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The Social Obstacles in Richard Wright's *Black Boy* (1945) Novel: Acritical Analysis

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Abstract

Since the mid-1920s, the fundamental concern of American writers has been the phenomenon of deceit and reality and the struggle for self-definition as members of society. Black people in the United States have struggled to implement racial equality among members of society, especially after the declaration of their country's independence. Many achievements have been made in many areas over the last few decades, but the problem of ethnic conflict has not been completely resolved. The novel demonstrated blind fanaticism in the South and its negative effects on society. The Numerous difficulties in Wright's family life are directly or indirectly the result of racial discrimination. When Wright enters the world of labor, he discovers widespread and terrible racism in society. Thus, the autobiography finishes with Wright's flight to the South and the discriminatory conditions he faces there. The novel investigates the issue of racism not just as a detestable conviction held by evil individuals and as a tricky issue weaved into the very structure holding the system together in general. Wright depicts characters, such as Olin and Pease, as evil individuals. The current research attempts to analyze the sum of critical social problems such as violence, racism, and oppression in the novel. This study aims to create an awareness of racism and oppression using the personal experience of Richard Wright in his autobiography *Black Boy*.

Keywords: Violence, Racism, Oppression, Self-Definition.

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1. Introduction

The slave story, the principal black literary prose genre in the United States, helped build an African-American identity in America apart from continuously being applied as an integrative impact on black anecdotal strategies and themes throughout the 20th century. Afro-American literature describes the harrowing experiences, agony, and debasement that Black people endured throughout their existence. Racism, convention, culture, slavery, and liberation are all themes that appear in the literature. Black Literature is a subgenre of modern American literature that has emerged in recent years. To express their anguish over racism to the entire world, black Americans have taken to writing novels as a way to communicate their experiences. The historical backdrop of disavowal of equivalent treatment in the society carved disappointment and dissatisfaction among the blacks. Wright's fight was against the oppression of the Blacks by the Whites and the unjust American Society. His motive was to find a solution to the racial problems while spreading the idea of democracy because it says that he became a victim of White domination and oppression like that of the other Blacks. One of the most notable African-American authors of the 20th century among the African authors who addressed vulnerable racial issues in a difficult period was Richard Wright. He gained popularity with his creative expression connected to the United States' social ramifications and the facts associated with African-Americans as an oppressed minority. He reacted to the deficiencies of blacks in American society in his writings, which shows the beginning of the cultural explosion of African-American literature. It paved the door for new theories by winning support for the Harlem Renaissance, in which the interests of black intellectuals were promoted for the growth of artists and effective social reforms. Richard Wright's literature is well-graded literature and art but it also challenges the norms of the society. The norms of the Whites rejected by the blacks through their alienation from the established order are represented in Wright's novels. After the Harlem Renaissance, i.e. around the 1930s, the Age of Richard Wright began and lasted until the end of the 1950s. Richard Wright's novels and works brought out into the open, among black novels, to change the American culture. Wright's novels professed that history can be a punishment. Richard urged the literature by Black authors should reveal the social disenfranchisement of black people and achieve the goal of social equality. Stoneberg supports this by stating, Wright, as an African-American writer, frustrated by the lack of social gains of the 1920s and 1930s and also influenced by Marxism, falls into this category of adopting naturalism in his novel *Native Son*, to reveal the social structures that disadvantages black people (Stoneberg Michael Richard, 2010: pp. 2-3).

Wright's considerate of African-American life is deep-rooted in his upbringing in the southern United States. Throughout *Black Boy*, he expresses his opinions on black life in America,

Whenever I thought of the essential bleakness of black life in America, I knew the Negroes had never been allowed to catch the whole spirit of Western Civilization that they lived somehow in it but not of it. When I thought about the lack of culture in black life, I wondered if clean, positive tenderness, love, honor, loyalty, and the ability to remember were things that came naturally to all men, not just black people. (*Black Boy*, p.35).

This paper analyzes the importance of social problems and self-definition with reference to the *Black Boy* novel. Our objective is to demonstrate that racism and oppression are essential themes in *Black Boy*, especially given that the book was published during the Jim Crow era.

2.The Historical Background of Genre

Since the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, African-Americans in the United States have fought for racial equality. It hasn't been an easy road. The country has made great strides in eliminating racial inequality in recent decades, but no one believes that the issue has been resolved. *Black Boy* is one of the most riveting records about the battle of an artist to find his or her identity and attain success in the American music industry. Between 1908 and 1927, when Wright was growing up in the South, *Black Boy* unquestionably aimed the systemic racism that pervaded society. Racism played a significant role in many of Wright's family's difficulties, both directly and indirectly. Wright discovers prejudice to be ubiquitous and unbearable once he enters the world of employment. In this way, Wright's autobiography comes to a close with his flight to the South and the discriminatory conditions he is forced to face there. Anthropological notions that have already been disproved have given rise to the concept of a "racial group". This school of thought originated predominantly in Western Europe in the 19th century and early 20th centuries, asserting that humans could be separated into racial groups based on physical and behavioral features related to ethnicity, nationality, and associated conceptions such as a shared language. The present use of the terms "race" and "racial" emerged because these false conceptions of Racial discrimination are growing ingrained in society's attitudes and behaviours, particularly in Western nations. These views penetrate all aspects of Scottish culture, from social attitudes to organizational structure, and disadvantages experienced by Black and minority ethnic people are perpetuated over generations. 'Race' is inextricably tied to skin colour. White populations worldwide have not been 'racialized' in the same manner that non-

