

CHAPTER – I

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Self-alienation is the distancing of oneself from one's feelings or activities, such as may occur in mental illness or as a symptom of emotional distress. The word alienation refers to a separation or taking away of human beings from themselves and from their potentialities. Therefore, the coherent use of the concept of alienation depends upon a prior conception of human possibilities. Self-alienation occurs due to helplessness, powerlessness or paralysis of human faculties. This is intimately connected with unresolved problems based on error. If there is state of helplessness, there must be an underlying problem, an unresolved conflict. Unresolved conflict is the reason of self-alienation, or one can say, self-alienation is the result of an unresolved problem. The concept of alienation is theoretically powerful, because it facilitates to the degradation of human life without allowing the assumption that this degradation is natural or inevitable. Self-estrangement may, and often does, exist in the form of projecting one's own faculties and powers on aspects of the self.

In 1927, Wright left the South for Chicago. He worked at various menial jobs, read the fictions of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, and Theodore Dreiser. All the while reading and writing extensively. During the Depression, he joined the WPA Writers' Project and became active in the Communist Party. Simultaneously he contributed for writing articles, poems, and short stories to various communist newspapers. In 1944, after witnessing the trial of a party member for ideological "deviationism," Wright resigned from the party.

The simple positive man having flawless mind is always energetic and enthusiastic about life. He always thinks, as he is a simple human being, like many others. He is always aware about his powers and his strength. These powers

sometimes cannot express and unfold because of his unreality and distorted views. He faces the outer difficulties sometimes fully or sometimes partially. It is his try to cope with the situation truthfully and honestly. Though possibilities are manifold, He never acts superficially because his perception of reality is more truthful. He does not want to pretend his greatness or to show his glory and speciality. It is called as the objective attitude towards the life with humility and discernment. The person who is not alienated from himself experiences the richness of his own individuality. He experiences his own power. He trusts in himself because he is free from compulsion and anxiety. He relates to himself throughout his life. Thus, he can relate to others too. He cannot underestimate himself and not becomes victim of it. When one's experience about self, about others or about life is not distorted but in accordance with reality, one can express all the gentle forces that person's real self is endowed with. Those are like love, understanding, insight, strength, resourcefulness, flexibility, adaptability, creativity etc. Then Person can express himself adequately, properly. He will be understood because his real self is free. He has choices and can make decisions too. Because there will be no fear and anxiety. After that, difficulty itself becomes a stepping-stone. If person's experience of self and of others is so distorted then he feels frustration as personal rejection, which is nothing but the proof of his inadequacy.

However, Richard, like anyone, was at first simple positive man. The social environment as well as many figures concerned to his life spoiled his views and vision. Many factors are responsible to make Richard self alienated figure. First, it will be convenient to see Richard's family relationship as well as his basic nature to know the reasons why Richard became alienated soul.

Richard's relation with his family members is somewhat critical. He was rewarded repeatedly by slaps and abuses. Mrs. Ella Wright, Richard's mother, was a tremendous force in Richard's life, probably the most important influence on his character. She is strong in the face of overwhelming adversity. Her anger at his behavior was motivated by abstract ideas of goodness than by the frustrations of her own existence. She often was striking out at Richard because there was no one else around to strike. She is a lonely figure abandoned by her husband for another woman. She did not touch those people who have destroyed the possibilities of her full life. Richard may have received the rebellious aspect of his personality from his mother. Richard was fond of friendship and companionship in the school but his mother's illness made a permanent difference in his nature, and this difference combined with the forces of rebellion and individualism to form Richard Wright: the writer. As soon as Richard is grown, she chooses to be with him, though the life was extremely insecure for them.

