THE ANALYSIS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN RICHARD WRIGHT’S NATIVE SON

A THESIS

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ABSTRAK

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Analysis

Literature comes from the word littera (Latin) which is the smallest element of alphabetical writing (Klarer, 1999 : 1). This definition looks simple in describing what literature is all about, because not all written works can be considered as literature. In addition, Klarer (1999 : 1) stated :

“The definitions, usually include additional adjective such as ‘aesthetic’ or ‘artistic’ to distinguish literary works from text of everyday use such as newspaper, legal documents or even scholarly writing.”

Based on the brief description above, being a form of written works of recognized artistic value is known as one of literature characteristic. In addition, another characteristic of literature are concerned with human interest, characterized by permanence, universality, coloring of imagination and artistic embellishment (Sinha, 1977:1). For that reason, it is clear that literature is essentially a creative act of the writer’s imagination in selecting, ordering and interpreting life experience in form of written works. It also gives more lessons through the aspect of human life such as social, cultural, moral and religious aspect. According to Wellek and Warren (1956:94), they stated that :

“Literature represents “life” and life in large measure, in social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been object of the literary imitation.”

It means that literature expresses reality without ignoring the environment, which influences the writing.
Generally, literature can be divided into three genres; poetry, prose and drama. Prose, as a genre of literature tells a story and portrays people in the society. As a form of prose, novel can be defined as a long fictional story in book form that express the idea of man’s life experience through the novelist’s skill. Novelist frequently focuses on tensions between individuals and the society (Peck, 1984:102). Therefore, novel can be considered as work of imagination in which prevailing social problems, such as gender, race, or class prejudice, and dramatized through its effect on the characters of a novel.

Racial discrimination is one of the worst social problems that still exist up to this very moment in every part of the world. It can be defined as the mistreatment of a group of people on the basis of race, color, and religion. Racial discrimination is also the belief that race accounts for differences in human character and that a particular race is superior to others. This problem is very serious because it always leads to destruction, not only to certain human being but also to the society. According to Michel Leiris (1963:8):

“Racism is one of most disturbing phenomena of the great revolution of the modern world. At the very time when industrial civilization is penetrating to all points of the globe and is uprooting men of every colour from their age-old traditions, a doctrine, speciously scientific in appearance, is invoked in order to rob these men of their full share in the advantage of the civilization forced upon them”

One of the novels that deal with racial discrimination issue is Native Son written by Richard Wright. The main concern of this novel is racial discrimination issue that took place in the United States of America. Although America may be a single nation, it is also one originally made up of immigrants who arrived not only from Europe and Asia, but forcibly as slaves from Africa and of Native Americans. Its population is the
most racially and culturally diverse in the world and for that reason is often referred to as a "Melting Pot". Unfortunately, with the blessing of multicultural diversity, racial discrimination in the US has a long history and is well known throughout the world; it stands as one of the most serious social problems ever existed.

Richard Wright (1908–1960) was known as “the father of Black American literature”. He was an African-American author that mostly concerned with racial themes. His work helped redefine discussions of race relations in America in the mid-20th century. His masterpiece, *Native Son*, was one of the earliest successful attempts to explain the racial divide in America in terms of the social conditions imposed on African-Americans by the dominant white society. It is a powerful novel because it represents the African American experience of oppression in America. *Native Son* is an exploration of how the pressure and racism of the American cultural environment affects black people, their feelings, thoughts, self-images, in fact, their entire lives. Therefore choosing *Native Son* as source of the analysis, the aim of showing readers about racial discrimination and its impact to the society can be properly displayed.

### 1.2 Problem of the Analysis

The analysis of this thesis has been focused on Racial Discrimination as described in Richard Wright’s Novel *Native Son*. Racial Discrimination refers to social gap which happened because of cultural differences, feeling of superiority, inferiority, prejudice and segregation. In reference to his matter, the problems that will be analyzed are:
a. What makes the Whites feel superior over the Blacks?
b. Why do the Blacks feel inferior over the Whites?
c. What are the ethnic and cultural differences between the Blacks and the Whites?
d. Why do prejudice and segregation make social gap between the Black and the White?

1.3 Objectives of the Analysis

The objectives of the analysis are:

a. To explain the superiority of the Whites over the Black.
b. To describe the Blacks inferiority over the White.
c. To portray cultural and ethnic differences between the Black and the White.
d. To explain the prejudice and segregation that create social gap between the Blacks and the White.

1.4. Scope of the Analysis

The scope of this thesis analysis is limited to the portrayal of characters as expressed in the novel. The characters are representing the Blacks and the Whites in terms of racial discriminations. Since racial discrimination relates to person both individual and social, the characters are very important to be analyzed. The analysis is limited to what they say, what they do and how they behave by representing their skin color. Thus, the scope is interconnected between the character and the racial discrimination that happens among the Blacks and the Whites as expressed in the novel.
1.5 Method of the Analysis

The main source of this analysis especially the data, is taken from the novel *Native Son* written by Richard Wright. The data are in form of quotations which are selected from the novel. The selection is oriented on the text which has connection with racial discrimination context as expressed in the novel.

The quotations are analyzed through interpretations. The interpretation is needed because the text is mostly stated implicitly rather than explicitly. In other words, literary works, such as novel, is much more concentrated on connotative meaning than denotative one. That is why the interpretation is described in order to analyze properly.

The method applied in this thesis writing is both intrinsic and extrinsic approaches. The former suggest the internal elements of literature and the latter means outside of literature. Moreover, Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in their book *Theory of Literature* gives more clear description of intrinsic and extrinsic approach, they stated:

“There are tow kinds of approach in analyzing a literary work. They are first, intrinsic approach, is approach which emphasizes on the elements of the literature itself, such as characters, theme, point of view, plot and others. Second, extrinsic approach, is an approach which relates to the literary works and the other subjects such as psychology, society, thought and biography.” (Wellek and Warren, 1956:50)

In addition, references or books are also used in order to support the analysis. Library research means that data will be take from the novel and some information from books, magazines, internet and other related sources in order to support the analysis. Finally this thesis research is better known as library research.
1.6 Significance of the Analysis

The significance of the analysis is to tell and to show the readers what racial discrimination is and what the social problem are, so that we will learn how big the impact of this discrimination and they can avoid it in their own society.

1.7 Review of Related Literature

There are some books which deal with the subject matter of the thesis, which are:

- *Theory of Literature*, written by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1956). This book has brought an understanding about the relation of literature and society. They describe literature as a social institution where language used as medium in creating social relationship and the novelist himself becomes the member of the society.

- *An Introduction to Literary Studies*, written by Mario Klarer (1999). It is designed to show how to approach studying literature in a practical and theoretical manner and to understand some of the fundamental concepts of literary studies. This book also emphasizes the basic structure building of looking literary works closely based on ingredient element of literature. They are plot, theme, character, setting, and point of view. Besides, it also adds the interpretation for analyzing literary works is not separable since literature is strongly subjective matter in its real in.

- *Race and Culture*, written by Michael Leiris (1963). This book stated that all human beings belong to a single species and share a common origin. They are born equal in dignity and rights and all form an integral part of humanity. It simply the clear description of racism as a form of social dysfunctions.
• Ras – Ras Umat Manusia, written by Drs. N. Daldjoeni (1991). This book explains more broadly about the definitions, types and origin of races that exist in the world. It is emphasizing the origin of human races globally and the spread of races in the world followed by the development of human civilization. Daldjoeni in this book also discussed the separation of human being based on races and the implication to the society which is racial discrimination.

• Racism, Crime and Justice, written by Ben Bowling and Coretta Phillips (2002). This book contributes a lot in understanding the crucial elements of Racial Discrimination. It also explain how race could become a justification in defining the superiority and inferiority.
CHAPTER II
DISCRIMINATION

2.3 Types of Discrimination

Discrimination is basically prejudicial act that leads to unequal treatment to a certain group or person. People who adopt this kind of action believe that those who possess certain characteristic or belong to a certain group or society will also possess certain kind of behavior that need to be taken seriously.

Discrimination usually associated with prejudice. It can be behavior promoting a certain group, or it can be negative behavior directed against a certain group. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discrimination). Therefore, discrimination is like two side of a coin, because no matter what, this kind of action will always brings advantage to one group or person and in the other hand will lead to dissatisfaction or even destruction to another group that’s being discriminated.

The discrimination action could cover all aspect of live, because everybody could be discriminated, not only to the minorities but also among the majorities as well. It is not only can happen to the poor and the weak but also can happen to the rich and even powerful people. Basically, discrimination action could happen to everybody in any parts of the world, no matter who you are and where ever you are.

According to Bowling (2002:38):

“Discrimination consist of unequal, unfavorable and unjustifiable treatment based on a person’s sex, gender, ‘race’, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, class, sexual preference, age, physical disability or any other improper ground. It includes refusal to offer employment, pay fair wages, to provide housing or medical treatment or to provide a commercial or social service.”
From the quotation above, it is then obvious that discrimination could cover every aspect of lives, which definitely could happened to anybody in the world.