white people have been. Their process of racialization resulted in more benefits than problems. As a result, while there may be prejudice and discrimination against white minority ethnic groups in Scotland, we would classify this as xenophobic prejudice rather than racist. One of the most common ways to describe oppression is an evil or unjust use of power. In the context of discrimination, oppression occurs when a wrong is committed against a specific group of people rather than the general public. There is currently no widely accepted paradigm or terminology for explaining oppression as its whole. However, some academics have found a sign of numerous varieties of tyranny, including social oppression, institutional oppression, and economic oppression, among others. When one person forces their will on another, this is called oppression. However, the concept, popularized by Marx and Engels in their 1848 Communist Manifesto, is frequently invoked to justify governmental repression.

However, the Latin word *oppressus* is the past participle of *opprimere*, which means to make someone feel bad or ("to press against", "to squeeze", "to suffocate"). In other words, when governments use tyranny to make people subservient, they want their citizens to feel that "pressing down," and to live in fear that if they displease the government, "squeezed" and "suffocated," for example, they'll be put in a dank, dark, state prison or killed. Such governments use restraint, control, terror, hopelessness, and despair to make people feel hopeless and helpless (American Heritage Dictionary, 2016). Taylor (2016) described (social) oppression as a more insidious kind of manipulation and control:

Oppression is a form of injustice that occurs when one social group is subordinated while another is privileged. Oppression is maintained by a variety of different mechanisms, including social norms, stereotypes and institutional rules. ... oppression] occurs when a particular social group is unjustly subordinated, and where that subordination is not necessarily deliberate but instead results from a complex network of social restrictions, ranging from laws and institutions to implicit biases and stereotypes. (Taylor, Elanor, 2016).

In particular, in Western countries, racial differences are becoming ingrained in society's views and behaviors. As a result, persons in positions of relative power can treat and exploit a group of individuals in a socially acceptable manner. Social group oppression can be founded on various ideas, such as the opinion that people are oppressed based on their socioeconomic status or the conviction that people are oppressed based on their ethnicity. the concept of racial oppression or discrimination is defined by the term "race":

"...burdening a specific race with unjust or cruel restraints or impositions. Racial oppression may be social, systematic, institutionalized, or internalized. Social

forms of racial oppression include exploitation and mistreatment that is socially supported." (Wikipedia, 2021).

Discussion

The current research examines the works of Richard Wright, a prominent African-American novelist who was born in the South of the United States. Racism and prejudice and the struggle to find one's identity are all prominent themes in this novel, which focuses on a man's journey for freedom and self-definition. Slavery's unpleasant spectre hung over their heads for most of their lives. In many cases, people die as a result of a deluge of racial hatred and violence.

3. Critical Analysis of The *Black Boy*

3.1. The Professional Career of Richard Wright

Richard Wright was born in 1908 on a plantation in Natchez, Mississippi, and raised there until he died in 1989. His father was a sharecropper of African descent, while his mother was a schoolteacher. When cotton prices plummeted at the onset of World War I in 1914, Wright's father was one of many who fled to the northern industrial towns, eventually settling in Memphis, where he worked as a night porter in a drugstore. After abandoning his family due to the stress of city life, Wright's childhood consisted of moving from one southern town to the next, where he attended various schools and worked in a variety of occupations. The Great Depression brought him to Chicago, where he laboured at odd jobs and drifted until he became involved with the American Communist Party. For as long as he can remember, Richard Wright has harbored a deep desire to be a writer. When his first novel, *Uncle Tom's Children*, was released in 1938, he became an overnight sensation. Throughout these stories, the black person is depicted as being in rebellion against his environment, and the depth of Wright's expressive links to the South is revealed. According to Wright's own admissions in his autobiography, his writings from 1932 to 1944 illustrate his belief in communism as the only system capable of restoring human values to the planet. Native Son's use of this concept has affected many black authors. *Black Boy* (1945), a memoir by the novelist Edgar Wright, exhibits the same Marxist philosophy that Bigger Thomas conveys in his anti-hero character in the novel. He abides by the existentialist tenet of freedom of choice in his daily life, mocking Communist methods. Wright's novels, *The Outsider*, *The Long Dream* (1958) and *Lawd Today* (1963), deal with racial issues.

Additionally, he wrote short stories, sociological studies, haiku, and several essays and reviews, among other works. His impact on contemporary black literature is undeniable. He helped establish a new tradition by fathering the black

protest novel and exploring naturalism through the lens of the American Black. His most moving and artistically influential book, *Black Boy*, is unquestionably this one. This book provides an in-depth examination of the ethics of living in the Jim Crow South, revealing the many unresolved difficulties that still plague both black and white Americans today. Wright passed away in 1960 while traveling outside of the United States.