His mother intimidated him of God. It was her method of punishing him to take God in-between. For mother, God was the solution of anything. God becomes many things; to whatever Richard's mother is unable to cope with or explain in human terms. He is supposed to provide food when they are hungry. However, God was bound to fail very quickly. He did not supply food. Instead, it is clear to the boy that the whole question of food is not dropped there. Richard's later behavior is the consequence of his mother's superstitious beliefs and her force him to trust the Superpower. Richard came to the conclusion that his father or his mother is the breadwinner, not God. When a preacher comes to dinner and greedily consumes the food Richard is longing for. Preacher, though God's representative, only increased Richard's loss of faith. His hunger will remain throughout the book as a reality in

itself and as a cause for his alienation. The more he grows and travels, the more he becomes conscious of race.

As he moves from job to job, from the seventh to the eighth grade in school, he was always conspicuous by his attitude of detachment. It makes him unpopular not only with his coworkers, but with his classmate. When he wrote a short story, in the local black newspaper, most of the people he knows were completely bewildered by it. A black boy is not supposed to do those things.

At the beginning of the novel, Wright's mother was taking efforts to make him comply with the standards set by a pre-individualistic society succeed only when Richard was a little boy. Though after some days, she failed in keeping him unconscious of his own individuality, it was his mother who taught him how to live, behave and survive in the society when Richard was confused to live in racial as well as brutal world. She also made him aware about his powers: the power to survive beyond the normal bounds of human endurance. She whipped him, gave him punishment to discipline him, and tried to make him a good person in his future life. Richard never questions his mother's love for him, and although he rarely mentioned demonstrations of affection and stressed the negative aspects of his family life, the love between him and his mother must be taken for granted.

Ella is not happy to live in the religious household they are forced so often to inhabit, and she even rewards Richard with a kiss when he successfully revolts against his grandmother's will. Her suffering, her paralysis, and private sorrows do not hinder her from influencing her son. One source for Richard's isolation is revealed when he claimed that after his mother's operation, she became as good as dead to him. Constantly sick and in pain, his mother becomes a symbol of the suffering that

Richard has encountered throughout the rest of his life. By disallowing himself any emotional reaction to her pain and sickness, he creates a facade for himself. We see that Richard deals with his pain essentially by building an emotional wall around him. To quote him, "My mother's suffering grew into a symbol in my mind, gathering to itself all the poverty, the ignorance, the helplessness, the painful, baffling, hunger-ridden days and hours; the restless moving, the futile seeking, the uncertainty, the fear, the dread; the meaningless pain and the endless suffering." (Wright, 2006:100). Evidently, it proves that the extract of all his aloofness was nothing but the outcome of excessive mental suffering, which he had to face in his small age of life.

At fourteen, Richard had a view of life far beyond his years, but he also has the vulnerability of a child. As he sees himself increasingly ostracized by his friends and family, he hurt more and more and retreated deeper and deeper into himself. He had been told, at home, as long as he could remember, that he is worthless and bad. He was entangled in two kinds of thought: At one side, he wanted to live up to this reputation, even though it is false. On other side, he was constantly rebelling against that judgment. He saw the people around him accepting the white man's opinion on blackness. They were taking the easiest, and safest, course. He was disgusted by this.

Nathaniel Wright, Richard's father, is very briefly presented in the book. Nevertheless, the effect of his personality is strong. Richard never felt close to him; his father only frightens him because of his sleeping habits, which were disturbing due to boys' games. Richard's father is a victim of white tradition and white convention. His manhood can express itself in only the most elemental terms through sexual passion, through physical labor because any other avenue for self-expression and growth had been cut off from him. Incapable of having emotional bonds with his

wife and children, he made his roots in what is temporary, immediate satisfaction. Richard had no grudge against him for these attitudes because these attitudes are beyond his control. He is a rural black, a man who has been uprooted and transplanted into an urban setting, completely out of his element. His bad temper and impatience is directly related to his personal frustrations, and Richard reacts to him likewise. Males who allow themselves to be castrated by white society disgusted him. His father is by no means one of them. Richard was tormented by his father's physical abuse and apathy. When Richard's father exerts authority, which Richard does not comprehend, the young Richard kills the family cat: "By lynching the kitten that is disturbing his father's sleep, he subverts his father's authority and ignites a process of estrangement of which the actual writing of the autobiography is the culmination." (Cappetti, 1993:255-271). Taking one of his father's careless commands at face value, Richard cruelly killed a kitten. Afterward he was horrified by what he had done. His horror was underscored by his mother's religious, superstitious nature. She warns him of the dire consequences of taking a life and fills him with a sense of sin and guilt that will never leave him.

