

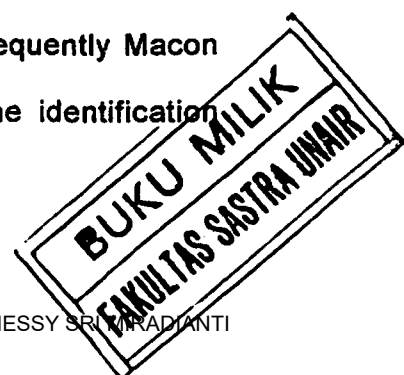
## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

*Song of Solomon* is a story about a young Afro-American who strives to find his self-identity in order to free himself from the pessimism of the future of his life. Then because the main character is a young Afro-American, the conflicts that arise must be much dealing with the identity crisis. Next this crisis must be ended in maturity and awareness of self in order to gain a happy life for the future generation of Afro-Americans and in order to form a stable Afro-American society in the future.

Milkman's surrounding society has many influences on his psychological and sociological development. Milkman's unhappy childhood in his disorganized family has left a strong negative image on his life and self. Furthermore Milkman's peer group also strengthens that image.

Milkman was from an Afro-American family that lived in the North. Like most of the Northerner Afro-American families, Milkman's family was also uprooted from its cultural heritage in the past. It caused an absence of family tradition in Macon Dead's family and also the majority of movable Afro-American families. Moreover, Milkman's family was a disorganized family in which there was no love and caring among its members. Therefore Macon Dead could not hand over the traditional value which was useful in building the self-identity. Consequently Macon Dead's children, especially Milkman, failed to acquire the identification which normal family supplied.



In his childhood inside his disorganized family, Milkman had already saw the unpromising future of his life and the unhappy, lifeless life because he felt that his life was meaningless and worthless. It was due to the failure of his family to give him guidance, love, and affection and its failure to pass on culture that was essential for acquiring a child's 'self-identity'. That is why he was longing to seek a freedom from those feelings above.

Like most of children, Milkman needed love from his mother and guidance from his father. However, Ruth failed to satisfy Milkman's hunger of a motherhood love. Ruth could not show her love openly to Milkman. Therefore Milkman saw her as a woman who abandoned him for her collar job and for the past remembrance.

Ruth's abandonment of Milkman was due to her husband's abandonment and the feeling of shame. It was because Milkman's origin was like an illegitimate child since she got Milkman because of Pilate's spell in her husband. Moreover Milkman was also her object to satisfy her need of her husband. On the other hand, from the beginning, Macon Dead saw Milkman merely as a failure, a shame, and a burden because he hated his wife so much. Then because of this enormous hate and suspicious of his wife, Macon Dead doubted that Milkman's sisters were his daughters and he even tried to kill Milkman before he was born.

Macon Dead preferred loving his job and status to his family. Therefore, he never gave a father's love and guidance to his children especially Milkman. However, since Milkman was the only son he had,

Macon Dead still kept Milkman but the purpose was only to continue his *man's business* and to get what we wanted.

Like most of the Afro-American children from the disorganized families, Milkman was precarious and fragmentary. When he grew up, his father told a shocking story about his mother's incest with his grandfather's dead body. Because of it, Milkman became to disbelieve the behavior of the adults. Therefore, he needed adults who had a noble manner and who lived in a consistent set of values or norms. Boys usually idolize and look at his father. Nevertheless Milkman's father could not satisfy this need since he ignored him. Then Milkman became suffered from the uncertainty and the pessimism because there was no adult who provided the model or image of the values that had to help him to shape his personality.

Those facts above urged him to find another person who was willing to give them for him. However he had to choose the best person who he could depend on. A Person who could lead him out from the uncertainty and the pessimism of his life and also could guide him to gain a promising future. The best friend and the closest relatives were choices for him.

First he ran to his peers. He chose his best friend, Guitar to explain all the uncertainty in his life and to guide him out of it. However, Guitar himself also came from a disorganized family. Therefore his life was also as uncertain as Milkman's life. Although he looked wise but he wasn't mature yet. Even his heart was stiffened by hatred toward whites. Therefore his attitude suddenly changed from 'good' to 'bad'. Then

Milkman finally turned his choice to his father's sister or his aunt, Pilate, to be his guidance. In Milkman's view, Pilate was the only person in Michigan whose attitude, behavior, and life value were different from most of Michigan people but they were more reasonable for him. Moreover she was the only person who introduced about love, caring and family tie to him and who taught Milkman about discipline and habits which were necessary for his personality development.

Along with the growth of his age and experience, Milkman's need to search his 'self' became stronger and more unbearable. He was longing to set up his own life in order to have a better life than the life he had had. But due to the lack of a wise guidance from his parents especially his father, Milkman drew a wrong conclusion. He thought that status, money, and prosperity were the most important matters in man's life so that a man had to have them first in order to get a bright future and happiness in life. Therefore Milkman equalized the gold as a bridge to free himself from the uncertainty of the future of his life. Consequently, Milkman ran after it directly to the land that he had never visited before.

Then after having searched for the gold for days in a hard journey, Milkman became to realize that his treasure hunt was in vain. However Milkman still got a more worth valued experience than the gold itself from his journey. Because during his gold hunt, Milkman met so many people from different society background, region, and way of life. Therefore the learning process of socialization that Milkman's family and Michigan society failed to give, was taken over by the Southern society. That is why, this long, hard, and tiring journey succeeded in changing Milkman's

character from an ignorant person to a better person. A person who had already used all human's senses for humanity. A person who communicated with the other people for the sake of togetherness and peacefulness. Or in short, Milkman changed to be a cultured person who could behave in accordance with norms.

Thus, along with Milkman's changing behavior and manner, Milkman could reveal the mystery of his family lineage from the children's folk song, *Song of Solomon*. Therefore after revealing his ancestors' names—one thing that hardly Afro-American could do because of the influence of years under the slavery system—Milkman got his self-respect, his awareness, and his dignity which meant that he succeeded in obtaining his self-identity and his freedom. The freedom here was defined as the freedom from the feeling of uncertain and pessimistic to gain a better future, from the feeling of being alienated and worthless, from racism and from the identity crisis. Then these feelings brought him closer to his ancestor.

At the end, it is not only the Afro-American young generations like Milkman but also all young generations in the world must pass every crisis in life safely. If they do not pass this crisis successfully, they will lose their selves. Later this lost will lead to a confusion and a pessimism to see the future. Just like Milkman, he had once trapped in confusion and pessimism that made him looked like a lifeless human being. It was due to the lack of guidance and lesson on culture and norm from his parents and his surrounding society in Michigan. However after Milkman entered a totally different type of society from his hometown's society that was

**caring, loving and upholding the norms and humanity, he finally succeeded in gaining his self-identity and his dignity. Thus by obtaining his 'self' Milkman can be a free man who is able to speak proudly who he is, who is able to set up his own life, and who is able to value the human's life. Moreover by obtaining his 'self', Milkman can free himself from the pessimism and the uncertainty of his life.**

**Last but not least, if there are many young generations can be saved from their identity crisis, just like Milkman, the continuance of a society's life will be guaranteed and will last forever.**

# **BIBLIOGRAPHY**