3.2. An Introduction

Richard Wright's *Black Boy* (1945) demonstrates the self-instruction of Wright (protagonist of the novel), indicating how he suffered from racism. It reflects the photo of his poor family in Natchez, Mississippi. It depicts his hopeless trip to escape from the poor, escape from White abuse. The novel follows his life as a transient and investigates the urban life's strength. Wright was stunned of the estrangement of industrial advancement. Wright, in *Black Boy*, depicts the deadly destitution committed by White as a system to rule blacks. *Black Boy* demonstrated the discontinuity caused by racism either on the individual or on an aggregate level as a reality in the South. The novel clarifies the trivial and incomprehensible states of life in the South. It uncovered the barbarism statuses of blacks, reflecting the starvation as a malady that won in the society amid the time of great depression. White as well as black cultures are attempted to be exposed as unnecessarily developed stories of racial virtue that prospered with the rejection and slandering of black male subjects through the writings of Richard Wright. The legitimacy of White culture that claims against its conception of its other blacks is underscored along with the gap between its grim realities of abuse and deprivation and its humanistic talks of justice, opportunity, progress, order and rationality; because of which the black population is confined. The reason behind exposing this is to disclose the disparity that is among the discourses of White culture and its practices associated with black people. It goes further as it assaults the particular epistemological and hypothetical premises of Whiteness, a kind of proof that can be recognized as a proof that is laid on an essential and a positive perspective of the self and the other. As per the visualization of Wright, black manliness is an identity in an emergency because basically it doesn't fit in the humanistic patterns of power and learning by which White methods of identification concerning social typicality and racial solidarity are supported. The White culture and its hidden enlightenment assumptions are tested and challenged with the depiction of Wright's fiction on how a black male is better than an average redness. The assumption that Whiteness can't stand the trial of distinction in uncovering its epistemological presumptions and facts not being normal but developed and rambling is the expected demonstration of its

mining of broken black manliness. Abdul Jan Mohamed (1995) outlines this common procedure of distinguishing proof, where the burst and distortion of the black subject is turned into a site where there is an investigation of White culture's distinction of making knowledge and esteems. Wright's main scholarly distraction of comprehending his own particular arrangement as a black subject by White as well as black cultures is also contended by Abdul Jan Mohamed:

All groups define their identities through some form of binary opposition to other groups [and] the very process of suturing the (relative) 'homogeneity' that is crucial to the definition of that group's 'identity' . . . also simultaneously constitutes the process of rupturing various subjects on its borders the border subject becomes the site on and through which a group defines its identity. (Mudimbe-Boyi, 2012: pp.231-32).

Though the origins of racial identity can be traced back to American history and social practices, Wright doesn't focus on that alone; in addition ventures, it as a metaphor, a signifier that ousts both White and black identities from essentialist meanings of reality and spots them in the historical backdrop of a racial battle over significance and power. In another unique situation, he challenges the White identity because it is similar to the Negro; it is a "picture" resulting from social innovations. He explains how African-Asian pioneers in the postcolonial time see Whiteness:

The 'White man' is a distinct image in Asian-African minds. This image has nothing to do with biology, for, from a biological point of view, what a 'White man' is not attractive. Scientifically speaking, the leaders of Asia and Africa know that there is no such thing as race. It is, therefore, only from a historical or sociological point of view that the image of 'White man' means anything (McKenna, 2015: p.239).

'Black Boy' is Richard Wright's autobiography. It depicts living in the southern and northern parts of the United States. As a black person living in the "Jim Crow" South, this is what it's like. The narrative begins to unravel through his father's presence in the household and his thoughts about him. According to him, his mother was a god-fearing black woman who was also very fearful of the white people around her. The main character's father abandons the family, leaving them vulnerable to the effects of poverty. This takes the hard toll on Richard's mother, who unable to withstand the pressure, becomes sick. The traumatic life of the main character that runs between the families for livelihood as well as his love for reading is explained. The importance and the kind of education, that the Whites determine for the blacks are nicely portrayed in the story. Richard, who is unable to survive the events in the South, goes to the North in the hope that he would find better living conditions and prosperity. Once on arriving in North, he

understands the bitterness of truth because he finds that White dominance, job discrimination and racial segregation are prevalent in the so-called liberal North. The life experiences of his contemporaries Zora Neale Hurston, Maya Angelou and James Baldwin are depicted through their autobiographies. They speak about the expressions of what life gave them and the various scenarios of life. Richard Wright entitles his work *Black Boy* fundamentally for the accentuation of the word Black. This is a story about Wright's youth, yet the hue of his skin is constantly on his mind. He is not only growing up in America, but he is also growing up as a black person. Because of his skin tone, white people in the narrative mistreat Richard on most occasions he encounters. It was subtle racism that was more important to Richard Wright because it kept him from frequently connecting with the Whites who treated him with similar regard (for instance, the Hoffman's or Mr Crane) or similar to blacks. A review of the black community is incorporated in Wright's research of Racism in America that the black community itself and, in particular, the black society group was unwilling to educate him befittingly. The savagery of fictional characters in modern American writing at the time mirrored his discontent when he discovered the imaginative powers of literature. "I vowed that as soon as I was old enough, I would buy all the novels there were and read them to feed that thirst for violence that was in me, for intrigue, for plotting, for secrecy, for bloody murders" (Rowley, 2008: p.10).

3.3. Society and the Individual

Black Boy is the story of a man forging his own path. Wright is thrust into a brutal environment. He battles white tyranny, black expectations for "normal" behavior, and feelings of rootlessness in the South. He wishes to flee to the North—but these difficulties do not go away in Chicago. There, he contends with the city's vastness and anonymity. He seeks harmony and human connection but is frequently unsuccessful in his quest. In Wright's experience, Southern whites lump all black people together. In their minds, there is no such thing as a black identity. As a result, many whites conclude Wright is a thief, a liar, and a murderer. The cops tell Wright not to ride his bicycle alone into white communities. When Wright expresses his desire to become an optometrist, Pease and Reynolds accuse him of asserting himself too forcefully. Racism is a systematic denial of black identity in the South. According to whites, a lack of individuality amongst black people means that Jim Crow-era servitude will continue to be the norm.

