

Langue Journal

p-ISSN: 1693-0487, e-ISSN 2808-3008
Vol. 17 No. 2, Desember 2023

INSTITUTIONALIZED, INTERNALIZED, AND INTRA-RACIAL RACISM IN RICHARD WRIGHT'S *BIG BOY LEAVES HOME*

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Abstract	Article information
<p>Racial discrimination seems to have become common in America, especially those who are black people. They are used to experiencing the oppression of racial issues such as economic, social, skin color, and psychological caused by racism. This study analyzes racism in <i>Big Boy Leaves Home</i> by Richard Wright. The short story talks about the story of black people who experience discrimination and injustice rights because of their racial differences. This study is aimed to find out the types and the effects of racism. This study focuses to examine racism in the short story <i>Big Boy Leaves Home</i> based on Lois Tyson's perspective of racism. The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive method. The result shows that the writer finds there are three types of racism in this study. Those are: 1) intra-racial racism shows that the visible difference in rights is the restriction of facilities for black people. 2) Internalized racism shows that black people are considered less moral by white ones. 3) Intra racial racism against the character are suffering a lot psychologically and physically.</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Black people, Big Boy leaves Home, Racism, Richard Wright</i></p>	<p><i>Received:</i> 22 August 2023</p> <p><i>Revised:</i> 1 November 2023</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> 30 December 2023</p>

Introduction

Literature is one of the ways for writers to communicate and convey their ideas through writing which is called a literary work. In which the writer conveys what is felt when reading literary work by making observations. The writer can express feelings of sadness, anger, and so on through their writing when analyzing the literary work they want to analyze. According to Wellek & Warren (1956) Literature is a social institution,

using as its medium language, a social creation but furthermore, literature represents "life" and "life" is in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary imitation. It means literature is a way to convey the creations of life through language by expressing writing in the form of literary works. Literary works can be conveyed to readers so they can feel what the author feels

through their writing. There are many genres of literature are prose, poetry, drama, movie, and short story. A short story is one fictional prose created because of someone's imagination. A short story is a simple form of a novel but it is not as long as the story of the novel. According to Lawrence (2014), a short story is a brief tale that can be told or read at one sitting. It means a story has fewer or shorter stories than a novel can be read and retold to other readers. Each short story has a different topic and discussion depends on the writer who wants to raise the topic.

As we know, hot topic that is happening worldwide right now is violence and discrimination because of differences. One of the differences is the difference in skin color which is called racism. According to Smedley (2018), racism is "refers for the action, practice or belief that human is divided according to their races. So with this racism it really affects people who are experience racist, namely black people because of differences in race or differences in skin color. Besides that, Lois Tyson (2011) states that racism is the economic, political, social, or psychological oppression of individuals or groups based on their race. So, the elements that are included in racism are economic, political, social, and psychological based on differences in skin color. The most dominant of these elements is racism in which the racist group of people is considered to have many flaws, such as being less intelligent, less moral, less attractive, and so on. This theory stems from the African American theory is not accept distinguished black people. Therefore, because of that difference, black people experience suppression and oppression both psychologically and physically. So, this study analyzes racism by sing Lois Tyson's perspective.

However, because of these differences, racism has three types based on Lois Tyson's perspective, those are: 1) Institutionalized racism, 2) Internalized racism, and 3) Intra-racial racism. As Tyson (2011) states, "There are three types of racism, those are: 1) Institutionalized racism, 2) Internalized racism, and 3) Intra-racial racism." Which these classes are distinguished according to the beliefs of the white people who divide it into three classes indicated according to its name and the definition of each class. The writer of this study finds there are three classes in the short story *Big Boy Leave Home*, namely; institutional racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism. Then, because of these three classes give some effects on black people were experienced by

Big Boy and friends according to the story of the short story *Big Boy Leaves Home*.

Based on the description above, the writer analyzes racism by using the short story. The title of the short story is *Big Boy Leaves Home* by Richard Wright. This short story was published in 1938. The writer uses a qualitative descriptive method in this study to analyze this topic. This study examines the types of racism and the effect of racism in this short story. This study centered on the story of characters told in this short story namely, Big Boy, his friend, and his family who they are black people, and Jimmy and his girlfriend, which they are white people. Therefore, this study focused on racism experienced by black people in the short story *Big Boy Leaves Home* that the background story of an overview of the various events that were based on racism. Based on the background of the study above, this analysis found some problems that could be analyzed in this study, namely the types and effects of racism that appear in the short story *Big Boy Leaves Home*.

