

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of The Study

Reading novel can be beneficial for us. Not only as an entertainment but also reading novel can be useful to broaden our knowledge, sense of empathy, and moral. Experts also stated that reading novel trains our ‘imagination and sensitivity of human conditions and experiences (Yanklowitz, 2014). Reading can also create an actual social bond between the reader and the characters (Begley, 2016), for example, fans of any fictional enterprise can feel real grief when a favorite character dies. It means that readers can imagine and sense the characterization throughout the stories that they ended up feels attach to the characters in the novel, it can be said that the friendship is imaginary, but the emotional attachment is real (Begley, 2016).

In reading novel, readers also learn not only the story but also the issues or themes that it carries about human’s life. Novel as a form of narrative shares more complexity than short story since novel depicts human’s life events more comprehensively. Usually novel brings up several issues or themes that is why novel is more complex compared to short stories.

In recent years, fiction novels are very popular amongs adolescence. Such as Harry Potter, Percy Jackson, and Hunger Games are fiction novels that categorize as teen literature or young adult literature. Wibowo (2019) conveyed that young adult novels are mostly concerned with coming of age journey, telling the life of a young adult protagonist and how he or she deal with

issues. Furthermore, Millard (2007) states that coming-of-age story tells the young adult character's progress from naive (inexperienced) trait to maturity. This kind of novel also portrays frequent self-consciousness of a young adult. Coming of age journey as portrayed in young adult literature can be very challenging for the character because it presents the character with various unpredictable problems so that they can learn, change, and grow up in order to find their identity. One of novels that the writer reads that have several issues about growing up and finding identity throughout the story is *Red at The Bone* by Jacqueline Woodson.

Brief explanation of Jacqueline Woodson as the author of *Red at The Bone*, she was born in February 12, 1963 at Coumbus, Ohio. Scutts (2020) stated that, she was known for her works that revolve around the stories of black children and teenagers. Ever since Woodson was a children, she love to hear and tell stories, in her personal website she stated that "I loved and still love watching words flower into sentences and sentences blossom into stories", shows how great her passion in literary works. This fifty eight years old writer had produces numerous award winning novel such as *Miracle's Boys*, and her Newbery Honor-winning titles *Brown Girl Dreaming*, *After Tupac and D Foster*, *Feathers*, and *Show Way*. She was also titled as National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, by the Library of Congress.

Jacqueline Woodson's 2019 *Red at the Bone* is a work of fiction that centers on the coming together of two dissimilar families because of a teen pregnancy. Highly acclaimed and award-winning author Woodson offers a

counternarrative to the familiar tale of teenage pregnancy while considering how identity intersects with class, race, sexuality, gender, and history.

*Red at the Bone* begins with a conversation between sixteen-year-old Melody and her mother, Iris, as Melody gets ready for her birthday ceremony. While she listens to Prince, her mother's white dress, which Melody will wear for the ceremony, lays on the bed. Iris explains to her that, because she became pregnant with Melody at fifteen, she never had her ceremony, and the dress has been unworn since. Melody reflects on a time when she was a young child and idolized her mother. However, because Iris was absent for much of her childhood, she began to call her mother by her first name. When Melody says that she knows Iris did not want her, Iris responds that she did but had to hide her pregnancy from her deeply religious parents.

Eventhough the novel center on how Iris struggle with teenage pregnancy and her journey to find identity, Melody story as Iris's daughter on how she endures trauma and pain of the absence of mother figure is also attract the writer interest to study her character thoroughly too to see their psychosocial development as well as their relationship throughout the story.

To enrich the researcher knowledge of how to implement psychosocial development theory in research, there are several previous study that act as guidance for the researcher in analyze Melody and Iris's psychosocial development. One of research that analyze psychosocial development in fiction novel is a Journal that created by Meriska, Sili, and Wati titled *Psychosocial Development Of Anna Fitzgerald In My Sister's Keeper Novel By Jodi Picoult*

(2018) This journal analysed Anna Fitzgerald's character through two theories to find out her identity. Erikson's psychosocial development in the fifth stage was used to analyze of how Anna Fitzgerald got through the development as thirteen years old children in defining her own identity, successfully or not.

