain and experience self-doubt in adulthood. Over time, unresolved mistrust in infancy can contribute to attachment issues, emotional insecurity, and difficulty forming relationships later in life.

B. ***Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt***

The toddler stage is relatable with muscle growth, which supports a child's independence. Muscular maturation sets the stage for the experiment with two simultaneous sets of social modalities, which are holding on and letting go (Erikson, 1993). During this period, children develop a new sense of self and the word "No!" (Poole & Snarey, 2011). Their muscles become stronger, which enables them to grasp, hold, push, and release objects. Psychological growth directly correlates with these physical abilities. Here, children develop from oral sensory to some anal-muscular self-will and certain self-control.

While children develop their self-will, parents have a crucial influence. The analogy can be drawn from toilet training activities. If the process of toilet training makes children feel unconscious, they may experience shame and low self-esteem. If the children feel shame,



they will experience restraint, self-doubt, and show symptoms of shame such as shame and inability to share. They will keep shame feeling and inability to share just for themselves (Poole & Snarey, 2011).

C. ***Initiative versus Guilt***

The sense of initiative contains a new hope and a new responsibility for children (Erikson, 1993). In this stage, children begin to explore the world more actively. This period is considered as a "play age" (Poole & Snarey, 2011). In this stage, children try to reflect on questions about "why". Children in this age are likely to collaborate with each other and construct something. They are mirroring what adults do. Through play, they learn to express emotions, practice problem solving, and develop their interpersonal skills. While pretending to be a teacher, a doctor, or a superhero for example, they use imaginative scenarios to explore their environment.

Guilt comes when adults constantly correct or discipline children for exercising their developing locomotor skills and mental power (Poole & Snarey, 2011). Children are naturally curious, energetic and eager to explore anything in them or their surroundings. If they meet the caregivers who consistently correct them, or often receive disapproval, then the children may feel guilt of what they do and they think because it is never correct from an adult's point of view. They also start to feel that their actions are wrong, annoying or even unacceptable.

D. ***Industry versus Inferiority***

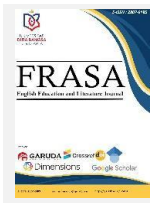
This stage is also known as a "school age" when children love to learn and play (Poole & Snarey, 2011). Children have a desire to learn, explore and engage in structured activities. The questions that the children often talk about are "What is this?" and "What is that?", also "How can I do?". They are naturally curious to learn new things and accept social change. It develops their fundamental development by engaging themselves in imaginative, cooperative and competitive play which also help them to understand rules, teamwork and social dynamics. Children who master this stage gain the ego virtue of competence that makes them believe that they can begin and complete the project at an acceptable level (Poole & Snarey, 2011).

A favourable ratio of the industry leads to a sense of inferiority or inadequacy (Poole & Snarey, 2011). It happens when the children struggle to develop their competency in their skills, knowledge, or social interactions. During this stage, children tie their ability to success in academics. To prevent the development of inferiority, it is crucial for the parents or caregiver to support their children in learning and growth. It makes them embrace challenges rather than failure.

E. ***Identity versus Role Confusion***

The primary task of the adolescent is achieving a favourable balance of identity over identity confusion and it is articulated by the question "Who I am" (Poole & Snarey, 2011). At this stage, individuals undergo significant psychological, social and emotional changes, seeking to establish a clear sense of self and direction in life. The adolescents explore various aspects of their identity such as their value, belief, career, relationship, and personal interest. When adolescents successfully navigate this stage, they develop a strong and coherent sense of identity. They are learning to be faithful to something.

The danger of this stage is role confusion (Erikson, 1993). Role confusion can arise



when adolescents lack guidance, face conflicting expectations or feel pressure to conform to external demands that do not align with their developing self-concept. An unfavourable balance leads to role confusion which are delinquency, cynicism, apathy, and inability to settle the identity.

F. *Intimacy versus Isolation*

This stage marks the period of romance during young adulthood and the articulate question is "Who can I share my life with?" (Poole & Snarey, 2011). It shows that the adolescent in this stage seeks deep and meaningful relationships beyond family and friendship. During this stage, individuals strive to establish close and trusting bonds with others, instead of playing around. They aim to build partnerships based on it. A successful resolution of this stage allows individuals to experience a fulfilling relationship which bonds a sense of belonging.