This study that relates to this study is entitled "*Racial Discrimination Against Black Main Character Big Boy in A Short Story Big Boy Leaves Home By Richard Wright*" by A Susanto, (2011). This previous study analyzes racial discrimination experienced by the main character and the themes of racial discrimination conducted by white against black in America. The result show that black people who are discriminated against because of differences in rights and theme that are displayed in the short story through the main characters that can be used as reflections in social life.

Another previous study is also inspired such as a study entitled "*The reflection of Racism Towards African American in Selma Movie*" by Yusrina Rahmatillah, Singgih Daru Kuncara, (2020). This previous study analyzes the level and effect of racism displayed by using film as a data source. The result show of this study is that in the film there are three levels of racism that appear in accordance with Jones and Day's theory and only have negative impacts on black people because of their skin color differences.

In addition, other previous study is also inspired such as a study entitled "*An Analysis of Racism in The Film of The Green mile By Frank Darabont*" by Atika & Tarihoran (2022). This previous study analyzes types of racism and the resistance shown in the movie. The result show of this study is the type of racism that occurs in the movie green Mile are internalized racism,

interpersonal racism, and institutional racism and also the resistance shown in the Green mile is closed and open resistance.

There are two aspects that can distinguish this study from other previous studies. First, the focus of this study in the previous study only focused on the violence that occurred to the main character and the themes raised in the short story *Big Boy Leave Home*, while this study focused on types of racism and the effects of racism that appeared in the short story *Big Boy Leaves Home*. Second, the theory used in the previous studies is Guerin's perspective and Jones and Day's theory while this study analyzes it by following Lois Tyson's perspective.

RESEARCH METHOD

In completing this study, the method of this study is used qualitative descriptive method, "Qualitative descriptive research generates data that describe the 'who, what, and where of events or experiences from a subjective perspective" (Kim H, Sefcik JS, 2017). The method is applied by describing the data as who, what, where, and events or experiences from the perspective of the writer and analyzing them and related to the focus of the analysis. The source data of this study is taken from the short story entitled "*Big Boy Leaves Home*" by Richard Wright.

The short story *Big Boy Leaves Home* is chosen as a source of data because it could fulfill and complete needed for the data of this study. The writer takes some data in the form of sentences, phrases, dialogues, and explanations from the narrator of the short story is quoted and then used as data in this analysis. Then, another data the writer takes some data from previous studies, journals, and website pages on the internet. The technique in this method by doing several steps.

First, the writer was looking for journals that relevant with this study. Second, the writer was reading the whole story *Big Boy Leaves Home* short story. Third, the writer was looking for the data of the short story and making some notes. Fourth, the writer was identifying and clarifying the data in this analysis, and the last step the writer was finding the result of the discussion and conclusion.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1) Finding

In this study, by using Lois Tyson's perspective the writer finds only there are three

types of racism in the short story *Big Boy Leaves Home*, those are institutionalized racism, internalized racism, and intra-racial racism in this short story. Therefore, this type of racism has some effects on black people. The writer finds there are two effects of racism occur in this short story those are psychological and physical.

2) Discussion

a. Types of Racism

1) Institutionalized racism

Institutionalized racism is one of the types of racism that the writer finds in this short story *Big Boy Leaves Home*. In which black people do not have the same rights as white people. As the quotation below:

"Aw nigger, shut up! They were silent. "Lawd, ahm goin noth someday" "Me too, man." "They say colored folks up Noth is got equal rights." (Wright, 1938)

From the quotation above, it shows that black people are indeed distinguished. In which they have no rights the same as white people. It can be seen from the facilities that are not allowed for black people. As Lois Tyson (2011) states "Institutionalized racism—In order for racism to have any real force in a society, it must be supported in some way by that society's institutions, for example, by the educational system, the judicial system, the entertainment and fashion industries, law enforcement policies, labor practices". Therefore, this type can be characterized by community support that does not allow black people to have the same education system, justice system, law enforcement policies, and even the entertainment industry such as access restrictions. Which black people are not allowed to swim in Harvey's swimming pool which is reserved only for white people. As the quotation below:

"yuh know ol man Harvey don allow no niggers to swim in this hole" "mean no dogs n niggers allowed said buck "well, was here now" said big boy". (Wright, 1938)

From the quotation above, it can be seen that black people already know that they are not allowed to enter the Harvey pool, but because they feel do not have the same rights, namely restrictions on facilities, so they are determined to swim secretly in the pool. Therefore, the type of racism that appeared in this short story is institutionalized racism.