Later on, when Richard's mother tries to get some support from him and brings along the boy to remind him of his responsibilities, he is openly living with another woman. Years later, when Richard met his father again, it is in Mississippi and the old man is a sharecropper. He now represents much more than a personal memory to Richard. He represents a whole generation of black people who were driven off the land into the cities, where they were unable to cope for themselves, who were still the offspring of slavery, and who had no more understanding of themselves historically or culturally than children. Richard is able to see his father in this clear light because he knew him so little. He can make him into a symbol of all that slavery has done to his

people without having an emotional involvement interfere with his point of view. The family's move to Memphis causes horrifying effects on the entire family. Richard's father becomes alienated and violent.

With her white face and black hair, her repressive religiosity and hot temper, Granny comes to represent everything that Richard must struggle to escape from. He and she were always locked in warfare. It seems to be an irrational conflict at first, but soon it becomes clear that a clash of temperaments is not the only problem between them. Granny's was the first white face that Richard knew and it was the face he was mostly afraid of. She had absorbed those qualities of white society that are intolerant, puritanical, oppressive, and fanatical. She was using the Seventh-day Adventist faith as the weapon for all her venom, just as the white Protestants had done. She made her church into a citadel of respectability and tyranny. Granny stood in the way of Richard's natural curiosity and impulses. Richard's difficult relationship with his grandmother played a large part in his development. She was brutally imposing on him guilt and sin. Richard's greatest sin is his curiosity. Every opportunity his imagination had to expand was deliberately hampered. His grandmother, like others in his family was used to beat him. To Granny, any deviation from her concept of the norm is subjected to the most severe punishment. The hypocrisy of these hard judgments, couched in Christian ideology, did not escape the boy, and he did not forget them as a man. His mother finally found the atmosphere at the grandmother's home is too oppressive for them. The fact that she could not drain Richard's energy, hopes, and boyish spirit was frightening her.

We cannot neglect the contribution of Uncle Tom to spoil innocence of Richard's mind and thoughts. When Richard went to his Uncle Tom's house to give

message of grandpa's death, he was considered "a prize fool" in spite of taking his innocence and little age into consideration. When he overhears his Uncle Tom warning his cousin to stay away from him because he is no good, his heart snaps inside of him. It is the final wound, and he knows that he must leave home as quickly as possible. The way to teach him in his house was so strange, filled with anger, which create no intimacy or love for Richard in his own house. Therefore, he thought, "Was I really as bad as my uncles and aunts and Granny repeatedly said?" (Wright, 2006:164). This is the consequence of the treatment Richard achieved from his so-called 'kith and kin'.

Aunt Addie, sister of Richard's mother, was just replica of her mother in the sense of spiritual beliefs who had strong hostile relationship with Richard. She is just one of the many characters who had tried to discipline Wright. But the way was quite wrong. Aunt Addie was Richard's teacher in Sunday school. She too was beating him indiscriminately when his attitude offended her. Though she was a teacher, she was not checking what is the truth and punishes Richard for crime, which he had not committed. Richard's relation with her was so tense that he was hiding kitchen knife under his pillow to protect himself from Aunt Addie's extreme beating. Rather he had told her that he never get lashed by her, moreover will always keep a knife for her. This showdown plays a big part in the family's gradual decision that Wright is a lost cause. By the time, many family members decided that Richard must have to move out of the house because he was a 'lost soul'.

In 1925, Richard was almost seventeen when he went out to face the world. Home and school have prepared him, psychologically, for the shock of working with

whites. The difference is in the response he was able to give. He had hostile relation not only with outer world but also with his blood relations.