On the other hand, Wright has a much more difficult time in the black community. Granny, Addie, and Uncle Tom think it's "soft" or "weird" that Wright wants to

be a writer and leave the South. Richard is urged by each to "fall in line" with Christian teaching. They want him to remain in Jackson and continue to live with them. Black workers like Shorty and Harrison in Memphis are more concerned with "not making waves," or pleasing their white superiors, than Wright finds in his research elsewhere. Wright moves to Chicago because he is dissatisfied with the black resignation process. He hopes to meet others who aren't afraid to embrace their black cultural heritage. However, this is not the true in Chicago. Wright does not agree with the other black writers, activists, and political figures that are present at the event. He will not be able to join the Communist Party or the John Reed Club if he does not follow their rules. Black actors who accept stereotypical portrayals of black life on the stage are the target of his ire. According to Wright, whenever Wright goes in search of a genuine black community, he discovers that white supremacy has distorted it in some way. Wright's feelings of loneliness and a sense of not belonging spur him on to more extraordinary accomplishments as a reader, writer, and thinker. Reading and writing, according to Wright, are the ultimate expressions of individualism because they allow one to dispute society's expectations about "normal" black behavior through the written word. Wright develops his own distinctive voice via reading and through calm, meticulous, and determined effort. Despite the fact that it deals with social issues and is intended for a wide audience, this work begins in a private setting. As a result, towards the end of the memoir, Wright returns to his study to continue working on his own behalf in order to advance his professional development.

3.4. Jim Crow Era and *Black Boy*

There is no doubt that violence has been a part of American culture for a long time. American colonists and later Americans were enthused about America because it fostered freedom of religion as well as freedom of speech and thought in all its forms. However, from the outset, the American society was concurrently established on horrible kinds of oppression and injustice, which entailed the entire rejection of the concept of slavery as a legitimate form of property. Furthermore, this outcome can be seen as an important historical conundrum in American history. According to the previous statement, it is necessary to look into the living conditions of the black community during the implementation and enforcement of those laws throughout Southern America, and more specifically in Mississippi, where Richard Wright's novel *Black Boy* is set, in order to be more specific about the issue of violence in America as previously stated. The Constitution of the United States clearly states that "all men and women are created equal," (Ginzberg, P5), but black people were consistently dominated in the South

during the first half of the twentieth century as a result of Jim Crow Laws. Whites used numerous measures to prevent blacks from becoming citizens of the United States. In addition, they formed organizations of assassins to target African-Americans. Early in twentieth-century Wright explores the tension between European-Americans and African-Americans in his novel *Black Boy*. As a result of this attitude, there is a development in the novel. ' It's easy to believe that Richard had issues with white people, but the awkwardness of the Jim Crow Era was a major factor in the poor racial relations even among African-Americans. In this case, Richard's family's circumstances were so dire that I'd like to explain them in more detail. A majority of American states' "Jim Crow" laws imposed harsh punishments on people of color from the 1880's through the 1960's. The majority of the laws barred black-white marriage and required employers and public institutions to treat black and white people differently. Economically, blacks were capable of earning a living, yet, white individuals who were not prejudiced were forced to refuse black job applicants and customers. Historians believed that the term "Jim Crow" first appeared in 1830, when a white minstrel named Thomas Daddy Rice painted his face black and capered gleefully while singing a Jump Jim Crow poem. He came across an old black man or a teenager capering and singing fully some phrases that ended with "I jump Jim Crow" while traveling through the South of America. Other Chroniclers asserted that a young man known as Mr. Crow owned a slave, which drove Thomas Rice to behave in such a manner; as a result, the Jim Crow was mentioned repeatedly throughout the book. Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, which freed the slaves in the southern United States, was violated throughout the Jim Crow Era. Discrimination became the basic laws and regulations of the state in the southern states of America after the Supreme Court of the United States of America ruled in 1896 that the Constitution of the United States of America did not prohibit discrimination, "separate but equal"(Berrey, 149). It was legal for whites and blacks to have equal access to opportunities. Since the Supreme Court's 1880s and 1890s ruling, Jim Crow laws have been given greater weight. When The Civil War ended, many slaves were emancipated, and they began to settle in the United States of America. It was a difficult journey for them to adjust to their newly acquired independence. Restricting blacks from politics didn't just stop the racial activities; it also led the loss of all close ties with blacks. After six years of attempting to repeal the racial segregation rule by posing as semi-white individuals, Homere Plessey boarded a train, where he was detained immediately for occupying a seat reserved for white individuals. Plessey was hauled to court, where he was found guilty and sentenced to prison. This occurrence is remembered as a notable historical event in American history, known as Plessey v

Ferguson. The Tribunal determined that Plessey had been awarded equal rights since diverse but equal locations had been guaranteed for both African-Americans and white folks by the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which said that all people must be given the right to enjoy equally and completely “the accommodations, advantages, facilities... and other places of public discrimination on a railroad and in public sites” (McNeese,49). The white judicial system exacerbated the situation by establishing rules that caused complications for black people during elections and denied many African-Americans the right to vote. Racial discrimination by whites increased dramatically in the United States over the last two decades of the eighteenth century another form of racism espoused by white segregationists was the White Supremacy. When White Supremacy was challenged in the South, newly emancipated blacks were scared of whites defending their ideals. Blacks have been subjected to violent attacks because of their desire to exercise self-created liberties.