The danger of this stage is isolation that is the avoidance of contact which commits intimacy (Erikson, 1993). A symptom of isolation is avoidance of intimacy and exclusivity (Poole & Snarey, 2011). This avoidance can stem from past experiences of rejection, unresolved emotional conflict or a deep-seated fear of commitment. Some individuals may engage in superficial short-term relationships to maintain companionship without the risk of emotional exposure. Others may completely detach from romantic and social interactions.

G. *Generativity versus Stagnation*

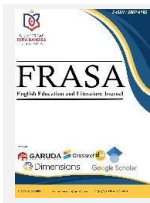
Generativity is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation although there are individuals who through misfortune because of special and genuine gifts in order directions (Erikson, 1993). At this stage, the question "Whom or what can I care for?" correlates with the person's need to be needed. Generativity manifests itself in the desire to guide the next generation (Poole & Snarey, 2011). Generativity is not limited to biological parenting, but it can also be seen in mentorship, volunteering, and creative contributions and efforts to improve society.

The social sphere of influence during this stage comes primarily from work and family. When people do not become generative, they tend to become stagnant and self-absorbed (Poole & Snarey, 2011). Work plays a crucial role as it provides individuals with opportunities to fulfil their needs. Family life provides a direct avenue for generativity in their personal growth and aspiration. When individuals fail to achieve generativity, they risk falling into stagnation which leads individuals to a cycle of isolation and disengagement from work, family, and community.

H. *Ego Integrity vs Despair*

The main question in this stage is: "Has my life been meaningful?" mirrors the psychological preoccupation with facing death (Poole & Snarey, 2011). In this final stage, individuals reflect on their lives, evaluating whether they have lived meaningfully and fulfilled their potential. Typically occurring in late adulthood, individuals engage in life review, assessing their achievement, relationship and the impact they have on others. Those who find satisfaction in their past experiences believing they have led a purposeful and meaningful life.

The radius of social interaction extends to the cosmic world order. In contrast, the person who lacks ego integration expresses fear and despair at the thought of death (Poole & Snarey, 2011). They may feel unresolved regrets, bitterness, or disappointment over



missed opportunities of unfulfilled dreams. This fear often comes from anxiety about the unknown and feeling of purposelessness. Individuals in despair experience isolation and emotional pain.

METHODOLOGIES

Methodologies were used in this study to examine Marilyn Monroe's psychological development as depicted in *Blonde* (2022). The data is in the form of pictures. The research's method of gathering data is to capture every scene in *Blonde* (2022) that pertains to Marilyn Monroe's psychosocial development. The researchers apply qualitative methods by collecting, organizing, and analysing data, and eventually drawing conclusions from it. Qualitative research is considered an effective approach because it occurs in a natural setting and enables a deeper level of detail to emerge from individuals who are directly engaged in the experience (Creswell, 2003).

The psychosocial development theory of Erik Erikson (1950) served as the primary theoretical framework for this research. Eight stages make up Erik Erikson's theory of the human life cycle, each of which denotes a distinct stage of human development (Snarey, 2011). Although the chronological age and cultural content may differ due to maturational variances in biological growth and cultural differences in the content and timing of social expectations, Erikson believed that everyone would experience each of the eight stages in the same sequential order. The psychosocial stages are basic trust versus basic mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus identity confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, ego integrity versus despair.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The film *Blonde* (2022), a fictionalized biographical portrayal of Marilyn Monroe, presents a selective depiction of her psychosocial development based on Erik Erikson's theory. The film focuses primarily on Monroe's emotional and psychological struggles rather than providing a comprehensive account of all her developmental stages. Upon analyzing the film, three of Erikson's eight psychosocial stages were identified as crucial elements in Monroe's portrayed psychological and emotional journey. These stages capture key aspects of her identity crisis, difficulties with intimacy, and struggles with a sense of purpose. The film focuses on Monroe's emotional and psychological challenges rather than offering a complete picture of her developmental stages. Three of Erikson's eight psychosocial stages were found as critical factors in Monroe's depicted psychological and emotional journey. These stages capture crucial features of her identity crisis, including difficulty with relationships and a sense of purpose. These are: **Identity vs. Role Confusion** (Stage 5), **Intimacy vs. Isolation** (Stage 6), and **Generativity vs. Stagnation** (Stage 7).