Religion is the major obstacle set down by authority to make him conform. Religion is also a cause of alienation for Richard because he was not sharing the same enthusiasm for religion as he was sharing for community. Richard's Granny was religious. She was trying to maintain religious regime at home. There were prayers at sunup and sundown, at the breakfast table, and dinner table. Each member of the family also read Bible verses. Richard was enforced and presumed to pray before he went to the bed. On the contrary, Richard did not believe all these things. In his words, "I had not settled in my mind whether I believed in God or not; His existence or nonexistence never worried me." (Wright, 2006:115). He rationally thought about existence of God. He points out that if there exists an all-wise, all-powerful God who knows the beginning and end, who gives justice to all, who controls the destiny of man, He would realize surely the queries and doubts in Richard's mind and would laugh at his foolish denial of almighty. On the other hand if there is no God at all, then why all the commotions? Yet his house members were convincing him to be religious. They became kind, forgiving to make his mind about the religious things. He knew the reasons behind their changed behavior. It resulted into the greater emotional distance in Richard's life. He felt that the religion, in his life, is nothing but the strife, the attempt of one individual or group to rule another in the name of God.

From this, it is seen that to persuade Richard deliberately or for following customs of religious tradition was torment for him. It was not correct method to reform Richard's so-called 'lost soul'. He neither became the apple of his granny's eye nor obeyed her religious principles. He physically as well as mentally suffered a

lot due to the activities that were exactly opposite to his will. Granny had decided to reform him by virtue of religious revival. The neighborhood boys sent to convince Richard to join in the revival. Richard disgusted because of his own ignorance to all these things. Rather than his heart opens toward religion, he inclined to become more isolated and independent.

Though at that teen age he was not ready to do what granny was imposing deliberately, he had deep sense of living which church was trying to give so that he was remaining unaffected without doing any traditional religious things as other family members were following. Richard admits that “ Perhaps if I had caught my first sense of life from the church I would have been moved to complete acceptance. but the hymns and sermons of God came into my heart only long after my personality had been shaped and formed by uncharted conditions of life.” (Wright, 2006:112). Richard had an open eye to see the world, feel and think. He was not following the blind faith like other black souls. He knew better that merely kneeling down in front of the invisible holy power never could stop the suffering in the world, which he was facing. He had lived, seen, felt. and suffered the life in terms of dread, fear, hunger, terror, and loneliness. As a result, he did not believe anything, anyone in the whole world who could stop all the chaos and brought the harmony. When he is beaten for eating in school, he realizes that there is no solidarity among these children, and that the students have no moral or brotherly obligation toward each other.

He felt religion is more of a hindrance than a path to salvation. It is his grandmother's religious beliefs that not only prevent him from being adequately fed, but also stunt his intellectual growth. His education at the religious school was almost

a joke and any literature other than the Bible was considered "the Devil's work" in his home.

Adverse kind of social scenario and poor family support were not only the obstacles but at the same time factors responsible for his degeneration. Each incident is described in close details, exudes the emotions of the narrator. It is enough to be sensitive to his emotions and to the situations from which they spring. Wright starts his life story with the incident of his setting the grandmother's house on fire. His grandmother was sick, and he has been warned several times by his mother to keep quiet. However, his rebellious personality is immediately revealed in the dramatic gesture of setting the house on fire. Here the reader becomes immediately conscious of the nature of the narrator not only by the scene he describes, but also by his tone, which is objective and cool.

Wright is a too sensitive figure to understand the world. It was very rare at that time in his community to observe the facts intricately, feel, understand and portray it in words. '*Black Boy*' is appropriate example focusing on Wright's gifted observational powers and his ability to reflect upon the psychological struggles facing black Americans. It is the task not only of senses and of feelings but of the intellect, which is undermined by the system. In his childhood, Wright created some mischievous events when he was unconscious of their effects on his later manhood. Obviously, Richard gradually regarded as notorious boy. He was considered as wasted fellow and always neglected by his relatives.