3.5. Illness, and Suffering

Wright's physical agony and privation in both the South and the North are chronicled in his novel, *Black Boy*. Because African-American families in the white-dominated United States frequently lack access to adequate food, medicine, and other necessities, many of the characters in the memoir suffer as well as they should. Much of Wright's memoir is devoured by hunger. Wright's father refuses to pay alimony from the start of the case. Wright and his brother are dependent on their mother's low earnings as a cook for wealthy white households to make their way through each day. Wright has to eat mush, very little meat or bread, and nearly no fruits or vegetables because his mother works in a kitchen. Later, when Wright's mother is ill, he moves in with his grandma in Jackson to take care of her. His diet improves marginally while he is there, but he still does not eat enough to make him feel pleased. In his early years, hunger becomes one of the most prevalent emotional states in his existence. Despite Wright's desire to flee the South, the anguish of Southern bigotry is vividly depicted here. Drinking a lot of water to make himself appear full is one of his methods. The only foods that Wright consumes in Memphis are hamburgers, peanuts, and beans from a canned food. With his newfound wealth, Wright can afford to eat better, and Mrs. Moss, with whom he shares a room, is willing to feed him—but Wright prefers to save his money for his journey north. He does not want to be reliant on anybody else's food since he believes it is necessary for a guy to "create his own way in the world." Wright's hunger persists until the conclusion of the first section of the memoir, when a white man approaches him at an eyeglass shop and offers him a dollar, claiming that Wright had the appearance of a starving man. Although he

is in severe need of financial assistance, Wright refuses to accept the money from the white Northerner, demonstrating that Wright's pride and self-reliance are more essential than his physical necessities even in desperate times. Other characters in the memoir are subjected to physical pain. Wright's mother suffers a series of debilitating strokes that leave her in excruciating discomfort. In the following years, it becomes evident that she will never be totally recovered, and Wright will be forced to provide for the family. Wright concludes that the only way to get relief is to relocate to Chicago. Members of the black community have at least a theoretical prospect of equal rights in the absence of Jim Crow laws in our country. Wright, on the other hand, does not think that Chicago will be a paradise when it is finished, he has seen what slavery, brutality, and hardship can do to black communities like Jackson and Memphis. Wright and his family are still unable to locate adequate housing in Chicago because of the high cost of living. However, his job prospects improve, and he is able to eat enough to maintain the weight required by the Postal Service to do his duties. Wright's hunger has changed by the end of the book. It's no longer only a matter of survival, but he could always consume more. The kind of intellectual nutrition that Wright craves comes from reading extensively, writing, and joining a political community.

3.6. Color and Racial Issues

Among African American writers, Richard Wright rose to popularity, with his creative expression centered on the socioeconomic complexities of the United States and the realities of African Americans as an oppressed minority. Wright wrote in response to the shortcomings of blacks in American society. Richard Wright's literature explores the struggle of an African-American man to develop an identity and break free from the limits imposed by society. Wright wrote in response to the shortcomings of blacks in American society. Richard Wright's literature explores the struggle of an African-American man to develop an identity and break free from the limits imposed by society. Furthermore, the novel *Black Boy* focuses on the lives of Wright and his encounters with whites, his neighbors, and his own family during the Jim Crow era. Several such instances of *Black Boys* responding to abuse by calling their abusers names unbecoming of a civilized society have occurred. It is clear that the work was written during the time period when the Jim Crow Laws were in effect. Because of the establishment of Jim Crow Laws, the black community suffered greatly as a result. When young Richard was out running errands for his mother, he was in a very different environment where violence would recur in his life. It was commendable how Richard Wright depicted the terrible violence he witnessed as a child. He was one

of the first writers to focus only on the horrors of the Jim Crow Laws and Racism in the South, which led to the commencement of the American Civil War without his knowledge or consent. He built a reputation for himself and was a trailblazer in the fight to end all types of violence and racial discrimination perpetrated against the black people in America, including police brutality and segregation. As Jan Mohamed concludes his essay :

Black Boy is remarkable not so much for its rebellion as for the control that Wright had to exercise and the internal struggle that he had to wage against being engulfed by the racist sovereignty. (Rampersad, 1995, pg. 118).

The color of the skin does not affect or correct the minds, but makes the victims of hatred more open or violent, is precisely reflected in the novels taken from racism and the persecution of black subject, among these novels *Black Boy*. It is exactly what the stories of racism and black oppression are inculcated. These include novel *Black Boy*, which highlights on racial discrimination which based on color and race. The novel is giving a voice and support to the formerly voiceless black youths of the South. Richard Wright's autobiography examines the manner in which the South's racial landscape shaped its inhabitants. Individuals found it exceedingly difficult, in an oppressive society, to free themselves from the shackles placed on them by the community and rise above it. Richard, on the other hand, prevailed despite his ferocious will. Interestingly, Wright himself stated that he wished to pass judgment on his surroundings: 'This judgment was this: the environment the South creates is too small to nourish human beings, especially Negro human beings.' (Andrews, 2003.pg 134). This is clear in his judgments of many black persons in his immediate environment. Wright does not feel completely at comfortable in either white or black society; yet, he does feel at peace in both, he is a man 'estranged from his own race by sensitivity and intellect, yet segregated from the white race by the colour of his skin.' (pg.140). He also attributes his predicament to his surroundings, the oppressive climate of the South: 'The shocks of southern living had rendered my personality tender and swollen, tense and volatile' (*Black Boy*, p.260). Wright was physically and verbally abused and threatened by his own family throughout his whole youth. When he was four years old and accidentally sparked a fire in the house, his mother beat him mercilessly. According to Yoshinobu Hakutani, 'It seems as though black adults, subjected to racism in white society, in turn felt compelled to rule their children at home.' (Bloom, 2006,pg.90). The majority of Wright's black population allows white supremacists to impede their quest for self-expression and identity development: "I began to marvel at how smoothly the *Black Boys* acted out the roles that the white race had mapped out for them"