1. Identity vs. Role Confusion (Stage 5)



Figure 1. Blonde (2022), min. 00:17:05

This phase, which usually takes place throughout adolescence and early adulthood, is centred on identity building and self-discovery (Erikson, 1950, 1968). *Blonde* (2022) depicts Monroe's constant conflict between her Hollywood persona and her true self, Norma Jeane Mortenson. She often talks about her identity issues since she feels disconnected from the market's image. Monroe's identity dilemma in the film makes her confused about her roles as she seeks praise from others, including relationships and career success. She constantly doubts her worth and struggles to reconcile her past sorrow with Marilyn Monroe's glamorous but misleading façade. This depiction supports Erikson's theory that role ambiguity and psychological discomfort worsen her mental health and self-perception concerns due to her inability to define herself (Orenstein & Lewis, 2021; Aldwin et al., 2017).

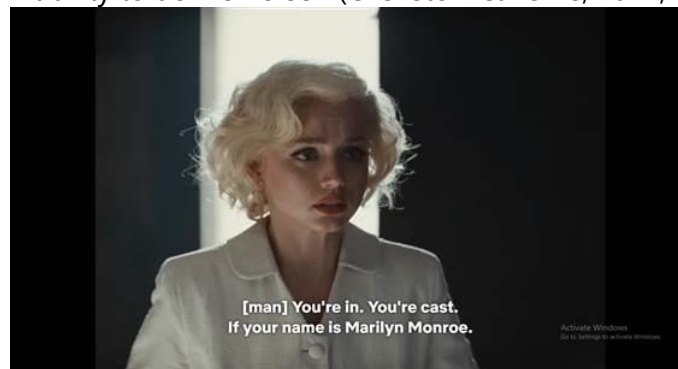


Figure 2. Blonde (2022) (2022), min. 00:20:08

At the Identity vs. Role Confusion stage, people develop and establish their character and self-image (Erikson, 1950). Norma Jeane tried to be Marilyn Monroe so she could live within herself. Starting with her financial troubles before entering the film industry, Norma Jeane leveraged her magazine modelling career to improve her life. She changed her hair colour and appearance to become Marilyn Monroe (Sahin & Basim, 2020). In *Blonde* (2022), Marilyn Monroe struggles to reconcile her identities as Norma Jeane and Marilyn Monroe. Marilyn Monroe's signature blonde hair was bleached from her reddish roots. The data shows this. *Blonde* (2022) depicts Marilyn Monroe's identity transformation at the commencement of her magazine modelling career, when she still had her natural hair colour. Erikson's notion that unresolved identity conflicts can cause psychological suffering, suggesting that her fame has not made her happier.

2. *Intimacy vs. Isolation (Stage 6)*

The discovery of love is an indication of accomplishment at this stage (Mcleod, 2024). Respect and trust between the two parties are essential for this stage to be successful. And if a person fails in this intimate stage, they will experience what is known as isolation. Isolation occurs when a person struggles in their romantic life and experiences rejection. In adulthood, this could lead to emotions of estrangement and feeling disconnected. Isolation, loneliness, and even melancholy can result from avoiding closeness and being terrified of commitment and relationships (Mcleod, 2024).



Figure 3. *Blonde*. Min 00:39:19

This stage is associated with early adult romance and is centred on developing deep, meaningful connections with other people. If they are prepared for intimacy, they can make firm commitments to partnerships, even when doing so may require major concessions and compromises (Erikson, 1993). Questions such as “Who can I share my life with?” start to appear in this stage (Snarey, 2011). The discovery of love is an indication of accomplishment at this stage (Mcleod, 2024). In an attempt to better themselves, a young adult starts looking for aspects of themselves in other people at this stage. According to Erik Erikson's Intimacy vs. Isolation stage, early-adults look for close emotional bonds. When someone is successful in the intimacy stage, they will have feelings of trust and belonging. The dancing couple is shown in this scene from *Blonde* (2022) with both of them entwined with one another, signifying closeness. However, they are also dancing in dim light with a somber black and white colour scheme. This contrast shows how intimacy is clearly present in the scene, but the dim lighting may also be seen as a relationship that is brittle and transient.



Figure 4. *Blonde*. Min 00:42:02

In order to develop emotional intimacy and connection, individuals in Erik Erikson's Intimacy vs. Isolation stage look for meaningful, long-lasting connections. Physical contact is depicted in this scene from *Blonde* (2022), implying a need for acceptance, love, and connection. Though the composition also begs the question of whether this connection is real or just an effort to fill an emotional need, the linked bodies and intense embrace graphically convey the desire for intimacy. The moment's intensity might represent a desire for intense love, but it also suggests a vulnerability in the pursuit of genuine emotional pleasure.



