

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings of this study, which demonstrate that Prince Henry experiences identity conflict throughout the movie *Red, White and Royal Blue* (2023). The conflict is reflected in the way he responds to various situations that place his personal identity in opposition to the expectations attached to his role as a member of the British royal family. Rather than appearing as a single event, the conflict develops gradually as Henry struggles to balance his personal desires with the responsibilities imposed by his social position.

The analysis reveals that Henry expresses his identity conflict in three forms, namely internal emotional expression, nonverbal expression, and verbal expression. These forms of expression develop throughout the story. At the beginning of the film, Henry tends to suppress his emotions and avoid situations that force him to confront his personal identity. As the conflict intensifies, his responses gradually shift from emotional restraint and avoidance to open expression of his thoughts and feelings.

The findings also reveal that Henry's identity conflict is influenced by several interconnected factors, including expectations from the royal family, royal responsibilities, heteronormative social expectations, and his relationship with Alex. These factors interact, making it increasingly difficult for Henry to reconcile his personal identity with the social role he is expected to fulfill. The following

discussion interprets these findings in relation to Erikson's theory of identity development, Butler's queer theory, and prior studies.

A. Factor Causing Henry's Identity Conflict

This study examines the factors contributing to Prince Henry's identity conflict in *Red, White and Royal Blue* (2023). From the perspective of Erikson's psychosocial theory, identity conflict develops through the interaction between personal identity and the social environment. The findings indicate that Henry's conflict is not caused by a single factor, but rather by a combination of family expectations, royal responsibilities, social expectations, and his sexual identity. These factors interact with one another throughout the movie and create sustained psychological pressure, making it difficult for Henry to balance his true self with the role that

One of the main factors fueling Prince Henry's identity conflict is the expectations imposed by his family. Throughout the film, Henry is repeatedly reminded that, as a member of the British royal family, his personal desires must always be set aside for the sake of the monarchy. These expectations limit his freedom to make personal decisions, especially regarding his relationship with Alex. As a result, Henry constantly experiences a tension between what he truly wants and what his family expects of him, making his family's expectations the primary source of his identity conflict.

From the perspective of Erikson's psychosocial theory, the family plays a crucial role in the development of a person's identity. When family

expectations conflict with a person's personal values or aspirations, an identity conflict can arise as the individual struggles to reconcile these conflicting demands. Erikson (1968) argued that identity develops through interactions with significant others and the surrounding social environment. In Henry's case, the royal family's expectations prevented him from freely expressing his personal identity, leading him to prioritize his role as a prince over his own emotional needs. This imbalance made it increasingly difficult for Henry to achieve a stable sense of identity.

The importance of family in shaping identity has also been emphasized in previous studies. Branje (2022) explains that identity development is greatly influenced by close interpersonal relationships, particularly those within the family, because these relationships provide expectations, values, and guidance that shape how individuals understand themselves. Similarly, Leung (2021) found that family expectations can be a source of identity conflict when they restrict individuals from making choices that reflect their true selves. In line with these studies, this research finds that Henry's identity conflict was exacerbated by his family's expectations. However, in contrast to previous studies that examined the influence of family within a broader developmental context, this study specifically demonstrates how family expectations contribute to identity conflict within the unique context of the British royal family, where personal identity is strictly governed by institutional obligations.

Another factor contributing to Henry's identity conflict is his responsibility as a member of the British royal family. Throughout the film, Henry is expected to prioritize the reputation and stability of the monarchy over his personal interests. This responsibility influences many of his decisions, including his reluctance to openly pursue a relationship with Alex. As a result, Henry constantly feels that his personal identity cannot be separated from his public role, creating an ongoing conflict between his personal desires and the obligations inherent in his position as a prince.