There are several types of discrimination that categorized by some experts. However this thesis will be using the category declared by Ben Bowling that divided the action of discrimination into 2 types. Those discrimination types are direct discrimination and indirect discrimination.

Direct discrimination is a type of discrimination that more obvious and more destructive. It is involves in treating someone less favorably because of their possession of an attribute (sex, age, race, religion, family status, national origin, military status, sexual orientation, disability, body size/shape), compared with someone without that attribute in the same circumstances.

Furthermore, Bowling (2002:39) explain that:

“A distinction can be made between direct and indirect discrimination. Among the best examples of direct discrimination are those which have been enshrined by law. The south African apartheid legal system, for example, prohibited black people from voting or participating in the political process, created separate ‘white’ residential areas and schools, and also prohibited ‘mixed marriages’.”

Another example of direct discrimination from Bowling had mention from the quotation above would be not offering a job to a woman because she is likely to take maternity leave whereas a man is not, or given a specific job with more high paid salary to a certain ethnic due to the common perception that they will likely to present better output and more efficient than others. Also, to sum up, direct discrimination usually practice the refusal to offer employment, the fairness and equality in payment,
wages, to provide housing and medical treatment or to provide a commercial or social service. In general, it covers almost all aspect of human life.

Other type of discrimination based from Bowling’s description is indirect discrimination or also known as subtle discrimination. Indirect discrimination refer to treatment which might be described as ‘equal’ in a formal sense between different groups, but is discriminatory in its actual effect on a particular group. (Bowling, 2002:40). Therefore, unlike direct discrimination, this type of discrimination works smoothly and tends to be undetected. The action is mostly intentional but apparently hidden and barely recognized. One of the indirect discrimination examples would be the capability test used in job applications to disqualify certain ethnic.

2.4 The Definition and The Effects of Racial Discrimination

Human races belong to a single, unique species, *Homo Sapiens*. Recent genetic knowledge suggests that all people have the ability to reason, that they are born equal, and that there is no hierarchy of superior and inferior races (Dubinin, 1975:87). Hence, it is obvious that all the people in the world should possess equal capability for attaining the highest level in intellectual, technical, social, economic, cultural and political development. However, in the real world there are differences among races in making progress of such development.
Races are distinguished from one another by such characteristics as hair color and texture, skin color, eye color and shape, size of body parts, and facial organs.


“Race refer to a human groups that defines itself and/or is defined by other groups as different from other groups by virtue of innate and immutable physical characteristic.”

In addition Sacknell (2003:2) stated:

“Race is a concept that signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies. It is a sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed.”

From both statements above, it is clear that race is simply a theory that concerns only with physical characteristics. However, humans are outwardly different in appearances. In a positive manner, one may embrace the differences of people across the face of the earth and marvel at the uniqueness of individuals who live on a different part of the globe or across the street. Problems occur if there are claims that these physical appearances are closely related with moral, intellectual, and other nonphysical attributes or abilities. Thus, race becomes a justification for prejudiced beliefs and discrimination attitude to others that have different physical characteristic.

Racial prejudice is an insidious moral and social disease affecting people all over the world. Initially this is referred to making a judgment about a person based on superficial characteristics, before receiving information relevant to the particular issue on which a judgment was being made. Racial prejudice perverts this uniqueness of the races and takes the view that these differences separate individuals further into groups, with one group being inferior to the other. Discrimination and prejudice are very much related, because prejudices always construct a rationalization of discrimination,
while discrimination brings the threats of attitude to justify the prejudice (N. Daldjoeni, 1991: 85).

Racial discrimination or racism is the belief that race is the primary determinant of human qualities and capacities and those racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race. As a result, mistreatment of a group people on the basis of race, color, and religion are often found in the name of race superiority. Because people with racist will hate certain groups of people that belong to a certain racial groups that is different from his own.

The statement above also supported by Bowling (2002:21), that stated:

“Racism is the belief that certain group are innately, biologically, socially, morally superior to other groups, based upon what is attributed to be their racial composition.”

In addition to the characteristic of racial discrimination, E.U. Essien-Udom (1975:236) gives more explanation, he describe that:

“Racism is exists only if three conditions are simultaneously presents, namely, (1) the physical criteria; (2) beliefs about the inevitable correspondence between the physical and cultural, moral, or intellectual differences among racial groups; and (3) social actions based on those beliefs.”

From Udom statement above, being physically different plays a great deal in experiencing racial discrimination. Another factor in racial discrimination is when there is a perception or a belief that certain physical characteristic automatically possess a certain attitude, morality and ability. Udom also adds that in the case of racial discrimination there must be an action in making it into reality based from the certain perception or believe. Thus, this definition also gives us a clear picture that people with racist tend to use their own set of thinking for someone who possesses certain characteristic must own certain attitude that they need to be aware off.
In the broadest sense, racial discrimination or racism is actually a system of stratification of a human race based on the physical characteristics, which are assumed to explain differences of civilizations, cultures, moral and intellectual abilities of the different races of man. In this system of stratification some races are supposed to be innately and permanently superior, others are similarly inferior.

Related to this thesis, in America, especially in the 1920s, the black race or the African American occupies the bottom of the hierarchy while the white race is at the top. Admittedly, the Whites have something to be proud of in his great inventions and discoveries, technical equipment and political power. This domination and role as a superior race also confirmed by Leiris (1963:9):

“It is accepted by them as basic truth that, despite the faults which must be recognized in the white race and the innate virtues they are prepared to concede to other races, the highest type of humanity is, if not the whole, at least the best, of the white race.”

As the superior race, the white people created a new kind of understanding and interpretation of human differences that mostly gave bad effects and sufferings towards black American. White Americans cannot accept the existence of Black Americans, as consequences they never treat Black Americans as the true human beings because of the different types of physical characteristics. Later on, they began to show the symptoms of racial discrimination which are intolerance, separation, and hatred. Hence, Black Americans have never treated well and always second or even considered as an outcast in their own country. These statement also support by Sacknell (2003:4), that stated:
“Whites Americans relegated Black Americans to a low status and constantly portrayed them as “culturally backward, primitive, intellectually stunted, prone to violence, morally corrupt, undeserving of the benefit of civilization, insensitive to the finer arts and aesthetically ugly and animal like.”

Black Americans had to undergo many aspects of race discrimination, in terms of social status, voting, public accommodations, employment, education, and health care. To make it worse there is a certain language that native-born Americans adopted to describe the Black Americans as an indicator of their revulsion to them. In the beginning nicknames were only mildly abusive, but as time went on the terms became uglier. Black people around this time were still being referred to as either Negroes or more commonly Niggers. Although these colloquial terms are fairly mild compared with those used today, their sheer presence in American vocabulary at the time tells us that people were becoming much more intolerant of the ethnic minorities they encountered. Being the subject of racial discrimination forced Black Americans to live in fear, intolerance, separation, segregation, and hatred.

The racial discrimination towards ethnic minorities during the twenties can also be seen in the job opportunities available to them. Blacks, Mexicans, and the recent immigrants clustered as the bottom of the wage scale. All were usually the last hired and the first fired and performed menially jobs. Wherever the minorities worked, the 'native' Americans saw them as a threat to their livelihood, as they normally accepted jobs that the whites did not want. They lacked of economic independence, since they largely worked in white-owned land. According to Sacknell (2003:6):
“The power of whiteness depended not only on white hegemony over separate racial groups, but also manipulating racial outsiders to fight against one another, to complete with each other with for white approval, and to seek the rewards and privileges of whiteness for themselves at the expense of other racial populations.”

The White ultimate power as a major group plays a great deal in determining other race quality of life. Because of the superiority and unlimited power that the Whites possess at the time, the Black American was forced to live their life’s in an utterly terrible condition and got couldn’t get the privileged of civil liberties. The Black at the time could not have the voting rights, the right to be tried by a jury of one’s peers and freedom of movement and association. (Bowling, 2002:38)

Based on that, as results the huge effects that Black Americans had to endure due to the discrimination, exist in a wide range of social and economic outcomes. Because it creates disadvantage and limits the life chances of those discriminated against. Racial discrimination can be measured from the higher rates of poverty, unemployment, residential segregation, lower levels of education and wealth accumulation for some racial groups compared with others. It is obvious that racial discrimination has all the negative effects that anyone could ever possibly think off and it surely affects all aspect of a person’s life.
CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN RICHARD WRIGHT’S

NATIVE SON

3.1 The Whites Superiority

Racial discrimination devalues, demeans, and disadvantages Black Americans by treating them as lesser beings and by denying equal access and opportunity. Racial discrimination uses the inflexible assumption that group differences are biologically determined and therefore inherently unchangeable. As the superior race, the Whites often treat other races with disrespect for they are not considered as human beings.

The Whites in America have control in every aspect of life, both in political, economical and even in social life. Therefore being born as white or black really makes a difference in defining ones future. Born as a White, means there are unlimited choices for the future and you could be almost anything that you desire to be. On the other hand, being born as a Black, means that you have to accept the reality for having no brighter future and just live by what ever rules that whites had written for you.