Figure 5. *Blonde*. Min. 01:20:01

Erik Erikson's Intimacy vs. Isolation Stages describe how people try to build meaningful relationships, with marriage often serving as a symbol of the dedication that characterizes successful intimacy. Marilyn Monroe's first husband's proposal to her in this scene from *Blonde* (2022) symbolizes the need for security, belonging and connectedness in a relationship. The idea that intimacy requires trust, vulnerability, and mutual commitment is reinforced by the act of proposing, which conveys a desire to move beyond the temporary relationship of the past and create a lifelong connection.



Figure 6. *Blonde*. Min. 1:41:49

According to Erik Erikson's 6th stage: Intimacy versus Isolation explain the period of romance during adulthood. According to Erikson (1993), Individuals in this stage are ready for deep relationships built on mutual trust, responsibility, and sacrifice. After a failed previous marriage, Monroe remarried with the man she loved. Despite her past, Monroe

reconciled with the situation and opened her heart, preparing to accept love and compassion again. In this data, Monroe was in frame with her beloved husband as proof that she was emotionally fulfilled with the love she has chosen. She decided to believe again, to trust and commit to the man again. She was renewed faith in love which reflects her longing for a sense of belonging and acceptance she was seeking. The scene above illustrates Monroe's desire to heal, to rebuild trust, and to find solace in love.

3. *Generativity vs. Stagnation (Stage 7)*



Figure 7. Blonde. Min. 01:47:19

Mastering the previous stage by engaging in intimacy, the stage is developed to the next stage: Generativity versus Stagnation. In this data, Monroe and her husband expected to have a baby. They took a walk in the garden and there was a scene where Monroe touched her belly indicating that she was carrying a baby. Erikson (1993) stated that generativity is an essential stage on psychosexual as well as on the psychological schedule. As an individual, I need to drive to nurture, guide, and contribute to the next generation. This stage expands beyond the legacy-building, caregiving and societal contribution. This can manifest in various forms such as raising children, mentoring, teaching, creating, or engaging in meaningful work.

4. *Trust vs. Mistrust (Stage 1)*

Monroe was raised in dangerous foster care without love or support due to her absent father and mother's mental instability. She couldn't form strong relationships without a caregiver, and she dreaded desertion. She needed confirmation because her instability made her feel undeserving of love and affection as an adult. Erikson's Trust versus Mistrust stage argues that inconsistent parental figures in early infancy may make it hard to trust and maintain stable relationships later in life (Erikson, 1950, 1968).

Monroe's childhood trauma affected her self-esteem. She mistrust harmed her personal and professional life with age. Her desire for confirmation exacerbated her emotional instability and prolonged her lifetime struggle with trust and self-acceptance (Orenstein & Lewis, 2021). She sought emotional security in relationships with men who could give her stability she hadn't experienced since childhood. She was desperate and feared abandonment. Her audience approval and love relationship needs lacked trust. She struggled to form meaningful relationships without inner stability (Aldwin et al., 2017).

5. *Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (Stage 2)*

Monroe lacked security and encouragement to develop autonomy as a foster child, unlike remorse and uncertainty. She struggled with relationships and confidence in unstable foster care. Monroe's challenging childhood didn't support Erikson's Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt stage's ongoing encouragement to develop talent and confidence. Not communicating and relying on others made her doubt herself. She doubts her opinions without proof (Sahin & Basim, 2020).

As she aged, her need for external validation became a desire for emotional and professional recognition, causing anxiety and dependence. Monroe had trouble being independent without her mother. Without explanation, she felt weak and useless. Early experiences made her manipulable personally and professionally (Orenstein & Lewis, 2021). Putting others' praise first ruined her career. She needed career advice from firm leaders, directors, and partners.

Monroe became needy and insecure. After being recognized, she wondered if she was improving or just meeting expectations (Erikson, 1968). Ambiguity caused emotional instability and self-doubt. Hollywood stardom constrained her. Outside self-worth affirmations hurt her.

6. *Initiative vs. Guilt (Stage 3)*

This level boosts confidence and initiative. Monroe was limited by early instability and lack of support (Erikson, 1950). She felt terrified to act alone. Her conduct and interests decreased after multiple foster care moves (Sahin & Basim, 2020). Monroe felt unworthy of success and feared defeat at every turn. This misconception led her to seek outside validation rather than trust her intuition as an adult.