On the one hand, it seems that Wright could not maintain his cordial relations, did not succeed to keep relations warm. Alternatively, He failed to win the heart of grown-ups. However, Richard is not responsible for this. On the other hand, he was

trying to understand the social conditions. He was asking queries about community problems, White-black problems, racism and much many things from grown-ups: from his granny, grandpa, and mostly mother. But he was never given satisfying answers of these things. On the contrary, he was suppressed, rather kept hush. In result, Wright becomes more and more introverted, and is never fully comfortable sharing his thoughts and opinions with others. He explains this by saying: "I began to be aware of myself as a distinct personality striving against others. I held myself in, afraid to act or speak until I was sure of my surroundings, feeling most of the time that I was suspended over a void." (Wright, 2006:30). This void follows him throughout his life in the South, seeping into all aspects of his daily life and separating him from those around him, leaving him empty of the love and acceptance he so greatly needs.

It is observed that self-alienation of the author in present work is an outcome of mental suffering of the author due to the inadequacies of their own people and the things may it be social, may it be religious happening against his mind. The trauma created by upper White class members as well as his own people resulted into the emotional distancing of the author and he felt lonely. It is this sense of isolation and independence that drives Richard toward writing. In the chapter number 3 and 4, we still see that Richard is young and naive. He does not realize the power that words have: a power he discovered later in his life. Instead, his writing brings him satisfaction only because that was his destination where he could be more frank as compare to his real life. He achieves the success. Actually, Richard did not know what was the exact difference in Blacks as compared to Whites. He explains by saying: "I wanted to understand these two sets of people who lived side by side and never touched, except in violence."(Wright, 2006:47).

There are many virtues as well as vices in the character of the protagonist. One can say that the bundle of contradictions is present in the personality of Wright. He is timid yet assured, tough yet compassionate, enormously intelligent yet ultimately modest, rebel at the same time shy and almost becoming half-paralyzed in the presence of a crowd. As a young boy, he is passive-aggressive too. Richard is a person, very determined to live according to his own principles and willing to live with the consequences. This strong-willed nature, however, contrasts with Richard's powerless position in society. The low social status that comes with being Black and poor is reason of Richard's powerlessness. As a result, he had goal to be well read, learnt and educated. No doubt, finally Richard found his salvation in reading, writing, and thinking. As far as vices are concerned; most of the time he lies, steals money, and turns violent. It is because he is a victim of his poor upbringing in both the black and white communities in the South. Richard stole the money because he wanted to go to the North. He wanted to escape from all rigid paths of rules against which he always stood. The reason is that he grew up in an abusive family environment in the violent, racially segregated American South where he felt insecure, unable to develop himself and meet anyone's expectations. So that, Wright was somewhat tired for living in south: in Memphis or in Jackson. As a result, he wanted to move to North; to Chicago. When he introspected, he recognized the universal truth that crime produces additional suffering in the world. He was thinking to be a part of social good not social evil yet he committed crime to fulfill his needs. He had no other way, no other option to do. If he behaved well, honestly, and spoke true, he could not go to the North because of his grandmother's restrictions and strictly following rules of religion where Richard was against his grandmother's thoughts. He knew that religion could unite people other than skin color.

He was an ambitious person since his childhood. He wanted to become a writer. Writer is a person who shows to the society what exactly the life is. Though the oppressive forces working against him contaminated his soul, the impulses and ideas for stories were awakening in him at the time of his praying too. He was always dreaming, thinking about his goal. Obviously, Wright wanted to acquire the weapon of pen to disclose the life what he and his community lived. His destination was being a writer, which was also helpful to take indirect revenge on the southern social system.

Richard overcomes the negative and isolating aspects of his environment and channels them into a love for other people. Though he was an outsider, he used to feel little connection to other people. He was not able to believe the publicly accepted notions that his blackness, lack of religion. His intellectual curiosity made him inherently flawed. Rather, In spite of his flaws, Richard remained intensely concerned with humanity both, in a universal sense and in the context of his concern for the individual people to whom he met on his journey.