(Feagin, 2014, p. 60). However, Richard was involved in some capacity in this before he realized his error. This story involves Richard agreeing to fight a black kid for the amusement of white people at one point. 'I suppose it's fun for white men to see niggers fight... To white men we're like dogs or cocks' (*Black Boy*, p. 239).

4. Racism

Racism as a barrier between persons is a topic that frequently appears in the literature. While *Black Boy* tackles racism as a pernicious idea held by pernicious people, it also investigates racism as an insidious problem woven into the very fabric of society as a whole. In his novel, Wright presents villains such as Olin Pease as evil people and as small players in a larger drama of hatred, fear, and oppression. This is particularly unsettling. It is not enough for Richard to say that racism is a problem. He says that the real problem is that its roots in American culture are so deep that it is hard to think that they can be removed without destroying the culture itself. As a whole, Richard's work shows that racism harms not only white-black connections, but also black-black relations. Wright chose the title "*Black Boy*" for his work mostly because of the emphasis placed on the term "black": this is a story about childhood, but we are constantly reminded of the color of Wright's skin. He is not only growing up in the United States, but he is also growing up Black. Certainly, it is difficult for Richard to grow up without being frequently referred to as a "black lad." Throughout the book, Wright goes into further depth about his argument against institutionalized racism in the justice system. According to several readers, Wright has already made a compelling case for this early in the piece. However, because he concentrated so extensively on the horrors of Bigger's actions in the first two novels, he may find himself having to remind readers of the atrocities of the society that Bigger believed he was assaulting in the third book. Wright appears to be reiterating his criticism of the criminal justice system and racism.

Eighteenth-century prejudice and the author's own evolution as a writer are brought together in *Black Boy's* preoccupations. (Gallantz, 1985, p. 70). At the intersection of different cultural discourses that characterized significant advancements in 20th-century America, when it comes to institutionalized unfairness, bigotry, and violence, Richard Wright's fiction takes a multifaceted approach, drawing on a large network of critical perspectives fictional renderings of these issues. When it comes to racism and racial identity in the South, *Black Boy* tells a story that is both personal and universal. An impressionable young Richard was mesmerized by the difference in skin tone between people who had light-colored skin and those who had dark complexion as a child. However, he

only fully grasps the significance of this cultural and political singularity after witnessing the fervor of white fundamentalists and the paranoia of some black families. The story of a *Black Boy* in the Deep South demonstrates the heinous consequences of Southern Racism and shows that racial differences are not "deep-rooted" or "biological," but rather the outcome of an unfair society. As Jan Mohamed concludes in his essay :

Black Boy is remarkable not so much for its rebellion as for the control that Wright had to exercise and the internal struggle that he had to wage against being engulfed by the racist sovereignty. (Rampersad, 1995, pg. 118)

"*Black Boy*," a semi-autobiographical book written by Wright that describes his childhood, depicts Wright's conflict with his Seventh Day Adventist parents. His problems with white employers and social isolation are also discussed. This memoir's central theme is racism's insidious repercussions. 'Wright portrays villains like Olin and Pease as wicked in the eyes of the general public and as minor players in a much larger drama involving contempt, paranoia, and coercion. Racism is not just an issue because it exists, but because its roots are so deep in the American nation that it is impossible to remove them without destroying the culture itself, according to Richard. Richard observes the negative consequences of racism throughout the work, not only in terms of interactions between whites and blacks, but also in terms of interactions between blacks. In order to continue his self-respect and achieve his goal of being the author of *Black Boy*, Wright must continuously defy the world around him. Wright explores the theme of race in particular through writing.

Black Boy takes on the bigotry that existed in the South during the time when Wright was growing up there (1908-1927). In Wright's family, many of the difficulties they have faced are either the direct or indirect effect of Wright's racial acumen. When Wright enters the world of employment, he discovers that racism is widespread and intolerable. The book concludes with Wright's fleeing the South and the racist environments he has been forced to sustain there (Spark Notes, 2003). While living in a milieu of dread, fear, starvation, hatred and violence, the *Black Boy* is compelled to discover basic facts about life. This puts his life in a terrible situation:

"My sustained expectation of violence had exhausted me. My preoccupation with curbing my impulses, my speech, my movements, my manner, my expressions had increased my anxiety". (*Black Boy*, p.197)

There are gender-based assumptions throughout *Black Boy* and Wright's preconceptions regarding race and socioeconomic status. He notices the presence

of in one of the churches he attends “wobbly bosomed black and yellow church matrons” and “skinny old maids” (*Black Boy*, 178), women he looks *at* but not *with*. Wright witnessed a young black woman getting smacked on the buttocks by a white police officer, and when Wright inquires as to how she can bear such treatment, she says that it doesn't matter. While she may have missed the message, we have to wonder whether Wright isn't missing it when he doesn't consider why she may tolerate disrespectful behavior from a white man: doing anything else may have resulted in dire consequences for both her and Wright. A doubtful social view point also informs Wright's replies to the black families he sees when he works as an assistant to an insurance agent named Brother Nance:

“Many of the naive black families bought their insurance from us because they felt that they were connecting themselves with something that would make their children ‘write’n speak lak dat pretty boy from Jackson’ ” (*Black Boy*, 160).