“Looks like a little bird,” Bigger breathed with childlike wonder.
“Them white boys sure can fly,” Gus said.
“Yeah,” Bigger said, wistfully. “They get a chance to do everything.”
(Wright, 1940: 12)

Bigger Thomas as the main character of the novel expressed his dreams to become a pilot. He knew that if he gets the same chances, he will be able to do things like the Whites do. However, he realized and fully aware that his dream was
impossible, since aviation was an occupation reserved for the Whites. At the time, the Whites own everything, and they would never allow Negro like him to do such things.

“Goddammit!”
“What’s the matter?”
“They don’t let us do anything.”
“Who?”
“The white folks.”
(Wright, 1940: 22)

Bigger pursed his lips and sang:
“Zoooooooom!”
“They got everything,” Gus said.
“They own the world,” Bigger said.
“Aw, what the hell,” Gus said. “Let’s go in the poolroom.”
(Wright, 1940: 25)

The conversation between the main character in this novel, Bigger Thomas and his friend Gus, showed us how the Whites have the power and chances to do whatever they desire in live. They lived with unlimited choices, a luxury that they, as the Black couldn’t afford.

For Bigger and his black friend Gus, watching the Whites to do things that they couldn’t do, made them realize how powerful and superior the Whites are. Bigger Thomas, understood that as Negro, his whole life was controlled by the White. They decided where he should live, what he supposed to do and how would he live his life.

“Aw, for chrissakes! There aint nothing you can do about it. How come you want to worry yourself? You black and they make the laws…”
(Wright, 1940: 23)

The black people, aware that, it doesn’t matter what you do and wish for in life, you can not go against the White people. Everything is being decided by the white people, and there is nothing that you can do about it, for the Whites was the main ruler and the authority that have power over their lives.
“Does he seem intelligent? Does he seem to be acting?”
“I don’t know Mr. Britten. He’s just like all the other colored boys.”
“Does he say ‘yes mam’ and ‘no mam’?”
“Yes, Mr. Britten. He’s polite.”
(Wright, 1940: 180)

The conversation above was between Peggy, the white maid that works for the Dalton family with Mr. Britten, a White detective about Bigger Thomas. Those quotation illustrated that colored boys (Negro) should have specific manner towards the White. As the superior race, they must be address with respect and with a certain label.

“They don’t need a chance, if you asked me. They get in enough trouble without it.”
“Well as long as they do their work, let’s let ‘em be.”
(Wright, 1940: 154)

The above quotation was taken from the conversation between Mr. Dalton and Mr. Britten about how they felt about Negro. Being born as a White man made them especially Mr. Britten, felt so much better than other races, especially the Blacks. In his racist mind, the black people were useless and can only cause trouble in their lives. Therefore there was no point whatsoever, to grant them with chances just like the White people.

As the superior race, the Whites feel that they are way better than the Blacks. Thus, they never considered the Black as equal as the Whites. They also expected a certain attitude from the Black, otherwise they will be consider rude and have no manner. The Whites believe that black people exist only to serve the Whites and therefore it is a custom to refer every White with ‘Mam’ or ‘Sir’.
White Americans feel that their ancestor is better that Black Americans, came from the highest level physically, thus they do not want to have the Black Americans around them. Being physically different, especially the skin color, make white people to consider themselves better than the black people. The Whites always considers themselves to be on top of everything. They think they are smarter, brighter and well behave compare with other races, especially with the Black people. Over all they regard themselves more advance than the Black people.

“And, too, they had never held up a white man before. They had always robbed Negroes. They felt that it was much easier and safer to rob their own people, for they knew that white policemen never really searched diligently for Negroes who committed crimes against other Negroes.” (Wright, 1940: 17)

Bigger Thomas and his fellow Negro is totally aware with the feeling of superiority that white people have. Therefore, based from quotation above, Bigger and his friend would never dare to make trouble with white people, let alone to rob them. Because they know that their people is not as important as the white, and White policemen would never bother to search those who committed crimes against other Negro.

The guarded feeling of freedom he had while listening to her was tangled with the hard fact that she was white and rich, a part of the world of people who told him what he could and could not do. (Wright, 1940: 66).

This quotation above was taken from the interaction between Mary Dalton and Bigger Thomas. Even though she offered her friendship towards Bigger, he knew that Mary comes from a very different world than him. A world that even Bigger himself could not imagine. It was the world that rules his life and the way his people
lived which was the world of people that made him suffer. The sign of ultimate superiority is also shown in the quotation bellow:

The black girl was merely “evidence.” And under it all he knew that the white people did not really care about Bessie’s being killed. White people never searched for Negroses who killed other Negroses. He had even heard it said that white people felt it was good when one Negro killed another; it meant that they had one Negro less to contend with. Crime for a Negro was only when he harmed whites, took white lives, or injured white property. (Wright, 1940: 307)

As the story went, Bigger Thomas accidentally murdered the daughter of the Dalton’s family, Mary Dalton. Being Panic, Bigger tried to hide her body into a trunk and conceal his crime by burning Mary's body in the furnace. Not only that, Bigger also murdered and rapes his black girlfriend, Bessie Mears because he was afraid that she would give him away. Bigger then bludgeons her to death with a brick after she falls asleep.

In convicting two murders, Bigger will surely get a death sentence. However, all attention was focus on the murder of Mary Dalton, for she was a rich, white woman. However ironically, Bessie was considered only as evidence. This is once again proves how meaningless the life of black people compares with the White.

The next quotation was another solid prove that shows the ultimate superiority of the White people over the Black people.

“Go on, Bigger.”
“Well they own everything. They choke you off the face of the earth. They like God . . . “ he swallowed, closed his eyes and sighed. “They don’t even let you feel what you want to feel. They don’t even let you feel. They after you so hot and hard you can only feel what they doing to you. They kill before you die.” (Wright, 1940: 327)
The conversation between Bigger and his lawyer Boris A. Max, portrays how brutal racial discrimination could do to ones life. To Bigger and his kind, white people were not really people; they were a sort of great natural force. In his mind, as the minority and victim, the White people presents themselves just like God. The Whites used their superiority to the maximum limit where they could not allow other races, especially the Blacks, to do almost anything as a social human being. As if, they were killed, before they were even born.

3.2 Black Inferiority

White Americans always believe that they were superior and therefore should regard themselves in a higher position than other races. As the consequent, Black Americans, that regarded as the lowest class in the society forced to live their live with sets of the regulations by the Whites. Whether they like it or not, black people realize that the variety of choices in life and the freedom of doing something that they desire to do, could only happen in their dreams. As a result, due to the powerlessness of the Black, people like Bigger was very familiar with violence and poverty.

“How come Bigger acts that way?” Vera asked, crying again.
“He’s just crazy,” the mother said. “Just plain dumb black crazy.” (Wright, 1940: 12)

“Even when the relief offers you a job you won’t take it till they threaten to cut off your food and starve you! Bigger, honest, you the most no-countest man I ever seen in all my life!” (Wright, 1940: 12)
Just like most of other black people, Bigger had a hard and uneasy life. Anger, fear, and frustration define Bigger's daily existence. Being raised in the poor, uneducated black family, he was familiar with violence and ignorance. Even his own mother cursed him all the time by saying that he is stupid, black and worthless.

“As he ate he felt that they were thinking of the job he was to get that evening and it made him angry; he felt that they had tricked him into a cheap surrender.” (Wright, 1940: 15)

Having grown up under the climate of harsh racial prejudice in America, Bigger is burdened with a powerful conviction that he has no control over his life and that he cannot aspire to do anything other than menial, low-wage labor. From the quotation above, it shows how the Blacks then realized as the minority, they were forced to accept what ever white people had decided for them, and there was nothing that they could do to change it. They were too powerless. Thus, almost all black people became inferior in their own society.

Inferior is a feeling that one is lower and unimportant compare to others in some way. Superiority and inferiority are like two side of a coin. Because whenever superiority exists, inferiority will automatically take place. Bellow quotation also shows how low the black people consider themselves compare with the white people.

“Nigger, you nuts.”
“I reckon we the only things in this city that can’t go where we want to go and do what we want to.” (Wright, 1940: 24)

The above conversation expressed the frustration that Bigger and his friend Gus. They knew that as a Negro, they have no rights as a human being to do things that other people (white people) could do.

Bigger, was the eldest in the family therefore he considered to have the biggest responsibility in supporting his family. His mother expected him to get a job, any jobs
available, in order to help his family financially. However, just like any other black fellow, Bigger realized that he did not have wide opportunity in choosing a career because of the lack of education. One could not be hired for a decent job if one was not educated. His lack of education has left him no option other than menial labor.

Just as shown from the quotation below:

“Yes, he could take the job at Dalton’s and be miserable, or he could refuse it and starve. It maddened him to think that he did not have a wider choice of action.” (Wright, 1940: 16)

The above quotation gives another example about the inferiority that Bigger felt. A Black American could not possibly take jobs other than job that the White offered, which mostly other whites would not take. Even though, he completely understand how things work in his life, still the reality that lay upon him was really hard for him to digest. Thus, he could not help not to feel angry and shallow.