Causes of Self-Alienation of the Author in '*Black Boy*':

Psychological Condition of the Protagonist:

The questions Wright thought only have serious and upsetting answers. These are the questions Richard had been asking himself from a very early age: why is my family disrupted? Why is Granny oppressive? Why do my friends and I have such limited futures? Why do white people set out to destroy me? What have I done as an individual to deserve this treatment from society? How can I escape? Richard had to find out his own personal history by escaping from the place where he endured a lot.

He found the answers of his own questions, conceived his past and wrote about it. This is his legacy for the future of black and white America.

Being “nigger” was one another obstacle and the major reason. It separated Wright not only from White world but also from his world too. It means that Richard was insisted to show what he is not; to hide his true self. When he was six-year-old, Richard has no consciousness of racial differences. He thought man is after all man, a human being. His grandmother can be termed White only because that is her natural color. Therefore, the distinctions remain invisible to him. Life in the streets led him to become a drunkard, hanging around a saloon and begging pennies from pedestrians. His mother was beating him, praying for his salvation, and finally put him in the care of an old woman where no one was present to give him answers of his problems. He felt a new kind of hunger: a hunger to gain knowledge to find out the answers of his queries.

Dreams and Fantasies:

Since his childhood, Richard was severally passing his time in dreams and fantasies. Sometimes his dreams were out of fear. When Richard sets fire to his grannies house and his mother bit him, almost killed him, he went in unconscious state and was hallucinated about the udders of great white cows hanging over his head. He was terrified that they would drench him in some terrible liquid. When he smelt of frying meat in neighbor's kitchen, he, out of hunger, was trying to imagine himself as a son in a rich family having meat on the table at each meal. He knew that it was highly impossible. He disgusted with his futile daydreams and shut the windows to stop the torturing scent of frying meat coming in his room. He dreamt to reform the entire system in Jim Crow South. He dreamt that the government verifies

grandpa's claim for a pension. It was never possible to come in reality yet he was often drowned himself in daydreaming or throwing in fantasies.

Daydreaming is nothing but a short-term detachment of a person from his immediate surroundings. In daydreaming, person's contact with reality is blurred and partially substituted by a visionary fantasy in which person imagines especially one of happy, pleasant thoughts, hopes or ambitions and it is experienced consciously when he comes in reality. Psychologists argued that daydreaming is an early sign of mental illnesses and daydreamers were people with unfulfilled desires. Gradually the views are changed. Daydreaming is considered as a natural and normal human phenomenon. But daydreaming makes a person isolated and withdrawn from his activities. As far as positive side of daydreaming is concerned; it allows the person to drift away from the reality for a while and also helps to imagine pleasing things, such as success and achievements that can motivate and inspire to reach goals in life.

Dreams, in Freud's view, are all forms of "wish fulfillment". It is an attempt by the unconscious to resolve a conflict of some sort, whether something recent or something from the recesses of the past. Richard's daydreaming and fantasies were outcome of his suppressed feelings, a reflection of his reaction sometimes to the situation, sometimes to the people around him.

Richard expresses his first love with his elder's wife when he was merely twelve-year-old. The lonely figure, ostracized, attracted to worship a distant and unattainable woman. He was an adolescent at that time. Naturally, the thought of companionship was blooming in his mind. He was rather imagining marrying her, gazing her and pondering how she would be passionate. However, thoughts were

remained thoughts forever. He became more alienated figure, remote from the intimacies in relations.

Hunger:

‘Black Boy’ is a story about a life-long struggle with hunger. Wright suffers from hunger in his entire life, not only for food but also for acceptance, love, and an understanding of the world around him; but most importantly, Wright possesses an insatiable hunger for knowledge. Wright was prevented to act spontaneously. His feelings and intuitions were also forbidden which will be praised in other system.

Racism, Violence, Revulsion are some supporting themes to the Richard’s alienation from himself.