2) Internalized Racism

Internalized racism is one of the types of racism that the writer finds in this short story *Big Boy Leaves Home*. In which black people internalized because of their racial differences. White people always look down on black people and always think that black people are still below them and they are not comparable with white people. As Lois Tyson (2011) states “Internalized racism—Some people of color suffer from varying degrees of internalized racism, which is the acceptance of the belief pressed upon them by racist America that they are inferior to whites, less worthy, less capable, less intelligent, or less attractive. Victims of internalized racism often wish they were white or that they looked more Internalized racism is very damaging to self-esteem.” So, white people always think black people are lower than them, it make black people feel that they do not have the same rights as white people. So that, black people have the awareness that indeed they are different and do not have the same rights as white people and it damages their self-esteem because racial differences are always a comparison and it makes them thoughts of avoiding white people.

Besides that, the belief that white people have beliefs about black people that they hold from time immemorial. The belief that black people are considered less worthy, less capable, less intelligent, and less interactive because of their racial differences are considered inferior. Because of that belief, white people do have not rights as same as white people. This type of racism is seen when Big Boy and his friends swim in place of white people. Then Big Boy and his friends meet with a white woman in the swimming pool and make white woman was frightened when she meet Big Boy and his friends approached her in naked. As the quotation below:

“Jim!” the woman screamed. “We wanna get our cloes” the big boy said “You go away! You go away! You go away!” the woman screamed. “Les go!” said Bobo. (Wright, 1938)

From the quotation above, it shows that white women are frightened when she saw black people. She screamed by calling her husband “Jim” with the intention of asking for help because she was terrified of meeting black people. Even though big boy and his friends go to white woman to take their clothes were under the tree

occupied by white woman. As the quotation below:

“C mon back: that woman scared,” said Lester. Big boy stopped, puzzled. He looked at the woman. He looked at the bundle of clothes. Then he looked at Buck and Lester. “C mon, les git our cloes!”. He made a step “Jim!” the women screamed. (Wright, 1938)

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Big Boy and his friends tried to take their clothes even though white woman kept screaming in fear because she saw black people naked and there in the area of white people. The fear of white women because of white people’s beliefs that black people were immoral in this case, she was afraid because she thought she would be disturbed by black people. Black people were oppressed because of this element that was influenced based on racial differences. Because racial differences and beliefs about black people make white women afraid when she meet big boy and his friends. So, it makes black people position feel they are different and feel inferior because of their racial differences. Therefore, the type of racism that appeared in this short story is institutionalized racism.

3) Intra-racial Racism

Intra-racial racism is also the last type of racism. This type is included as the result of internalized racism. It starts with the different skin colors of black people and then they are marginalized. According to Lois Tyson (2011) stated that Internalized racism is the result of intra-racial racism. Intra-racial racism is discrimination, within the black community, against those with darker skin and more African features, such as hair texture and the shape of the lips and nose”. The quotation above states that black people are discriminated against because of their differences. Namely, the differences in skin color that is darker, the texture of hair that thick and dreadlocks, nose shape that is wider than white people who have a sharp nose, and other differences. The point is that black people are ugly from their behavior, character, and so on. The emergence of this thought is a type of internalized racism, so it produces intra-racial racism as other discriminations such as physical ridicule so that it can be accompanied by violence.