He later refers to such people as “walleyed yokels” (p. 161), an unfortunate phrase that suggests Wright's social prejudices. He acknowledges that social classes are artificial constructs. “the artificial status of race and class” (p. 218). However, despite his knowledge of social class as a construct, he cannot control his sentiments towards it. The story of a young African-American man's struggle to survive in the Deep South is told in the memoir *Black Boy*. According to Right essay " The Ethics of Living Jim Crow " said that: “But the color of a Negro's skin makes him easily recognizable, makes him suspect, converts him into a defenseless target”(Lamore, 2017, pg.132). To avoid being the victim of white aggression in the American metropolitan arena, he has learned a lot from his own experiences with them: “I was learning rapidly how to watch white people, to observe their every move, every brief-expression, how to interpret what was said and what left unsaid” (*Black Boy*, 183). However, it's worth noting that all of Richard Wright's black characters are required to adopt a humble and subservient demeanor in order to escape aggressive displays of white racism. Finally, it should be noted that the entire story of *Black Boy* (his autobiography) can be traced back to his alienating the protagonists whenever he has the opportunity to realize his potentialities. Many readers believe that many of Wright's difficulties are the same as those faced by any sensitive and rebellious individual living in an environment that does not value those characteristics. In their minds, the novel's climax represents less of an escape from racism and more of a step forward in the path of a new writing career and personal identity.

5. Violence and Hunger

The violence in *Black Boy*, whether bodily or otherwise, is extremely vital, because it is what makes the authority tend to depend on rather than argument.

According to the beliefs of Wright, the succession of arguments has to be based on their own merits but not on violence or appeals to authority. A world that is quick to depend on force in order to meet the challenges can easily be determined by the reader of what Wright thinks. Wright is beaten so severely and for such a long time that he passes out, after the house was set on fire. His grandfather, Aunt Addie, grandmother, his mother, and other family frequently lash, slap, and beat him. He is also bullied at school. His uncle Hoskins, whose prosperous saloon business was envied by the Whites, was the target of their assassination. In order to protect himself from his aunt Addie, Wright pulls out a long bread knife on her and his Uncle Tom is also threatened with razor blades and he as well fights with other boys. These befitting examples prove that the theme of physical violence lies the threat of lynching and that violence is everywhere in *Black Boy*.

Hunger is another dominant theme in *Black Boy*, hunger for opportunity, knowledge, love, life and food. In fact, under the title American hunger, the last third of the original manuscript was published in 1977. Wright's family did not have enough food and he was hungry most of the time in the most basic sense. Wright, born in 1908, had to overeat in the late 1920s to gain enough weight to be qualified for a post office job. He considered his father to be a competitor for food and hence he hated him. Wright could smell and see the food when he was taken to a kitchen where his mother cooked for a White family, but he was not allowed to eat except for some occasional scraps. He had become weak from starvation on numerous occasions, and he was unable to carry out his duties on the yard at the orphanage where he and his brother had been forcedly abandoned by their mother. At another point of time, he had almost sold his poodle for buying food as he was starving.

To artistically demonstrate to his readers that racism is always felt in everything a Black man does, Wright endures severe hunger and suffering. Wright's children are the children of African-Americans:

Mama, I'm hungry' I complained one afternoon 'Jump and catch a kungry, she said trying to make me laugh and forget. 'What's a kungry? It's what little boy eat when they get hungry She said. 'What does it taste like?' I don't know 'then why do you tell me to catch one? I sensed that she was teasing me and it made me angry. But I am hungry, I want to eat' 'You will have to wait 'But I want to eat now' For god to send food' When is he going to send it? I don't know. But I'm hungry (*Black Boy*, p.13)

The reader is constantly reminded throughout the novel the situation in Richard Wright's family is not quite easy. One of the biggest problems was hunger. Richard (character) is taken to the cooking job by Richard's mother. When

Richard's mother was preparing food, which could smell it and every now and then he and his brother managed to get some scraps:

Standing hungrily and silently in a corner of the kitchen, we would watch her go from the stove to the sink, from the cabinet to the table. I always loved to stand in the White folks' kitchen when my mother cooked, for it meant that I got occasional scraps of bread and meat; but many times I regretted having come, for my nostrils would be assailed with the scent of food that did not belong to me and which I was forbidden to eat (*Black Boy*, p.17).