Consequences of Self-Alienation:

Resistance:

Wright resists frequently too many things. He refuses constantly to obey orders, denies the life, which he feels as substandard, imposed to him. He refused the punishment his mother gave him after the crime of firing the house and killing the kitten. He refuses his uncle to whip him for taking razorblades in hand to “slice out with points of Steele” and speaking with his uncle arrogantly in loud tone. It is natural for Richard to resist his grandmother when her commands are irrational. It does not involve thought or planning. When he threatens to leave her house if his granny did not allow him to work, he means it. He was a rebel, and so granny and all members in the home left his subject behind. Because Richard never wanted to do as they please. There was nothing that could help them. Given the honor of writing the valedictory address, Richard was shocked to discover that it is all a fraud. The principal had a

prepared speech for him to read because there would be white people present in the audience. He defied reading an official speech at school though the principal had asserted that Richard must read or will not graduate. Richard refuses to read anything but his own speech, against everyone's advice. Though his culture was also responsible to detach him from himself, his resistance for too many things resulted to make him ostracized than ever.

Richard, as told earlier, always had defied behaving, as others demanded him. He defied in granny's home, where he was living without embracing its barren, mandatory spirituality. He was against the views of the Communist Party in Chicago, where party imposed him to act as they tell him or be expelled. Richard rejected this final choice by leaving the Party of his own accord. This rejection led to create strife and difficulties. However, it was not because Richard was thinking cynically about people and refused to have anything more to do with them, but precisely because he did not have the approach, which time need. Though Richard wished to remain an individual, he felt connected to the rest of humanity on a spiritual level. Therefore, as an artist, he struggled much to show compassion for communities though they did not want him. It is a difficult task, but one that he learnt to accept at the end of the novel.

Cappetti contends that each time Richard "emerges from a confrontation with a family member, the hero is able to keep his personality intact only through a progressive denial of kinship and through a growing sense of isolation." (Cappetti, 1993: 259). He also states, "Through a denial of kinship ties, the individual can thus subtract himself from the familiar institution and from its violence against the personality". (Cappetti, 1993:259).

Remote Figure:

Richard's aloofness became responsible to make him remote from his family. He could not succeed to win the hearts of his intimates. It affected his nature and personality due to which he loses the love and affinity of his own people. As an alienated soul Richard, was removed from self-expression and self-fulfillment, he struggled to find meaning in his life without a family. Wright reveals the conflict that if estranged individual separates from a healthy family unit, it results into the difficulties for that person to maintain family relationship.

Finally, his family gave up Richard as a lost cause; they expect nothing of him anymore, so he was free to do as he chooses. This marks a change in his character. No longer one who struggles against his family in order to win their approval, he turns his rebellion outside to the world at large. As an outsider, a masculine individual, and a believer in human rights, he became dangerous to his community. He saw lack of tenderness in black people. Just why and how he became dangerous, makes clear when he matures. The freedom that Richard has achieved by the age of twelve is unusual. It is a freedom of many facets. He no longer receives orders from Granny and Addie; they have given up on him. At the same time, this freedom from their criticism is also a freedom from their interest in him and is perhaps an example. Moreover, granny, the oldest figure in the home, had no concern for Richard. He too was free of any concern for them. The unspoken pact between them was that they had no longer care about each other. When Richard became outsider, then it was a relief for house members not to be forced to show affection or demonstrate loyalty.

Therefore, '*Black Boy*' is regarded as the chronicle of Richard's alienation, not only from white society, but also from his own people. Therefore Fishburn has

pointed out, "Richard is alienated not only from dominant white society but from his own race." (Fishburn, 1977:10). It then becomes more than a record of personal abuses. In *Black Boy*, the protest is both personal and metaphysical: a cry of anguish in the face of the human condition. Tragedy is what comes of an individual's efforts to overcome the human condition. This is the spirit in which '*Black Boy*' was written out of a sense of tragedy yet it does not stop there.

According to Fromm in Richard Schacht's *Alienation*, "alienation from oneself is a loss of spontaneity and individuality." (Fromm, 1970: 139). Fromm claims that a "unique and induplicable" individual is a person who is thinking, feeling and loving and who is creator of his own acts" (Schacht, 1970: 141-142). Richard had qualities. His intellect made him think, feel but his family and community were denying love or positive attributes to Richard. It resulted into self-alienation of the protagonist.

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