He was going among white people, so he would take his knife and his gun; it would make him feel that he was equal to them, give him a sense of completeness. Then he thought of a good reason why he should take it; in order to get the Dalton place, he had to go through a white neighborhood. He had not heard of any Negroes being molested recently, but he felt that it was always possible.
(Wright, 1940: 34)

As the only possible option, Bigger Thomas then decided to take the job that his mother offered, that was to work for the White and rich family, The Dalton. For the first time in his life, he went to the Whites resident. He felt a very strange feeling that made him really scared and terrified.

As part of the oppresses in the society, Bigger was familiar with how ugly was the White people attitude towards the Blacks. Therefore, when Bigger entered the White territory, he felt like he was going into restricted area. He felt so insecure. He
took a deep sense of unwanted and rejected straight away. The inferiority feelings take over him. In his mind, his fear towards the White, justify his action in bringing Gun and knife. At least, those things could bring him comfort and feeling of equality towards the White.

Suppose a policeman saw him wandering in a white neighborhood like this? It would be thought that he was trying to rob or rape somebody. (Wright, 1940: 45)

Another strange thought, came to his mind. Being black really made him so uncomfortable about himself. Just like any other black people, Bigger probably had already experience a lot in his live regarding racial discrimination. Bigger realized how unfortunate his skin color was. Because even though he came to a white neighborhood with good intentions, he still terrified that other people might saw him as a villain that will threat their live, their family and their property. He felt so insecure and no self confidence in dealing with the White.

“Nawsuh. But I got it here, somewhere.”
He hated himself at that moment. Why he was acting and feeling this way? He wanted to wave his hand and blot out the white man who was making him feel like this. (Wright, 1940: 49-51)

From the above quotation, Bigger was described to be very nervous in making his first contact with soon to be his employer, Mr. Dalton. Apparently, being black put Bigger in so much pain, for he could not control himself in the presence of a white man. For no reason Bigger had a very unpleasant feeling about himself. Even though the White did not do anything to intimidate him, yet the feeling of inferiority still rule his mind.
When the conversation took place, all of a sudden Bigger seemed to lose himself. He began to feel uneasy, nervous and forgetting things that he knew exactly where the thing is. For short, he felt totally terrorize just by being side by side with the Whites, and he hated himself for that feeling.

The feelings that Bigger experience not only the feeling of a normal nervousness due to the excitement of getting a job to support his family, but because of the anxiety and uncontrollable hatred toward the White. In his mind, Bigger felt that everything that happened to him and his people was because of the white people. That was why Bigger sensed danger whenever the Whites was around.

“Well, I’m Mr. Dalton.”
“Yessuh.”
“Do you think you’d like driving a car?”
“Oh, yessuh.”
Did you bring the paper?”
“Suh’
Didn’t the relief give you a note to me?”
“Oh, yessuh!”
(Wright, 1940: 49)

In the case of superiority, the quotation above show us how superior the White when other races refer them with certain title. However in the case of inferiority, the above quotation also gives us the clear action of how the Black considers themselves inferior to the Whites. They refer the White with a certain title, and they could only say things that they had been asked for. No more than that.

“He scratched his head. How on earth could he learn not to say yessuh and yessum to white people in one night when he had been saying it all his life long?” (Wright, 1940: 73)

All his life, Bigger was raised with the belief that he was only a black man that must obey all rules set by the white people. However, for the first time in his life,
Bigger was encounter with other Whites that treat him as human being, who asked him not to refer them as ‘sir’ or ‘madam’.

This kind of nice gestures put Bigger in a very awkward situation, because in his mind, their kind signal and gestures felt like a mockery. Bigger seems tormented with the so called equality offered by Jan Erlan and Mary Dalton. In Bigger’s eyes, he interprets their action with the thought “Was she laughing at him? Were they making fun of him? Why couldn’t they leave him alone? He wasn’t bothering them”.

Theoretically, it is nice to have someone that kind and treat you as a friend. However in the case of Bigger Thomas, this situation becomes something that he needs to be aware off just because of the unfamiliarity. For Bigger, this discrimination by the whites happen all of his life. Just like any other black people, Bigger’s only knowledge was that he should presented himself lower to the Whites by addressing them with ‘sir’ or ‘madam’ as a sign of respect and his inferiority. Sudden changes did not make any different to him.

“You don’t feel like you had a chance, do you?”
“Naw; but I aint asking nobody to be sorry for me. Naw; I ain’t asking that at all. I’m black. They don’t give black people a chance, so I took a chance and lost.” (Wright, 1940: 330)

When Bigger was caught after convicted 2 murders, he told his lawyer Mr. Max, that he completely aware of whom he really was. Bigger learnt that, as soon as he was born in this world, his skin color tells him where his future would lay. Black people do not have the chance to do anything. The only chance they have was only the chance given by the white. Once again Black was forced to obey the rules or break the rules. Unfortunately no matter what, both options were always ended with dissatisfaction to the Black people. As for Bigger, the lack of option drives him to
make a choice, a wrong choice indeed, because it caused in taking two innocent lives and in the end his own life as well.

3.3 Ethnic and Cultural Differences

Throughout the Native Son, Richard Wright depicts popular culture as conveyed through films, magazines, and newspapers as a major force in American racism. It has constantly bombarding citizens with images and ideas that reinforce the nation's oppressive racial hierarchy.

The big difference in the way of life of the Black and White people could easily found in this novel.

“Hello,” Gus said.
“Hello,” Bigger said. “Who’s this?”
“This is Mr. J.P. Morgan speaking,” Gus said.
“Yessuh, Mr. Morgan,” Bigger said; his eyes filled with mock adulation and respect.
“I want you to sell twenty thousand shares of U.S. Steel in the market this morning,” Gus said.
“At what price, suh?” Bigger asked.
“Aw, just dump ‘em at any price,” Gus said with casual irritation. “We’re holding too much.”
“Yessuh,” Bigger said.
“And call me at my club at two this afternoon and tell me if the President telephoned,” Gus said.
“Yessuh, Mr. Morgan” Bigger said.
“Both of them made gestures signifying that they were hanging up telephone receivers; then they bent double, laughing.
“I bet that’s just the way they talk,” Gus said.
“I wouldn’t be surprised,” Bigger said
(Wright, 1940: 21-22)

The conversation above was done by Bigger and Gus in order to imitate how the Whites would actually behave in the real life, based on their imagination. In the joke that they played, together Bigger and Gus pretended to be a rich white man. While
doing so, they could freely imagine themselves doing things that both of them could not do in real life. Even though it is all just a lie and just for short period of time, they feel pretty happy and having fun doing it. For a moment there, they seem to forget all of their hardship in life. The acting that Bigger and Gus pulled from the above quotation shows how big differences the Black and the White had in living their life.

“He wanted to see a movie; his senses hungered for it. In a movie he could dream without effort; all he had to do was lean back in a seat and keep his eyes open.” (Wright, 1940: 17)

Seeing movie was one of a view luxury activity that Bigger could have in life, as if for a moment he was able to put his desperate life on hold by doing it. Being a black American, made Bigger’s world so much different from the Whites. Therefore, watching movies able to fill his curiosity of how the Whites live their life. Bigger get most of the information about the Whites from the movie that shows him everything that he needs to know. By watching movie, Bigger was able to relax and escape from cold and harsh reality. He could easily picture himself just like the main actor that portrays in the movie.

“He looked at Trader Horn unfold and saw pictures of naked black men and woman whirling in wild dances and heard drums beating and then gradually the African scene changed and was replaced by images in his own mind of white men and women dressed in black and white clothes, laughing, talking, drinking and dancing.” (Wright, 1940: 36)

In the films, the Whites were depicted as glamorous, attractive, and cultured, while the Blacks were portrayed as jungle savages or servants. At that time, black people were the victim from a popular culture that portrays Whites as sophisticated and Blacks as either subservient or savage. This portrayal was something very common in the society and replicated in nearly every film and every magazine. Not surprisingly, then, both blacks and whites see blacks are inferior beings. This
The portrayal affected the Whites and absolutely had devastating effects for the black people as well.

The play ran on and Bigger saw a night club floor thronged with whirling couples and heard a swing band playing music. The rich young woman was dancing and laughing with her lover.

“I’d like to be invited to a place like that just to find out what it feels like,” Bigger mused (Wright, 1940: 33)

The above quotation shows another cultural difference between the Black and the White in living and enjoying their lives. For the Whites, aside from owning everything and capable of doing almost anything in life, made other inferior races, especially the Black Americans feels helpless. Because as the oppress Black Americans, Bigger did not know much about how the Whites live their life.

In their spare time, the White, have the luxury to go to the night club, get along with their colleagues, hanging out with beautiful girls and have fun dancing by the music. It must have been a wonderful life. Hence, Bigger imagined how amazing life would be if he could just get in to the club, for he knew that no Black man allowed entering such place, it was only for the White.

