

CHAPTER - III
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Richard Wright was the man having sense of the power and significance of a white dominated environment. He was also conscious about the consequences of being African- American in this world. Wright examined the life, by living a life of a black male, as an evil place where African-Americans could not avoid racial discrimination. Consequently, Wright wanted to show in his works that racism and violence are the outcomes of White supremacy due to which the black class was continuously remained economically backward that resulted into the overall suppression and demotion of the class. They remained as they were. In that sense '*Black Boy*', is an outcry of a sensitive and intelligent mind.

It is a story about the hardships and obstacles faced by a poverty-stricken family, and one boy's determination to escape the prison created by these circumstances. However, Richard shows signs of insecurity, inferiority, shame due to white reigns. His self-assurance seems largely invulnerable, and his punishing childhood only serves to convince him of his own right to succeed in the world. Richard, living in a racist society, focuses on black-white relationships and ultimately revolts against such a demeaning system to insert his individuality. In that sense, '*Black Boy*' recounts Wright's early initiation, his black neighbors, his frightened religious family and mostly important is his struggle with himself and with white world. The book also offers insight into an entire culture of people, both Blacks and Whites, who had unthinkingly accepted a narrowly prescribed course of life.

'*Black Boy*', is the quest of a boy where he decides firmly to leave his racist community, attempts to adapt himself to his society, alienates himself, defies all sorts of authority, uses words and stories to empower him, and heads to the North where he believes he can have a full meaning of selfhood. Alternatively, individuality, integrity, and uniqueness seem to be the incentive if not the pre-eminent factor that manipulates Richard's life. He struggled, fought, suffered, and alienated in white society only to preserve their individuality. "Despite Wright's stifling environment, his story is inspirational for its portrait of how a black boy shucked off the limited expectations of those around him. The social reality is responsible for Wright's literary personality. His autobiography is his attempt to tell the truth. The fear and alienation are the main features of Wright's life. Obviously, "'*Black Boy*' contains the themes of social and self alienation; it is the poignant tale of a young searching for his identity." (Fishburne, 1977: 7).

The protagonist of the Richard Wright is in a constant struggle against the white society as well as his own community. The protagonist's dilemma results from his society's nature and its principles that should be admired. In other words, this protagonist is depicted as unique figure through his remarkable sense of acuteness, which enables him to dissect and perceive the injustice his society imposed on him. As a result, the protagonist alienates himself either to preserve or to create his individuality.

The reader is always conscious of the unique nature of the author. In many ways, he seems to consider himself exempt from normal human fallacies. He is introspective and self-critical. What he ultimately discovers in his self-analysis is that his reactions have been justifiable. Wright is not a sociable person, but a critical

observer who is alienated socially and at the same time, alienates others by his moral position.

Kenneth Kinnamon opines that "Wright represented the culmination of the tradition of vigorous racial and social protest espoused by writers such as Fredrick Douglass and Claude McKay and by much black folklore." (Kinnamon, 1972:160). Richard Wright's delineation of southern whites is totally savage. They are not only cruel but tyrant crooked and filled with hatred. They are insensitive to the plight of the Blacks or they have nothing to do with miseries of the Blacks so that they totally scorn the Blacks and derive peculiar demonic pleasure in suffering, humiliating Blacks.

Wright develops a hope that is completely naive for that time in the South, a hope reflected in this statement: "I told myself that there were good white people, people with money and sensitive feelings." (Wright, 2006:148).

Writing his autobiography thus enabled Wright to address the problem of isolation. (Smith, Valerie. 1993:438). It is the very important statement for this research I like to refer herewith. Eventually, Wright solved the problem of isolation by establishing contact with millions of his readers through the medium of his writing. As a result, he has achieved the greater success due to his talent for writing that liberates him from both black and white oppressions. In addition to that, he got a way of discovering or creating the essential unity of his life by using narrative form to his live experiences.

Though the book is a record, author does not merely want here to report the miseries and oppressions. Wright was not only sufferer but he outwitted that sufferings rebelliously. His rebel was so high that Dan McCall has quoted from

Norman Mailer's article, "Being a man is the continuing battle of one's life, and one loses a bit of manhood with every stale compromise to the authority of any power in which one does not believe." According to McCall that is the continuing cry in all the battles of *'Black Boy'*s life: No compromise. (McCall; 1969:110). All his life he agonized, and all his days he searched for meaning.

Hunger of knowledge plays vital role in the life of Richard Wright. This hunger of knowledge made him restless and he flight to the North. Though he was burning in the yawn of contemporary ruling class, Wright has eventually succeeded in his mission to preserve integrity and freedom of spirit. He had acquired not only the identity as the black writer but out of solitude, he strengthened his will and intellect. *'Black Boy'* thus, begins with struggle and ends on a note of hope.

In Stephen Butterfield's words, "Wright is completely successful at transcending the color line and pulling the white reader inside the boy Richard, isolating and portraying meanings that hold good for all of humanity under oppressive conditions." (Butterfield, 1974:178).

Robert Bone appreciates to the implacable rebellion response of Richard Wright to the strained circumstances in the words: "The more his society insisted on setting artificial bounds to his experience, the greater his compulsion to trespass, to test forbidden fruit. The more his society conspired against his human weight and presence, the more determined he became to assert himself, to compel the recognition of his individuality". (Bone, 1969:14).

Richard admits, "I had never in my life been abused by whites, but I had already become as conditioned to their existence as though I had been the victim of a thousand lynching." (Wright, 2006:74).

Racism or racial segregation is blot on the humanity. Though black Americans faced and fought racism, the only option for them was to escape, to flee from the place and that is why Richard in '*Black Boy*' flees from the south, Bigger flees from police in '*Native Son*'. Moreover, in his real life too Richard Wright fled from the United States for France.

Dan McCall opined that, "'*Black Boy*' clarifies the nature of Wright's importance. He broke no new ground, established no new devices or techniques or methods. He did not make us see our experience in new ways; he made us see new experience."(McCall, 1969:104). It is true. Although the literature is the mirror of life, '*Black Boy*' is the record of black life and whatever Richard had observed and experienced since his childhood, is beyond the imaginations of the reader. Therefore, one must be agreed to McCall's opinion. Wright's life was although stereotype, different from us due to no scope of development, he tried to pen his thoughts, show the variety of lives and experiences. Therefore, Bigger in '*Native Son*' is different in each way from Richard, the protagonist of '*Black Boy*'. '*Uncle Tom's Children*' differs from earlier two. Though the extract of all his writing is roughly same, he has used different mould to delineate it.

In his essay, Stephen Butterfield states that the greatness of '*Black Boy*' as literature is that it encompasses history and politics *through* the individual experience of the boy Richard, without ever living his personal story. According to him, the slave narrators W. E. B. Du bois, Redding, and Hughes all encompassed history and politics. But they mingled autobiography and essay; they detached themselves momentarily from their personal stories to discourse on religion, abolition, education, Jim Crow, and a host of subjects not strictly autobiographical.

A child's personality is molded by parents' presence and the society. Richard Wright's autobiography, *'Black Boy'*, uncovers the outcome that social restrictions and family influences have on a person. Richard Wright was a young man of extreme intelligence and openness of mind to speak what he feels and thinks. Richard's writings in *'Black Boy'* are a collection of his alienation from white society and from his own people. Richard was treated brutally and tyrannically at home, in order to prevent his being treated the same way or worse outside the home and especially in the white society.

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