From the perspective of Erikson's psychosocial theory, social roles and responsibilities are key elements that influence identity development. Erikson (1968) explains that identity conflicts tend to arise when individuals struggle to integrate their personal identities with the roles expected of them by society. Henry's position as a prince requires him to prioritize institutional interests over his own happiness, making it difficult for him to freely express his identity. This interpretation is further supported by Butler (1999), who argues that social institutions reinforce norms governing how individuals should behave in accordance with their social positions. In Henry's case, the monarchy functions as an institution that shapes his behavior and limits the ways in which he can express his personal identity, thereby exacerbating the identity conflict he experiences.

The influence of social roles on identity has also been highlighted in previous studies. Leung (2021) explains that identity conflict can arise when individuals are expected to fulfill social responsibilities that conflict with

their personal identities. Similarly, Mashuri et al. (2024) found that Henry's status as a prince significantly influenced the choices he made regarding his relationship with Alex. Although previous research has primarily emphasized Henry's decision to maintain his relationship despite facing such pressure, this study focuses on the psychological impact of these responsibilities. The findings indicate that Henry's royal duties are not merely external obligations but also important psychosocial factors contributing to the development of his identity conflict.

Another factor contributing to Henry's identity conflict is the social expectations placed upon him as a member of the British royal family. Throughout the movie, Henry is expected to maintain an image that reflects the monarchy's values and traditions. These expectations influence how he behaves in public and prevent him from openly expressing his personal identity. As a result, Henry feels compelled to hide part of himself to avoid disappointing the public and damaging the royal family's reputation.

Through Erikson's psychosocial theory, identity is formed through ongoing interaction between an individual and their social environment. In Henry's case, public expectations intensify the pressure to conform to the image of an ideal prince, making it increasingly difficult for him to reconcile his personal identity with his public role. Erikson (1968) argued that identity conflict can arise when social expectations prevent individuals from expressing their true selves. This interpretation is further supported by Butler (1999), who explains that social norms dictate which identities are

considered acceptable within a given society. Consequently, Henry faces additional pressure because he believes that openly expressing his identity would conflict with the expectations associated with his royal status.

The influence of social expectations on identity has also been recognized in previous research. Yocheva (2024) argues that *Red, White and Royal Blue* depicts same-sex relationships within a broader social and political context, demonstrating that the characters' personal experiences cannot be separated from the expectations of the communities in which they live. Similarly, Galliher et al. (2017) explain that identity develops through ongoing interactions with the social and cultural environment. In line with these studies, this research finds that Henry's identity conflict is exacerbated by the expectations of those around him. However, this study specifically explains how these expectations function as psychosocial factors that shape both the development and expression of Henry's identity conflict.

The final factor contributing to Henry's identity conflict is his sexual identity. Throughout the movie, Henry becomes aware of his feelings for Alex and comes to terms with his sexual identity. However, rather than clarifying his true self, this realization becomes a source of further conflict because he believes his identity does not align with the expectations attached to his position as a prince. As a result, Henry experiences increasing psychological pressure as he struggles to balance his feelings with the responsibilities and expectations surrounding his royal status.

From the perspective of Erikson's psychosocial theory, identity development involves integrating various aspects of the self into a coherent, stable identity. Erikson (1968) explains that identity conflict can arise when individuals have difficulty accepting or expressing a certain aspect of themselves because it conflicts with social expectations. In Henry's case, his sexual identity was not the direct cause of the conflict. Rather, the conflict arose because he felt that expressing this identity would conflict with the responsibilities and expectations inherent in his status as a member of the British royal family. Butler's theory (1999) further supports this interpretation by stating that social norms shape which identities are considered acceptable, thereby influencing how individuals understand and express themselves within specific social contexts.

This interpretation is supported by previous studies examining the character of Prince Henry in *Red, White and Royal Blue*. Mashuri et al. (2024) explain that Henry ultimately chooses to acknowledge his identity and maintain his relationship with Alex despite facing various pressures, while Zahira (2024) emphasizes that Henry's identity development cannot be separated from the social context surrounding his relationship. These findings align with this study in showing that Henry's sexual identity plays a significant role in his personal development. However, unlike previous studies, this study shows that Henry's sexual identity becomes a source of identity conflict only when it interacts with psychosocial factors such as family expectations, royal responsibilities, and social expectations.

