

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Woman Thou Art Loosed is a novel that is a signature work and a national religious bestseller in New York written by Thomas Dexter (T. D.) Jakes. This book got NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work, Fiction and adapted into screenplay with the same title *Woman Thou Art Loosed: On the 7th Day* (2012).

Woman Thou Art Loosed tells about Michelle Jordan as the main character inside of the novel. She is being a victim of her mother's boyfriend (Reggie) when she is 12 years old. She is raped by her mother's boyfriend when Reggie was drunk, and this accident influences her psychology and becomes depressed and also brings impact toward her life further. Not only that, the relation Michelle has with her mother (Cassey) became worse too because of the incident. At the same time her mother's disbelief that her boyfriend raped her daughter, because her mother thinks that she is lying. She thought that Michelle blames the faults of others and Reggie is accused as the culprit. Day by day Michelle grew up fast with too many men, too many strangers and too many betrayals. Lost and sentenced to a private hell of abuse, addiction, poverty and crime. Michelle has now been given a second chance to reclaim her life. But first she has to believe in the possible. She has to believe in herself. What it takes to free her is the one thing Michelle thought she should never have. It is called faith.

With regard to this research the writer concludes that *Woman Thou Art Loosed* is the novel that emphasizes the importance of Michelle's character in defining her

identities which is dynamic. Mothers play a significant role in determining the identity formation of her daughter from childhood to adulthood. Because of that the children who fail to form successful relationships with their parents will have trouble handling relationship in the future. So that is why, the writer thinks that in identity formation parents have an important role in shaping identity. This object makes the writer is very interesting to be analyzed. The writer hopes this research can give beneficial knowledge of identity formation, not only for the writer but also for the readers that the dynamic of identity formation should not be considered lightly, because it will determine who we are in the future.

Concerning about identity the writer realizes that human's identity could be formed through the conditions in our surrounding which support human's subjectivity as identification of their identity to show who they are. Why? Because, the conditions can identify human's identity to determine she or he identity formation. In the following time, human's trait, job, pleasure are determined by their identity. Therefore, identity formation is crucial thing in human's life in order to force the individual choices and decisions, lead to commitments for life and to show the existence within the society.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, an identity basically refers to the distinguishing character or personality of an individual (Identity, 2011). This personality is unique to us alone and it is honed along the process of growing up. Identity development starts with an infant's discovery of self and continues throughout childhood before becoming the focus of adolescence (Identity Development - Aspects of Identity, 2010). Which means that the uniqueness

comes from the difference between “*I*” and “*Others*” that’s why there is no human being that have same identity because the identity can be fickle influenced by space and time.

Since humans revise their identity over time, means that human experiences the lack because not all human’s need is fulfilled. Therefore, they have desire to experience something in order to fulfill what they perceived as lack. The desire which come from subconscious actuates human’s life. Meanwhile, lack will continue to run throughout the course of human life, so that people are encouraged to always fulfill their needs in order to achieve satisfaction and wholeness. The idea above in line with this quotation:

“Human beings as subjects perceive have lack because it is believed as a fragment of something bigger and primordial”
(Sarup, 2011: 26).

In order to achieve needs satisfaction and desirability, it could be obtained through anything just like education, jobs, love and so on. Identity is the important thing in order to differentiate one to other. The easiest way to recognize someone’s identity is through physical appearance, or through names meanwhile in particular statement identity can be seen in two ways, they are essentialist and non-essentialist perspective (Gilles and Middleton, 1999). The essentialist perspective sees the identity is biological characteristic (genetics) in which cannot change forever just like physical identity. Meanwhile, non-essentialist perspective is a view that identity is related to each other and influenced by the time, place and it could be changed. Both these views can be taken into consideration to see the individual's identity because a lot of things around us that can affect the

identity between physically (genetics) and culture (religion, education, technology, employment).

The concept of identity can be understood from many perspectives. It has been used within contexts of culture, groups, and individuals by, for instance, historians, social scientist, and psychologists (Grotevant, 1998). Due to its multidimensionality, it has been defined in various ways, depending on the focus of the study. Personal identity indicates concrete aspects of individual experience rooted in interactions, and ego identity refers to the fundamental subjective sense of continuity that is characteristic of the personality. In spite of their emphasis, these different research approaches share an understanding of identity as the dynamic balance between sameness and change, and between subjective and objective perspective (Bosma, 1995; Kroger, 2007). In this case, Michelle personal identity was developed by individual experience rooted in interactions relationship that effect her identity.

Regarding to this research this study aims to discover how Michelle character in the story are responsible for determining her identities through her life. According to Erikson (1968), identity formation is a central developmental task in adolescence, and it provides a person with a sense of sameness and continuity across the time and place. In fact, only about half of young people have been found to obtain an achieve identity by early adulthood. It means the formation it depends on our interactions as human social. This research focuses on core identity formation. It also strives to create an understanding of how the object

relations theory can be incorporated into the dynamic of identity formation context based on the novel.

According to the object relations theory, early trauma like abuse can cause a pathological delay of the developmental sequence (Klee, 2007a). This leads to personality disorders such as schizoid and the narcissist. In this case, Michelle experiences various bad things in her life from adolescence until adulthood until she can determine her identity. Since emotional encounter on each story and psychological issue of major character related to identity formation which is dynamic could be seen dominantly, so it can be said that Jake's work contains of psychological element within Michelle Jordan character. To assist this discussion, the writer uses psychological approach. And also the writer uses the object relations theory to reach this research. This study benefits students of literature as the writer offering them different angles of looking at the novel.

1.2 Research Question

According to the background of the study which has been elaborated previously, the writer formulates research question into:

How is the dynamic of identity formation of Michelle Jordan character in *Woman Thou Art Loosed?*

1.3 Research Objective

From the research question above, the research objective is to explain Michelle Jordan identity formation which is dynamic through the object relations theory.

1.4 Uses of the study

1.4.1 Theoretical Uses

Theoretically, the writer hopes it will broaden the knowledge about the dynamic identity formation in main character of the novel. And then the researcher is aimed to enrich the field of literary study, so it will be advantageous not only for the researcher but also for the readers who are interested in analyzing the same topic.

1.4.2 Practical Uses

Practically, this research is expected to give benefit not only for the writer but also for the reader, for certain overview of knowledge about the dynamic identity formation in characteristic Michelle Jordan in *Woman Thou Art Loosed*. The writer hopes it will inspire for the students of school of foreign language Teknokrat who need information about identity formation which is dynamic.

1.5 Scope of the Study

Referring to the ideas that have been explained in the background, the writer gives the limitation in this research; the discussion focuses on identity formation which is dynamic. The study only includes Michelle Jordan character in *Woman Thou Art Loosed*. Meanwhile the other characters will not be covered unless required if related to the discussion about the identity formation of Michelle Jordan.