In order to survive, Bigger then decided to take a job offered to him, to work with the white and rich family, the Daltons. Yet, he still feels worried, for working for the White would be something completely new to him.

He was filled with a sense of excitement about his new job. Was what he had heard about rich white people really true? Was he going to work for people like you saw in the movies? If he were, then he’d see a lot of things from the inside; he’d get the dope, the low-down. (Wright, 1940: 35)
He does not know what to expect from his new job with the rich white family. All he knows was that his head still occupied by curiosity and excitement from the possibility to experience things that he only saw in the movies. Because in the life of Bigger Thomas, poverty, violence and works hard just to earn a few dollar which barely enough to feed his family was his daily routine. A little fun, such as dancing and going to club as he saw in the movies was never even existed in his life.

Well he would see in a few moments if the Daltons for whom he was to work were like the people he had seen and heard in the movie. But while walking through this quite and spacious white neighborhood, he did nor feel the pull and mystery of the things as strongly as he had in the movie. The houses he passed were huge; lights glowed softly in windows. The streets were empty, save for an occasional car that zoomed past on swift rubber tires. This was cold and distant world; a world of white secrets carefully guarded. (Wright, 1940: 45)

When Bigger finally arrived in the White neighborhood where the Dalton’s live, he began to make his own judgments based from what he saw in the movies. He started to make comparison and conclusion on his own. Therefore, his mind wondering and questioning the differences that he found along the way, because, to him it is different from what he saw in the movies.

Bigger admiration and confusion is very understandable, because he does not have any other reference other than the movies because at the time, making close social contacts with the Whites was something almost impossible to do.
3.4 Prejudice

The word prejudice refers to prejudgment or making a decision before becoming aware of the relevant facts of a case or an event. Initially this is referred to making a judgment about a person based on their race, religion, class, without even knowing them personally.

In a place that fills with Racial Discrimination, prejudice in America has becoming the main social disease that needs to be aware off. The worst thing of this kind of disease is that it so contagious, could affect people and populations all over the world in a very short period of time.

In all of the white woman he had met, mostly on jobs and at relief stations, there was always a certain coldness and reserve; they stood their distance and spoke to him from afar. (Wright, 1940: 60)

Bigger had been suffering from this prejudice disease since the day that he was born. People with racist believe that they are better than any other race. Therefore certain kind of attitude such as coldness, rejection and reserve, were developed because of the prejudice belief that they adopt. From the quotation above, being black forced Bigger to be frightened all the time, especially from the White Americans. In the eyes of the White American woman, black man was labeled as a rapist and always involves in crimes and violence. That was why they tend to make a distance to every black men that they met.

In the concept of prejudice, people are “pre-judged” based on superficial characteristics. We must honestly conclude that all people “suffer” from this on various levels. When we don’t know an individual well, we consciously or unconsciously begin to characterize him or her based on what we see.
The Black Americans, had more than enough experience in their life regarding racial prejudice. They are the main victim of the racial prejudice done by the White people. Therefore, the Blacks also develop their own prejudice to the Whites. It is like two side of a coin, for no side exist without the other. The Black people would never develop their sense of prejudice against the White if they were not experiencing the same prejudice from them, vice versa.

He was trying to desperately understand. He felt foolish sitting behind the steering wheel like this and letting a white man hold his hand. What would people passing along the street think? He was very conscious of his black skin and there was in him a prodding conviction that Jan and men like him had made it so that he would be conscious of that black skin. Did not white people despise black skin? Then why was Jan doing this? (Wright, 1940: 67).

As a Black American, Bigger was fully aware of who he really was and where he belongs to in the society. As a result, when there was another person that trying to be nice to him, especially from the White, he began to develop hesitant and suspicion towards them.

His mind telling him that he needs to be careful with the White. Because all of his life, all the Whites had treat him bad and with lack of respect. Thus, he expected all White will act the same way. White, without a doubt will despise his skin color and their existence as a human being.

The people in Ernie’s Kitchen Shack knew him and he did not want them to see him with these white people. He knew that if he went in they would ask one another: “Who’re them white folks Bigger’s hanging around with? (Wright, 1940: 71)

Again, when Jan and Mary offer him to seat and enjoy dinner with them, instead of being happy with the kindness and nice gesture, Bigger feel tense because this concept is unfamiliar to him. Mary and Jan's simple assumption that Bigger will
welcome their friendship deludes them into overlooking the possibility that he will react with suspicion and fear—a natural reaction considering that Bigger has never experienced such friendly treatment from whites. In his world, he believes that all Whites are the same. Never across in his mind that he will encounter White American that are nice and treat him as equal. He just does not believe them.

Though he had killed by accident, not once did he feel the need to tell himself that it had been an accident. He was black and he had been alone in a room where a white girl had been killed; therefore he had killed her. That was what everybody would say anyhow, no matter what he said. (Wright, 1940: 101)

There was silence. Bigger stared without a thought or an image in his mind. There was just the old feeling, the feeling that he had all his life; he was black and had done wrong; white men were looking at something with which they would soon accuse him. (Wright, 1940: 206)

The Above quotation was taken from the moment Bigger accidentally suffocated Mary to death. Bigger felt so terrified because he knew very well that no matter what he said, no body will believe in him. The skin color that he carries will put him in guilty sentence right away.

Both of the quotation above, explain how severe the impact of racial discrimination to the life of a person. For Bigger, his sensed the strong prejudice that the White have against his people all of his life. He was completely aware of the White will react if they found out that Mary Dalton, a rich white young lady, die in his hand. Nobody will ever listened to him, let alone believe that he did not meant to kill Mary. He is not a murderer; it is all just an accident.

“But, Jack, ever’ nigger looks guilty t’ white folks when somebody’s done a crime.” (Wright, 1940: 235)
Another example of racial prejudice shown from the above quotation as expresses by two anonymous black man in the story. They were talking about Bigger as a fugitive from the murder of Mary Dalton. Due to the brutality of the murder, Bigger was becoming the talk of country, his story became an instant hits. Especially because of the victim was a rich white woman and the murderer was a black man. However, his fellow black Americans knew it very well that, in his society the Whites adopt and practice the assumption, if a black people involve with a crime, he will ultimately convicted as guilty even without a trial, although maybe there was a slightest possibility that he was not guilty.

The White American never treat Black Americans as a human being, since their ancestor actually is a slave and it has been repeated in each generation and refined by the time, they should be put at the lowest level in the society. Those perceptions still implement the way of thinking of the White people. For them, Black people considered less than human, therefore they do not need any privileges, just like the Whites have.

“Well, you see ‘em one way and I see ‘em another. To me, a nigger’s a nigger.” (Wright, 1940: 154)

However, being considered as the lower and inferior race, the Blacks face an ultimate chance to be considerate as equal as the Whites.

For all of his life, Bigger was familiar with the prejudicial action done by the White. Thus, Bigger know exactly how the prejudice works and he was able to use the White prejudiced for his own benefit. By doing so, for a while, Bigger was able to get away from the suspicion.
“Would any of the white faces all about him think that he had killed a rich white girl? No! they might think he would steal a dime, rape a woman, get drunk, or cut somebody; but to kill a millionaire’s daughter and burn her body? ”(Wright, 1940: 108)

But they would never think that he had done it; not a meek black boy like him. (Wright, 1940: 179)

As the lowest uneducated race in hierarchy of the society, Bigger Thomas was never even considered as a suspect in this vicious crime. They would never thought that a black man have the guts to do such things. In their mind, even though the Black always considered as trouble maker. They would not dare to mess with the white people let alone kill a millionaire’s daughter and savagely decapitated and burn her body in her own house.

He saw in his mind picture of the Dalton family distraught and horrified when they found that Mary was kidnapped. That would put them a certain distance from him. They would think that white men did it; they would never think that a black timid Negro did that. They would go after Jan. The “Red” he had signed to the letter and the hammer and curving knife would make them look for communist (Wright, 1940: 176)

After all, their attitude toward him so far made him feel that they not consider him as being mixed up in the kidnapping. He was just another black ignorant Negro to them. (Wright, 1940: 199)

The Whites was ignoring the fact that Bigger just work for the Dalton only for 1 day since Mary went missing and he was the one who met her for the last time. Alas, they were never even bothered to consider him as a suspect. They forget that Bigger was also another human being like the Whites. Due to the prejudice they hold against the black, they move on with suspecting another white man, Jan Erlone, Mary’s Boyfriend.
Bigger utterly outsmarts the whites by telling them exactly what they wanted to hear, saying that on the night of Mary's disappearance, Jan was talking about these “things the Reds were always asking for.” Bigger knows that simply associating Jan with communist will make Jan appear guilty in the minds of his white listeners, even though they already know Jan to be an avowed communist. Bigger uses his long experience with racial prejudice shrewdly, manipulating the prejudices of his white questioners.

Being able to avoid suspicion, Bigger went on further by with making a ransom letter to the Dalton, as if she was kidnapped. In Bigger’s mind he would easily get away with it, because White would never even consider a black man would do such smart action. If not because of Mary’s bone fell of the chimney right before the eyes of the prosecutor, Bigger would be off the hook forever.