Therefore, these findings suggest that Henry's identity conflict is not solely rooted in his sexual identity but rather develops through the interaction between his personal identity and the psychosocial environment in which he lives.

B. Expression of Henry's Identity Conflict

This study examines Prince Henry's Identity Conflict in the movie *Red, White and Royal Blue* (2023) from the perspective of Erikson's Psychosocial theory. The findings indicate that Henry's identity conflict is expressed in three forms: internal emotional expression, verbal expression, and non-verbal expression. Furthermore, the findings reveal that Henry's identity conflict is influenced by several psychosocial factors, including family expectations, royal responsibilities, social expectations, and his sexual identity. From Erikson's perspective, these findings reflect the difficulties Henry faces in balancing his personal identity with the expectations inherent in his role as a member of the British royal family. Butler's theory of performativity further supports this interpretation by explaining how social norms and institutional expectations shape Henry's understanding and expression of his identity. The following discussion explains these findings by relating them to relevant theories and previous research.

The findings of this study is that Prince Henry most often expressed his identity conflict through internal emotional expression. Throughout the movie, Henry tended to suppress emotions such as fear, anxiety, sadness

and guilt rather than expressing them openly. This pattern suggests that his identity conflict first developed as an internal psychological struggle before becoming apparent through his words or actions. Rather than confronting this conflict directly, Henry repeatedly kept his emotions to himself because he felt responsible for maintaining the image expected of him as a prince.

From the perspective of Erikson's psychosocial theory, Henry's emotional response reflects the tension between his personal identity and expectations imposed by his environment. Erikson (1968) argues that identity development requires individuals to integrate their sense of self with the roles and expectations imposed by society. The failure to achieve this integration may lead to role confusion. In Henry's case, he is aware of his feelings and recognizes his personal identity, yet he believes that expressing those feelings would conflict with his obligations as a member of the British royal family. Consequently, rather than resolving the conflict, Henry suppresses his emotions, causing them to develop into prolonged psychological distress.

The above interpretation is also supported by previous studies that examine identity development in relation to social contexts. Galliher et al. (2017) explain that identity develops through ongoing interactions with the social environment. Mosanya and Kwiatkowska (2023) argue that identity can become fragmented when individuals experience conflicting social roles. However, in contrast to those studies, which examine identity development within a broader social context, this study specifically shows

how psychosocial pressures influence Prince Henry's emotional responses in *Red, White and Royal Blue*. These findings suggest that Henry's internal emotional expressions are not simply personal reactions but rather a reflection of the psychosocial conflict arising from the mismatch between his personal identity and the expectations inherent in his royal status.

In contrast to internal emotional expression, Henry's identity conflict was revealed only verbally after the emotional pressure had built over time. Throughout most of the movie, he chose to remain silent and avoid discussing his personal struggle with others. Only when he could no longer contain his emotions did he openly explain the pressures he faced as a member of the British royal family. These findings suggest that verbal expression was not Henry's initial response to his identity conflict, but rather the result of prolonged emotional tension that ultimately forced him to communicate his thoughts and feelings.

From the perspective of Erikson's psychosocial theory, these findings reflect a crucial stage in the identity development process. When these two aspects cannot be reconciled, an individual may experience psychological tension that persists until the conflict is acknowledged. Erikson (1968) argued that identity is formed through the interaction between personal identity and social expectations. Henry's decision to finally express his feelings indicates that he was no longer able to suppress the tension caused by the contradiction between his personal identity and his responsibilities as a prince. Therefore, his verbal expression represents an effort to

communicate the identity conflict that had been developing within him over a long period.