With the father leaving the family, Richard's mother had to lead the family and she even doesn't have enough money to pay the rent. She managed to keep some money from her mother but the money is gone now and hence she was unable to buy food or take proper care of little Richard and his brother. While looking for possible solutions, his mother kept thinking about this situation for a long time. Finally, she was able to find a job and her work was to do the washing up in the kitchen for White people. The money that she earned through this job wasn't good enough to feed her two children and herself. She had to finally make a compelling and uneasy decision to leave her children at an orphan house for a while in view of the situation she was undergoing. A two-story frame building in a vast green field among trees, such as the orphan home into which Wright's mother took him and his brother one morning. There they were presented before Ms Simon, who was a grant, tall mulatto woman. She immediately took a fancy to Wright and he was speechless out of fear. The moment he saw her, she was scared and it lasted throughout his stay in the orphan home. In this incident:

The house was crowded with children and there was always a storm of noise. The daily routine was blurred to me and I never quite grasped it. The most abiding feeling I had each day was hunger and fear. The meals were skimpy and there were only two of them. Before we went to bed each night, we were given a slice of bread smeared with molasses. The children were silent, hostile, vindictive, continuously complaining of hunger (*Black Boy*, p.27).

In this clip, Richard Wright discusses his worries while growing up in an orphanage. In addition to being unable to comprehend the rules he was expected to follow, he was perpetually hungry and frightened of Miss Simon. It was difficult for him to adjust and he eventually lost contact with his mother after Miss Simon informed Ella that her visits were viewed as inappropriate. Several months after Ella had left, Ms Simon asserted that Richard suffered from chronic homesickness. When Richard came to know that he could not see his mother any more, he started sinking into depression. Wright also had an uncontrollable craving for stories as well as language, apart from the kind of hunger he had for his mother. He decides to read or hear more as he becomes ecstatic when he hears

the story of 'Bluebeard and his Seven Wives' for the first time. In order to satisfy his hunger for social interaction, in certain moods, he went to church only to satisfy his social interaction hunger. He also had a deep craving for affection, especially of his mother, which he was never supplied with. But the most that Wright craved for was life itself and an opportunity to understand it without having to fear rejection or violence. In the case of Wright's view of religion, several versions of black Protestant Christian as a social control is said to be the third biggest thematic concern in *Black Boy*. One world was the motto of Wright; it is to say that he believed that there was one world and we all exist in it. Hence, he found the notion of some 'other' world to be offensive to his intellectual sensibility. After he killed the kitten, he was made to say a prayer after his mother and in the prayer he was told to ask God to spare his life though the kitten's life was not spared. In *Black Boy*, religion is turned into threats and violence through other ways. The unethical dogma of religion has so strongly affected Wright that almost all of chapter 4 is devoted to this theme. Though the emotional appeal of religion is felt by him, he says that he's enough sensible to see a doctor if he saw an angel. The use of religion at his grandmother's, who is a Seventh-day Adventist, (one who believes that Saturday is the day of worship and it is that day of Christ's second coming to the earth and the Last Judgment is near), as per Wright, was unethical and sometimes his faithlessness was even blamed for his mother's prolonged illness. However, his understanding of the function of religion was to make up for what reality lacks but at the same time he was relentlessly realistic. To his understanding, religion was another kind of power. He found it hard to reject his mother's request because of the way she has put it forth to him; she said that he would join the church if he loved her. A fourth theme is race and racism. Wright plays out the complete absurdity of judging one's "superiority" on the basis of one's skin color and of needing to behave inferior in order to meet the social and emotional requirements of light-skinned individuals over and over again in his plays. Wright, as a child came to know that race was an exceedingly dubious concept, especially when he understands the fact that his grandmother was as White as any 'White' person. The basic ideology of White thinking the value of a person relies on a considerable extent on one's racial association is turned on in most of the book. An overwhelming example by Wright is that it is hopeless to build social distinctions on racism though the efforts to disagree that fact may be elaborate enough. As a child, Wright took in the energy of written language by jotting four-letter words on windows, which frightened his mom yet all things considered exhibited to him that writing is a method for increasing some use on the world. Once, when he wound up plainly

exhausted while supplicating in his room, he composed a tale around a troubled Indian young lady who suffocated herself.

6. Conclusion

African-Americans in the South of the United States were haunted for a long time by the dreadful dream of isolation. For African-Americans, the American isolation period was a time of true discontent, dissatisfaction, dread, and fear. Richard Wright was constantly worried about questions of identity, he gave a unique portrait of battle, uncommonly man's battle to defeat the race, concealment, corruption as issues of modernity. In this paper, Richard Wright attempted to pleasant fracture and identity as a difficult picture of modernism all through the principal half of the twentieth century. Besides, Wright's books uncovered discontinuity wonders as an infection that breaks every one of the endeavors of blacks to quest their identity all through the twentieth century. Also, he depicted how racism and wrongdoing prompted mental and sociological clutters in the society's individuals. Wright's books oppose the social esteems and duties won in the modern society. Further, his books followed different social measurements and moved to all-inclusiveness to clarify his society's issues as universal issues. This paper has investigated the important of the social problems which was depicted in *Black Boy* novel. The novel indeed argued many obstacles like the racism, violence, hunger, and lack in the South of United State from the period 1908 to 1927. In conclusion, Richard Wright searches for his identity the duration of his life in the Jim Crow South. Richard's race undoubtedly leads to various assumptions being made about him, but he was able to break away from these expectations and establish a life in which he was in complete charge. Richard Wright has always worked hard to accurately portray the situation of Afro-Americans in the United States, who have long struggled with stolen rights. Although the black community obtained freedom and a statue of liberty after centuries of struggle, they suffered a nagging sense of discrimination and inhuman bias. The researcher concludes that African American society faces many obstacles that are impossible to solve without the state's intervention by enacting legislation and constitutional laws that guarantee the application of justice and equality among all groups of society. And the application of punitive laws that hold accountable anyone who practices racism against others or belittles others.

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