“Bigger, I’ve never done anything against you and your people in my life. But in my life. But I’m a white man and it would be asking too much to ask you not to hate me, when every white man you see hates you, I-I know my … my face looks like theirs to you, even though I don’t feel like they do. ……………………… but I didn’t know my white face was making you feel guilty, condemning you.” (Wright, 1940: 267)

The prejudice that Bigger adopt towards the White, made him become a person that full of hatred and raged. As a result, Bigger failed to recognize Whites as individuals and unable to make a fair judgment to Jan and Mary.

As a member of communist party that concern with the racial discrimination issue. Jan, like Mary was trying his best to help the Black people to be as equal as the Whites. However, Jan did not realize that such untraditional behavior only frightens and angers Bigger. Jan later recognizes his mistake in trying to treat Bigger this way
and becomes sympathetic toward his plight. He becomes especially aware of the social divisions that prevent Bigger from relating normally with white society.

3.5 Segregation

Racial segregation is the separation of different racial groups in daily life, such as eating in a restaurant, drinking from a drinking fountain, using a rest room, attending school, going to the movies, or in the rental or purchase of a home. As an integral part of racial discrimination, segregation cover every crucial and fundamental aspect of life. It could be found in the practice of hiring and in the rental and sale of housing to certain races.

Segregation in hiring practices contributes to economic imbalance between the races. Segregation, however, is often allowed close contact in hierarchical situations, such as allowing a person of one race to work as a servant for a member of another race. Segregation can involve spatial separation of the races, or mandatory use of different institutions, such as schools and hospitals by people of different races.

“Gus?”
“Huh?”
“You know where the white folks live?”
“Yeah,” Gus said, pointing eastward. “Over across the ‘line’; over there on the Cottage Grove Avenue.”
(Wright, 1940: 24)

In America, the practice of segregation was very severe. Having black skin automatically puts Black community on the bottom of the class chain. The Whites narrow-mindedness always considers Black people are identical with unsanitary and unhygienic; therefore people did not want them live next to their houses.
The above quotation plainly describes, even though the Blacks and the Whites are living in the same city, they live apart from each other. As if they have created a line for each race to obey. The Black lives in their own section of town where they told to stay while the White also lived in their own section of town which they choose to stay.

It is understandable, for people to be with others their familiar with. Unfortunately, in the practice of segregation the White as the superior race make the extreme separation with the Blacks as if they are not human. White men want the Blacks to be restricted from as much control as possible. Eventually, the separation was meant to keep the Black stay in the lowest class in the social hierarchy.

“Why they make us live in one corner of the city? Why don’t they let us fly planes and run ships …“ (Wright, 1940: 23)

“I swear to God I can’t. I know I oughtn’t think about it, but I can’t help it. Every time I think about it I feel like somebody’s poking a red-hot iron down my throat. Goddammit, look! We live here and they live there. We black and they white. They got thing’s and we ain’t. They do things and we can’t. It’s just like living in jail. (Wright, 1940: 23)

As the superior race White American feels that their ancestor is better that Black Americans, came from the highest level physically, thus they do not want to have the Black Americans around. They regard themselves more advanced than the Black Americans.

As shown from the above quotation, Bigger was devastated by the reality that the Whites forced his people to live in the certain part of the city, crowded and with no facilities what so ever. Bigger was disgusted with the fact that his black skin keeps him from having the same opportunities and luxuries as the he seen in the world of the White people. The inequality right before his eyes made Bigger felt more hatred....
towards the Whites. In his mind, they really make his world ended before it even started.

He remembered that his mother had once made him tramp the streets for two whole months looking for a place to live. The rental agencies had told him that there were not enough houses for Negroes to live in, that the city was condemning houses in which Negroes lived as being too old and too dangerous for habitation. (Wright, 1940: 233)

The segregation practice by the white, really made Bigger and his family suffered from desperation and helplessness. When they wanted to rent a place to live, the rental agencies strictly told them where to stay, for they will never rent or sell houses to black people outside of the black area. Bigger really frustrated with the segregation idea that his people had to endure. However being black and only completed the eighth grade in school, he could not do anything to go against the racist real estate.

He knew that black people could not go outside of the Black Belt to rent a flat; they had to live on their side of the “line” No white real estate man would rent a flat to a black man other than the sections where it had been decided that black people might live. (Wright, 1940: 233)

Another example of segregation practice is clearly shown from the above quotation. The Whites deliberately guided the Black people to live in a certain remote area that clearly not suitable anymore to lived because of the crowdedness. But still, no matter what, the White agencies would never rent or sell houses that are not located in the area where the Blacks supposed to live, which in the one corner of the city.

Mr. Dalton was somewhere far away, high up, distant, like a God. He owned property all over the Black Belt, and he owned property where white folks lived, too. But Bigger could not live in a building across the “line”. Even though Mr. Dalton gave million of dollars for Negro education, he would rent houses to Negroes only in this prescribed area, this corner of the city tumbling down from rot. (Wright, 1940: 164)
Mr. Dalton, was one of the contributors in making the gap between the White and the Black become deeper and deeper by practicing the segregation towards the Black. As the landlord that own houses and apartment for the Blacks and the Whites, he contributed a lot in making the practiced of segregation and in the low quality of life of the Black people.

“Thank you, Mr. Dalton. Now tell me why is it that you charged the Thomas family eight dollars per week for one room in a tenement?”
“Well, there’s a housing shortage.”
“All over Chicago?”
“No. Just here on the South Side.”
“You own houses in other sections of the city?”
“Yes.”
“Then why don’t you rent those houses to Negroes?”
“Well … Er … I – I – I don’t think they’d like to live any other place.”
“Who told you that?”
“Nobody”
“You came to that conclusion yourself?”
“Why, yes.”
“Isn’t it true you refuse to rent houses to Negroes if those houses are in other sections of the city?”
“Why, yes.”
“Why?”
“Well, it’s an old custom.”
“Do you think that custom is right?”
“I didn’t make the custom,” Mr. Dalton said.
“Do you think that custom is right?” Max asked again.
“Well I think Negroes are happier when they’re together.”
“Who told you that?”
“Why, nobody.”
“Aren’t they more profitable when they’re together?”
“I don’t know what you mean.”
“Mr. Dalton, doesn’t this policy of you company tend to keep Negroes on the South Side, in one area?”
(Wright, 1940: 303)

The above questioning and answering were taking place in the court room, between Mr. Dalton and Bigger Thomas lawyer, Mr. Max. As few part of the White community that opposed the practice of racial discrimination and a well known
Activist that fights for the equality of human rights, he was very sickened by the hypocrisy shown by Mr. Dalton. For all this time Mr. Dalton claims to be a generous philanthropist and supporter of black Americans. However his so called charity towards the Black people was in fact a small action to redeem his guilt over the Blacks.

As the landlord that owns most part of the property in Chicago, Mr. Dalton was clearly stated that segregation that he practiced was intentional and well planned. And also by the fact that he charged more for a smaller apartment for poor black tenants than the one he charged for the White, he himself had contribute a lot in the misery of the Black people and in the practice of racial discrimination.

The segregation practice in the novel, not only covered the aspect of housing, but also the practice of education and hiring.

“I could fly a plane if I had a chance,” Bigger said. “If you wasn’t black and if you had some money and if they’d let you go to that aviation school, you could fly a plane,” Gus said. (Wright, 1940: 20)

“I wanted to be an aviator once. But they wouldn’t let me go to the school where I suppose’ to learn it. They built a big school and then drew a line around it and said that nobody could go to it but those who lived within the line. That kept all the colored boys out.” (Wright, 1940: 327)

The white domination in the lives of the Black people is unquestionable. Segregation that White people practice in the name of racial discrimination, was really push the black people to the limit of their existence as a human being. Being born as a black person, made them have to go through hardship in order to survive. They could not do almost everything that the White could do. They could not have the luxury to choose the side of the area to live comfortably with their family and they could not go to the same school as the white. As a result, most of the black were
uneducated and in the end forced to live in poverty. Therefore that social gap between the Whites and the Black is getting wider and wider by the day with the practice of segregation by the racist White American.
CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1 Conclusions

After analyzing this novel, it is proved that racial discrimination gives high contribution in making social problems to the society. The first problem can be seen from the discussion between Bigger Thomas and his lawyer Boris A. Max. The second problem can be seen from the Bigger’s attitude the first time he went in to the Dalton’s house. The way Bigger protect him self by carrying gun and knife with him, shows how terrified he was to the White. The third problem can be seen from Bigger thought and enthusiasm to work for the Daltons. His excitement was mainly because of the eagerness to find out how the white man lives their life, was it the same with what he saw all this time in the movies and magazines. Prejudice was the fourth problem that analyzed in this thesis. There are two side of prejudice that shown from this analysis. The first was White prejudice against the Black which can be seen from Bigger’s experience with white woman, for they always for no reason tend to keep a distance from him and did not treat him nicely. The second was Black prejudice to the White which can be seen from Bigger’s night out with Jan Erlone and Mary Dalton. Their kind gesture to Bigger did not make Bigger felt calm and convenient, on the contrary Bigger’s prejudiced towards White people detain him from realizing that not all white people were the same. The fifth problem can be seen from the conversation between Mr. Dalton and Mr. Max that takes place in a court room. It was about how
Mr. Dalton’s segregation in housing for the black contributed a lot to the destruction of the Black society.