This interpretation is also supported by previous studies that view identity as a process shaped through interactions with others. Galliher et al (2017) explain that identity is constantly negotiated within social and cultural contexts, meaning that individuals often express their identities in response to the expectations of those around them. A similar pattern can be observed in Henry's experience, as his willingness to express his feelings only emerged when he was confronted by Alex. However, in contrast to previous research that discusses identity negotiation in general, this study shows the verbal experiences of someone who must balance personal identity with institutional responsibilities.

Another finding of this study is that Prince Henry often expresses his identity conflict through non-verbal expressions. Rather than communicating his feelings directly, he frequently responds to emotionally difficult situations by avoiding conversation, withdrawing from others, remaining silent, or leaving the situation entirely. These behaviors recur throughout the movie, especially when Henry faces situations that compel him to choose between his personal desires and his responsibilities as a prince. This pattern suggests that non-verbal expression is one of Henry's primary ways of coping with the psychological pressure caused by his identity conflict.

Through Erikson's psychosocial theory, Henry's nonverbal behavior reflects his difficulty adjusting his personal identity to the social roles expected of him. Erikson (1968) explains that identity conflict occurs when an individual is unable to integrate their sense of self with the expectations imposed by society. Instead of resolving this tension through open communication, Henry repeatedly chooses avoidance as a coping strategy. His tendency to distance himself from emotionally challenging situations suggests the conflict remains unresolved because he cannot find a balance between his personal identity and his obligations as a member of the royal family. This interpretation is further supported by Butler's theory (1999), which argues that social norms govern how individuals present and express their identities. In Henry's case, the expectations attached to his royal status limit the ways in which he can respond to his personal feelings, leading him to suppress those feelings through nonverbal behavior rather than expressing them openly.

The above interpretation is also supported by previous studies that highlight the influences of social context on identity development. Galliher et al. (2017) argue that identity is continuously shaped through interaction with the surrounding environment. Branje (2022) emphasizes that identity development involves an ongoing process of balancing personal needs and social expectations. In line with these studies, this research indicates that Henry's behavior is strongly influenced by the social environment in which he lives. However, this study shows how unresolved psychosocial conflicts

are reflected through observable non-verbal behavior, such as withdrawal, avoidance, and emotional distance throughout the movie.

The findings of the present study are generally consistent with previous studies on *Red, White and Royal Blue*, although they differ in terms of research focus and analytical perspective. Previous studies have primarily examined queer identity and the relationship between Alex and Henry from different perspectives. Nafalitha (2023) investigated readers' responses to queer representation in the novel and found that many readers viewed the representation positively, although some criticized the emphasis on sexual intimacy over emotional development. Meanwhile, Yocheva (2024) argued that both the novel and the film portray queer relationships not merely through sexuality but also as emotionally meaningful stories that reflect broader social and political issues. In addition, Zahira (2024) and Mashuri et al. (2024) emphasized Henry's struggle to acknowledge his identity and his decision to maintain his relationship with Alex despite the expectations associated with his royal status. These studies collectively demonstrate that identity and social expectations are central themes in *Red, White and Royal Blue*.

Despite these similarities, the present study offers a different perspective from previous research. Rather than focusing on queer representation, readers' responses, or Henry's decision to express his sexual identity, this study examines how Prince Henry articulates his identity conflict and identifies the factors contributing to it throughout the film. Using Erikson's theory of identity development and Butler's theory of performativity, this study demonstrates that Henry's conflict is shaped not only by his sexual identity but also by the interaction between his personal identity,

institutional expectations, royal responsibilities, and social norms. Consequently, the findings provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological process underlying Henry's identity conflict.

Therefore, the present study extends existing research on *Red, White and Royal Blue* by shifting the discussion from the representation of queer identity to the psychological dynamics of identity conflict. The findings explain not only the factors that contribute to Henry's identity conflict but also how it is expressed through internal emotional, verbal, and nonverbal means. In doing so, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of Prince Henry's character and offers an additional perspective for future studies examining identity conflict in literary and film contexts.