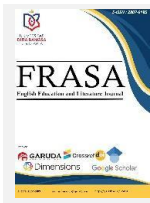
Monroe struggled without role models. In a stable environment, exploration, inquiry, and leadership teach children independence and self-efficacy. Monroe was advised to survive, not investigate (Orenstein & Lewis, 2021). She was hesitant to speak up because she was terrified to risk and decide alone. Monroe's age-related failure fear harmed her career and relationships.

She struggled with initiative and guilt throughout her career. She trusted directors, producers, and boyfriends above intuition. Her career emphasized scripted talks. She self-sabotaged and sought attention despite her talent and dedication. Shame and mistrust prevented her from leading, feeding infantile reliance (Erikson, 1950).

7. *Industry vs. Inferiority (Stage 4)*

Monroe's poor upbringing and lack of education slowed her development (Erikson, 1950). She questioned her intelligence in foster care and alone. She gained early self-esteem from her beauty and charisma. Her modelling and acting career was successful, but it didn't help her overcome her inferiority complex. Early intellectual and academic rejection led to career-long self-doubt.

Monroe first established financial stability, then expanded (Erikson, 1968). A WWII munitions firm photographer noted her oddities. This meeting led to her first Blue Book Model Agency position and popularity (Sahin & Basim, 2020). Modelling gave her self-confidence, which allowed her to enter movies. She worried about her IQ and skills, making her feel inferior despite her accomplishments.



Her inconsistent schooling left Monroe unorganized. Her frequent transfers harmed her grades and self-esteem. Her attractiveness helped her travel, but it hindered her outside of entertainment. Requiring outside approval hampered intelligence and career. Monroe doubted her worth privately (Aldwin et al., 2017).

8. *Ego Integrity vs. Despair (Stage 8)*

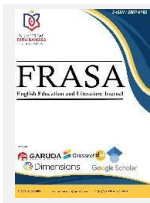
Monroe died late in life, therefore, *Blonde* (2022) does not represent this. The film shows she faced despair rather than integrity because of her long-standing self-worth and identity concerns. Unresolved psychological trauma from her unstable past and turbulent relationships would have caused immense regret and suffering. The film shows her seeking significance and acceptance but never finding calm. Erikson's psychosocial theory of development says she may have experienced despair and self-doubt had she lived longer (Erikson, 1950, 1968).

Unresolved psychological concerns may have made Monroe unhappy in late adulthood. Due to her lifelong need for validation and connection, she may have regretted her past and sought closure. Her emotional struggles in the film imply she was seeking completeness, supporting Erikson's idea that unresolved crises generate despair, which is a widely accepted concept. Monroe's legacy and entertainment business impact may have made her significant in late adulthood. Former troublemakers find comfort in mentorship and self-reflection. According to *Blonde* (2022), Monroe lacked emotional acceptance; therefore, mourning ruled her final years.

CONCLUSION

This analysis identified seven instances in the film that correspond with Erikson's theory: two related to the *Identity vs. Role Confusion* (Stage 5), four illustrating *Intimacy vs. Isolation* (Stage 6), and one reflecting *Generativity vs. Stagnation* (Stage 7). Among these, *Intimacy vs. Isolation* (Stage 6) is the most dominant stage, underscoring Monroe's struggles with forming meaningful relationships and her persistent battle with loneliness. This suggests that *Blonde* (2022) places significant emphasis on her isolation and emotional hardships, shaping the overall portrayal of her psychological journey. This study has real-world significance beyond theory. It can be used as a case study to connect psychological ideas with cultural representation, helping students better understand identity and development. It also supports media literacy by encouraging people to think critically about biopics and recognize how films can both reveal and distort the lives of historical figures. For the creative industries, it highlights the importance of portraying not only trauma but also independence and resilience, offering a fuller picture of psychological growth.

Blonde (2022) presents a selective portrayal of Monroe's psychosocial development, primarily focusing on her struggles with identity, intimacy, and stagnation. While these themes align with Erikson's theory, the film overlooks crucial developmental stages that could provide a more holistic understanding of her psychological state. By emphasizing the darker aspects of her life, *Blonde* (2022) highlights her emotional suffering but neglects her personal growth and resilience. A more balanced depiction would incorporate her professional achievements and moments of agency, offering a more complete view of her psychosocial development.



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