I can say that, the White Americans still adopt the superiority syndrome that effects in the way they treat Black Americans. Consequently, race discrimination which is done by White Americans toward Black Americans has made them suffer in every aspect of their life.

4.2 Suggestions

Racial Discrimination is one of the worst social problems that still exist up to this very moment in every part of the world. In “Native Son”, Richard Wright describes racial discrimination that happened in the America, Chicago in the 1930s through the eyes of the main character, Bigger Thomas. White Superiority, Black Inferiority, Cultural and Ethnic Differences, Prejudice and Segregation are the examples of social problems that occur due to the practice of racial discrimination to the society.

There are several suggestion that this thesis could offer to the readers, which are :

- Racial discrimination happened with the basis of physical appearances, which is the skin color. People should not be judge based on their performance but based on type of person and how they contribute to the community. This novel, clearly portray how devastated the impact of racial discrimination, it is not only affected to the oppressor, the oppresses but also to the society.

- Those who experienced or become the victim of the racial discrimination should not let the oppressor ruin their mind, confidents, personality and who you really are as a human being. They should overcome these boundaries and not submit themselves to the preconceived image that the white society has of them.
• Racial discrimination issue is very important to be taken seriously and constantly need to be reminded to people all over the world. It is need to be educated to children in their early age that they are no difference than any other people around him, if you have good understanding of what race discrimination is all about hopefully you can avoid misconceptions and unnecessary prejudice in the daily life.

• In Indonesia it self, this issue has become a major problem that almost tear this country apart. The incident of racism that happened on Mei 1998 in almost all over Indonesia for example was a very valuable lesson for us to learn of how destructive the practiced of racial discrimination could be. As a country that was built by thousands of different ethnic, the problem of racism could easily happen to your surrounding or even your self. Therefore, the understanding, respect and awareness of this social problem could help avoiding and terminating the destructive effects of racial discrimination.
A. The Authors Biography

Richard Nathan Wright was born September 4, 1908 in Roxie. He was the son of Nathan Wright, an illiterate sharecropper, and Ella Wilson Wright, a schoolteacher, and the grandson of slaves. In 1911 Ella takes Wright and barely one year old brother Leon Alan to Natchez to live with her family and the father later joins them and finds work in a sawmill. In 1913, the four Wrights moved to Memphis, Tennessee. But within a year, Nathan deserts them for another woman and Ella works as a cook to support the family.

In September 1915, Richard entered school at Howe Institute. However, Ella fell ill early in 1916 and Richard's father Nathan's mother came for a while to care for the family. When she left, Richard and Alan had to live for a brief time in an orphanage until Ella could have them live with her parents in Jackson, Mississippi. But again, Richard, Alan, and Ella were moved, this time with Ella's sister Maggie and her husband Silas Hoskins in Elaine, Arkansas. But the Whites murdered Hoskins and the family ran to West Helena, Arkansas. Not long after they moved to Jackson, Mississippi. After a few months, they return to West Helena, where mother and aunt cook and clean for the Whites. Soon, Aunt Maggie goes north to Detroit with her new lover.

Wright entered school in the fall of 1918, but was forced to leave after a few months because his mother's poor health forces him to earn money to support the family. Unable to pay their rent, the family moved and Wright gathers excess coal next to the railroad tracks in order to heat the home. When his mother suffers a
paralyzing stroke, they return with Ella’s Mother to Jackson, and Aunt Maggie takes 
Leon Alan to Detroit with her.

At the age of 13, Richard entered the fifth grade in Jackson, and he was soon placed in sixth grade. In addition, he delivers newspapers and works briefly with a traveling insurance salesman. The next year, he entered the seventh grade and his grandfather died. He managed to earn enough to buy textbooks, food, and clothes by running errands for whites. In the meantime, Richard read pulp novels, magazines, and anything he can get his hands on. During the winter, he writes his first short story, "The Voodoo of Hell's Half-Acre," which is published in the spring of 1924 in the Jackson Southern Register. In May 1925, Wright graduates valedictorian of his ninth grade. He begins high school, but as Leon Alan has returned from Detroit, quits after only a few weeks so he can earn money. At times he worked two or even three jobs.

In 1927, Richard read H. L. Mencken, and from Mencken, Wright learned about and read Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, Frank Harris, and others. Wright and Aunt Maggie moved to Chicago, while his mother and brother returned to Jackson, where Wright worked as a dishwasher and delivery boy until finding temporary employment with the postal service in Chicago. His mother and brother moved in with Wright and Aunt Maggie, and Aunt Cleopatra joins them. He makes friends, both black and white, in the post office, writes regularly, and attends meetings of black literary groups.

Following the stock market crash, Wright loses his postal job, but began work, in 1930, on a novel, "Cesspool," (published posthumously in 1970's as Lawd Today!) that reflects his experience in the post office. In 1931 Wright publishes a short story, "Superstition," in Abbott's Monthly Magazine, a black journal that fails before Wright
collects any money from them. However, he did get an opportunity to write through the Federal Writers' Project. He became a member of the Communist Party and published poetry and short stories in such magazines as Left Front, Anvil, and New Masses.

He went to New York for the American Writers' Congress, where he speaks on "The Isolation of the Negro Writer." He publishes a poem about lynching in Partisan Review and writes an article for New Masses entitled "Joe Louis Uncovers Dynamite." After his return, he is hired by the Federal Writers' Project to research the history of Illinois and of the Negro in Chicago. His short story "Big Boy Leaves Home" (1936) appears in The New Caravan anthology, where it attracts mainstream critical attention.

In 1937 Richard Wright went to New York City, where he became Harlem editor of the Communist paper, Daily Worker. He helps to launch the magazine New Challenge, and publishes "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow" in American Stuff: WPA Writers' Anthology. "Blueprint for Negro Writing" appears in the first and only issue of New Challenge. A second novel manuscript, "Tarbaby's Dawn," makes the rounds with publishers and receives constant rejection; it is never published, but "Fire and Cloud" wins first prize in a Story Magazine contest.

The next year, Uncle Tom's Children is published in March to wide acclaim. "Bright and Morning Star" appears in New Masses, and Wright soon joins that magazine's editorial board. He works on a new novel and asks Margaret Walker to send him newspaper clippings from the Robert Nixon case in Chicago. In October, he finishes the first draft of this novel, which he calls Native Son. "Fire and Cloud" wins the O. Henry Memorial Award. By February 1939 he has a completed second draft of
Native Son. After winning a Guggenheim Fellowship, Wright resigns from the Federal Writers' Project. In June, he finishes Native Son and marries Dhima Rose Meadman, a white modern-dance teacher. Ralph Ellison is his best man. He begins work on a new novel, "Little Sister," which is never published.

Native Son is published 1940 in March and the Book-of-the-Month Club offers it as a main selection. Though the book is banned in Birmingham, Alabama, libraries, Wright becomes internationally famous. Unhappy with the stage adaptation of Native Son that Paul Green has been working on, Wright and John Houseman revise it with Orson Welles in mind as director. The book is a best-seller and is staged successfully as a play on Broadway (1941) by Orson Welles.

Wright expresses his opposition to the war first by signing onto an anti-war appeal by the League of American Writers, and second by publishing "Not My People's War." Both items appear in New Masses in 1941. He criticizes Roosevelt's racial policies in a 27 June speech to the NAACP, although communist party pressure forces him to lessen his critique. Wright gets involved in music: "Note on Jim Crow Blues" prefaces blues singer Josh White's Southern Exposure album and Paul Robeson, accompanied by the Count Basie orchestra, records Wright's blues song, "King Joe." Twelve Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States published in October. Wright becomes interested in psychoanalysis as a result of his reading Fredric Wertham's Dark Legend. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Wright signs a petition, which appears in New Masses, supporting America's entry into the war.

Wright is not drafted in 1942 because he is his family's sole support, but he unsuccessfully tries to secure a special commission in the psychological warfare or
propaganda services of the army. He publishes "The Man Who Lived Underground" in Accent and "What You Don't Know Won't Hurt You" in Harper's Magazine. He breaks quietly with the Communist party. Wright begins American Hunger. In 1943 the FBI begins interviewing Wright's associates and neighbors, presumably to determine if 12 Million Black Voices constitutes sedition, but while that inquiry concludes during 1943, the FBI's investigations continue until Wright's death.

Book-of-the-Month Club tells Harper that it only wants the first section of American Hunger, which describes Wright's southern experience. Wright agrees to this demand and titles the new volume Black Boy. The second section is not published until 1977 (as American Hunger). "I Tried to Be a Communist" appears in the Atlantic Monthly, causing New Masses and Daily Worker to denounce and disown Wright. Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth in March 1945. It remains on the bestseller list from 29 April until 6 June. Theodore Bilbo, a senator from Mississippi, labels the book obscene. That year Wright also helped James Baldwin win a fellowship.