Another references that the writer use in this study is research journal by Raden Nur Prasetyo Wibowo titled *A Psychosocial Development of a Young Adult Character in Thirteen Reasons Why Novel*. In this research, Wibowo used Bucher and Hinton's (2010) developmental characteristics of young adults. The present research investigates the main character's psychosocial development. The purposes of this study are to enlist Clay Jensen's psychosocial issues and to discover how he copes with these issues as part of psychosocial development.

Other research journal that helps to strenghten this thesis is journal conducted by Ali Sabri Abuhassan and Mohd Nazri Latiff Azmi named *Psychosocial Development Portrayed In Jane Austen's Emma*. This journal explore bildungsroman phenomenon as depicted in Jane Austen's Emma using psychosocial development that coined by Erikson. This paper particularly traced Emma's psychological and social development since this type of development is the basic ingredient of any bildungsroman novel. the study revealed that she did not really mature neither she realized her own identity.

From the explanation above the researcher found that there hasn't been any previous research that uses Jacqueline Woodson's Red at The Bone novel as corpus and the researcher found that there are many evidence that shows psychosocial development that can be analyze inside the story. Another reason

why the researcher choose to study Melody and Iris's psychosocial development is because psychosocial development analysis is rarely been conducted in recent years. The writer also think that by conduct this research, it could add significant impact to enrich character analysis especially research that use psychosocial development and attachment theory.

In order to gain significant and scientific results of the research, writers intent to use 8 stages of psychosocial development theory of Erik Erikson. Erik Erikson (1902–1994) was a stage theorist who took Freud's controversial theory of psychosexual development and modified it as a psychosocial theory. Erikson emphasized that the ego makes positive contributions to development by mastering attitudes, ideas, and skills at each stage of development. This mastery helps children grow into successful, contributing members of society. During each of Erikson's eight stages, there is a psychological conflict that must be successfully overcome in order for a child to develop into a healthy, well-adjusted adult.

To strengthen and support Erik Erikson theory, writer also intent to use attachment theory that was introduce by John Bowlby in 1969. While Psychosocial development use as a tool to uncover the journey of Melody and Iris in enduring psychosocial issues and trauma from their childhood to adulthood, the use of attachment theory aim to disclose the relationship between Iris and Melody as mother and daughter. Bowlby describing attachment as a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings ( Bowlby, J. 1969). Moreover in his study Bowlby is interested to understand anxiety and distress that children experience

when they are separated with the caregivers. Attachment according to Bowlby is an emotional bond between people. He believes that the first ever bond created are between children and mother as caregivers. Thus bond meant to keep infants close to their mother in order to increase the child chances of survival. The important role in this theory is caregiver (mother), because mother is the person who always gives more time for her children in their family. It has begun when the baby was born. Bowlby believes that there are four distinguishing characteristics of attachment that furthermore explained in the following chapter.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

- a. What is the psychosocial development of Melody and Iris Characters that revealed in Red at The Bone novel?;
- b. How is Melody and Iris relationship depicted in Red at The Bone novel?

### **1.3 Objective of The Study**

Based on the research problems above, this study aims at exploring how is Melody and Iris characters psychosocial development is revealed throughout the Red at the Bone novel, and exploring what factors influence the two character's psychosocial development.

### **1.4 Significant of The Study**

In accordance with background of the study and objective of the study, theoretically, this research will add the information about the theory of psychosocial development developed by Erik Erikson and Attachment theory by John Bowlby. Practically, this research will be useful to help other researchers especially in the field of English Literature to take this study as a reference for



those who want to conduct the research about Red at The Bone novel by Jacqueline Woodson or even a research about the theory of psychosocial development and attachment theory.