In 1947, a Hollywood producer offers to film Native Son, but wants to change Bigger Thomas to a white man; Wright refuses. Wright's works are being translated into several European languages. Wright decides to move the family to Europe permanently. But in reaction to the continued racism he encountered in America, Wright decided to move to France as a permanent expatriate. While in France, Wright took a growing interest in anti-colonial movements and also traveled extensively. Wright himself played Bigger in a motion-picture version of Native Son made in Argentina in 1951.
Late in 1952, Wright begins working on a novel about a white psychopathic murderer. The Outsider (1953), was acclaimed as the first American existential novel. Three later novels were not well-received. Among his polemical writings of that period was White Man, Listen! (1957), which was originally a series of lectures given in Europe.

Wright had considerable company as an exile in Paris. James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, and Chester Himes were just the most notable of the presences. Meetings amongst the individuals are legendary.

In February 1957, Pagan Spain appears. It fails to sell well, despite favorable reviews. In October, Doubleday publishes a collection of Wright's lectures entitled White Man, Listen! 1958 Wright finishes The Long Dream, his novel about Mississippi, and begins to work on its sequel, "Island of Hallucinations," which is set in France. When The Long Dream is published by Doubleday in October, it receives poor and sometimes hostile reviews, and it does not sell well.

On 14 January, 1959, Wright's mother dies. In February, Wright sends Reynolds the manuscript for "Island of Hallucinations." He meets with Martin Luther King, Jr., who is on his way to India. Wright's new editor, Timothy Seldes, asks for substantial revisions on "Island of Hallucinations." Wright shelves the project and never completes it. In the spring, his play Daddy Goodness opens in Paris. Best American Stories of 1958 includes Wright's "Big Black Good Man."

A stage adaptation of The Long Dream opens on Broadway February 17, 1960 to poor reviews and closes within a week. Of his completed Haiku, Wright prepares 811 for publication. He begins a new novel, "A Father's Law," during the summer, but on returning to Paris in September, he falls ill. He prepares Eight Men, a collection of
short stories, which World Publishers will publish in 1961. November 28, 1960, Wright dies. The cause of death is listed as heart attack. On the third of December, Wright is cremated along with a copy of Black Boy. His ashes remain at the Pere Lachaise cemetery in Paris. The autobiographical American Hunger, which narrates Wright's experiences after moving to the North, was published posthumously in 1977. Some of the more candid passages dealing with race, sex, and politics in Wright's books had been cut or omitted before original publication. Unexpurgated versions of Native Son, Black Boy, and his other works were published in 1991, however.

B. The Authors Works

- UNCLE TOM'S CHILDREN, 1938
- HOW BIGGER WAS BORN, 1940
- TWELVE MILLION BLACK VOICES, 1941
- THE NEGRO AND PARKWAY COMMUNITY HOUSE, 1941
- play: NATIVE SON, 1941 (with P. Green, rev. ed. 1980)
- THE MAN WHO LIVED UNDERGROUND, 1942-44
- THE GOD THAT FAILED, 1950
- screenplay: NATIVE SON, 1951
- SAVAGE HOLIDAY, 1954 - films: Domingo salvaje, 1967, prod. Sagitarito Films (Mexico), dir. Francisco del Villar, adapted by Emilio Carballido, starring Kitty de Hoyos, David Reynoso, José Gálvez, Bertha Moss, Raúl Ramírez; La Passerelle, 1988, prod. T. Films (France), dir. Jean-Claude Sussfeld, starring Pierre Arditi, Mathilda May, Aurelle Doazan, Jean-Marie Marion
- BLACK POWER, 1954
- BANDOENG: 1.500.000.000 HOMMES, 1955 - The Color Curtain: The Report on the Bandung Conference
- THE COLOR CURTAIN, 1956

C. The Summary of The Novel

Bigger Thomas, a poor, uneducated, twenty-year-old black man in 1930s Chicago, wakes up one morning in his families cramped apartment on the South Side of the city. He sees a huge rat scamper across the room, which he corners and kills with a skillet. Having grown up under the climate of harsh racial prejudice in 1930s America, Bigger is burdened with a powerful conviction that he has no control over his life and that he cannot aspire to anything other than menial, low-wage labor. His mother pesters him to take a job with a rich white man named Mr. Dalton, but Bigger instead chooses to meet up with his friends to plan the robbery of a white man's store.
Anger, fear, and frustration define Bigger's daily existence, as he is forced to hide behind a façade of toughness or risk succumbing to despair. While Bigger and his gang have robbed many black-owned businesses, they have never attempted to rob a white man. Bigger sees whites not as individuals, but as a natural, oppressive force—a great looming “whiteness” pressing down upon him. Bigger's fear of confronting this force overwhelms him, but rather than admit his fear, he violently attacks a member of his gang to sabotage the robbery. Left with no other options, Bigger takes a job as a chauffeur for the Daltons.

Coincidentally, Mr. Dalton is also Bigger's landlord, as he owns a controlling share of the company that manages the apartment building where Bigger's family lives. Mr. Dalton and other wealthy real estate barons are effectively robbing the poor, black tenants on Chicago's South Side—they refuse to allow blacks to rent apartments in predominantly white neighborhoods, thus leading to overpopulation and artificially high rents in the predominantly black South Side. Mr. Dalton sees himself as a benevolent philanthropist, however, as he donates money to black schools and offers jobs to “poor, timid black boys” like Bigger. However, Mr. Dalton practices this token philanthropy mainly to alleviate his guilty conscience for exploiting poor blacks.

Mary, Mr. Dalton's daughter, frightens and angers Bigger by ignoring the social taboos that govern the relations between white women and black men. On his first day of work, Bigger drives Mary to meet her communist boyfriend, Jan. Eager to prove their progressive ideals and racial tolerance, Mary and Jan force Bigger to take them to a restaurant in the South Side. Despite Bigger's embarrassment, they order drinks, and as the evening passes, all three of them get drunk. Bigger then drives around the city while Mary and Jan make out in the back seat. Afterward, Mary is too drunk to
make it to her bedroom on her own, so Bigger helps her up the stairs. Drunk and aroused by his unprecedented proximity to a young white woman, Bigger begins to kiss Mary.

Just as Bigger places Mary on her bed, Mary's blind mother, Mrs. Dalton, enters the bedroom. Though Mrs. Dalton cannot see him, her ghostlike presence terrifies him. Bigger worries that Mary, in her drunken condition, will reveal his presence. He covers her face with a pillow and accidentally smothers her to death. Unaware that Mary has been killed, Mrs. Dalton prays over her daughter and returns to bed. Bigger tries to conceal his crime by burning Mary's body in the Daltons' furnace. He decides to try to use the Daltons' prejudice against communists to frame Jan for Mary's disappearance. Bigger believes that the Daltons will assume Jan is dangerous and that he may have kidnapped their daughter for political purposes. Additionally, Bigger takes advantage of the Daltons' racial prejudices to avoid suspicion, continuing to play the role of a timid, ignorant black servant who would be unable to commit such an act.

Mary's murder gives Bigger a sense of power and identity he has never known. Bigger's girlfriend, Bessie, makes an offhand comment that inspires him to try to collect ransom money from the Daltons. They know only that Mary has vanished, not that she is dead. Bigger writes a ransom letter, playing upon the Daltons' hatred of communists by signing his name “Red.” He then bullies Bessie to take part in the ransom scheme. However, Mary's bones are found in the furnace, and Bigger flees with Bessie to an empty building. Bigger rapes Bessie and, frightened that she will give him away, bludgeons her to death with a brick after she falls asleep.
Bigger eludes the massive manhunt for as long as he can, but he is eventually captured after a dramatic shoot-out. The press and the public determine his guilt and his punishment before his trial even begins. The furious populace assumes that he raped Mary before killing her and burned her body to hide the evidence of the rape. Moreover, the white authorities and the white mob use Bigger's crime as an excuse to terrorize the entire South Side.

Jan visits Bigger in jail. He says that he understands how he terrified, angered, and shamed Bigger through his violation of the social taboos that govern tense race relations. Jan enlists his friend, Boris A. Max, to defend Bigger free of charge. Jan and Max speak with Bigger as a human being, and Bigger begins to see whites as individuals and himself as their equal.

Max tries to save Bigger from the death penalty, arguing that while his client is responsible for his crime, it is vital to recognize that he is a product of his environment. Part of the blame for Bigger's crimes belongs to the fearful, hopeless existence that he has experienced in a racist society since birth. Max warns that there will be more men like Bigger if America does not put an end to the vicious cycle of hatred and vengeance. Despite Max's arguments, Bigger is sentenced to death.

Bigger is not a traditional hero by any means. However, Wright forces us to enter into Bigger's mind and to understand the devastating effects of the social conditions in which he was raised. Bigger was not born a violent criminal. He is a "native son": a product of American culture and the violence and racism that suffuse it.
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