Besides that, skin color is indeed very influential and the most obvious, and also this

opinion is further strengthened by Lois Tyson (2011) stated that “The white racist attitude summed up in the frightening old saying, “If you're white, you're alright; if you're brown, stick around; if your black, get back!”. The quotation states that because the difference in skin color is very important for white people so they make a saying that is very related to black people, namely if black people have white skin then they will be fine or they will not experience violence or oppression while because they have dark skin and are very different from white people so that black people are discriminated against, hurt in body and soul, considered inferior, and subjected to violence, just because of the difference in skin color. The violence that occurred is an example of intra-racial racism. Violence occurs when white people misunderstand woman’s problems. In this part, the violence begins to occur, as quoted below:

“don’t shoot me, Mistah, don’t shoot me...” Big boy lunged for the rifle , grabbing the barrel. “You black sonofabitch!” Big boy clung desperately. “Let go, you black bastard!” the barrel pointed skyward. CRACK! The white man, taller and heavier, flung Big Boy to the ground. Bobo dropped the clothes, ran up, and jumped onto the white mans’back. “you black sonsofbitches!” The white man released the rifle, jerked Bobo to the ground, and began to batter the naked boy with his fists. Then Big Boy swung, striking the man in the mouth with the barrel. His teeth can caved in, and he fell, dazed. Bobo was on his feet” (Wright, 1938)

The quotation above, it shows about the fight started when misunderstood a woman’s problem which is white soldier thought that white woman was disturbed then white soldier attacked them by taking out his rifle and shooting them. A white soldier is her husband. So, there are acts of beating and insult because they are black people and even murders occur here. Which is black people experience violence. So, white people oppress and discriminate against black people. After that incident, big boy and his friend come home with fear. When big boy got home then he was asked by his mother about what happened because of the change in big boy’s behavior which was very visible that he was very scared about something. As the quotation below:

“whuts the matter, Big Boy? whuts happened t yuh, Big boy? Someone been botherin yuh?” “they after me, ma! they after me...” “who?” “ah... ah... we...” “big boy, whuts wrong wid yuh?” “he killed Lester n Buck” “killed!” “how killed?” “he shot em, ma!” “who shot lester?” “the white man.” “whut white man?” “ah dunno, pa. he wuz a soljer, n he had a rifle.” “a soljer?” “yessuh, pa. A soljer.” (Wright, 1938)

From the conversation above, two black people were killed by white soldiers who thought that the presence of black people was disturbing the white woman. Big boy was asked by his mother because he looks scared. Big boy’s family was scared and shocked after hearing that their friends had been killed and more shockingly when they were killed by a white man and made his family panic. The black people’s habit is always avoiding the problem related to white people so it makes big boy’s family very scared after listening to big boy’s story about the murder of his friends. Because of the extraordinary fear that makes big boy always repeat the words that he will be killed by someone, as the quotation below:

“a white man?” “They gonna kill me: they gonna kill me!” big boy cried, running to the old man. “saul, cant we git im erway somewhere?” “They gonna kill me: they gonna lynch me!” big boy slipped on the floor. (Wright, 1938)

From this quotation above, it shows that big boy was very scared when his family asked about what happened. He cried and ran to an old man in his family. He kept repeating the words **“They gonna kill me: they gonna kill me”** It states that he would be killed by white people, he say that several times and his fright make him slip on the floor as he spoke. Therefore, it was not usual fright but he felt so scared that he repeated those words. Even his family who saw big boy was scared because the incident made them confused and scared too.

They also have the plan to take big boy and Bobo away and live somewhere. Because if they let big boy and Bobo stay at home it will be dangerous for their life who has marked by white people because of that incident. Therefore, the presence of violence perpetrated by white people makes big boy and his family afraid and the intense mental fright felt by Big Boy when

remembers that incident then this includes the result of internalized racism that have bad assumptions about black people which then results in violence that occurs because of that assumptions.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the short story *Big Boy Leaves Home*, it can be seen that this short story does indeed contain racism in which the three racists are indeed told in the short story. These three racists are institutional racism which is marked by the restriction of facilities for black people where black people are not allowed to swim in the Harvey swimming pool which is specifically for white people.

Then Internalized racism is characterized by the white people's belief that black people have no morals like what happened to that white woman who saw Big Boy and his friends in naked in the white people's swimming pool area. And the last one is intra-racial racism, this type is seen when violence occurs such as beatings to murder.

Therefore, it is very visible that this racism has some effects on oppressed black people, namely the beating of their big boy friends, and also has a negative impact on big boy's mentality which makes him very scared when he remembers the murder incident. Where the negative effect occurs psychologically, namely the excessive fear experienced by Big Boy, and physical discrimination, namely the beating and murders experienced by Big Boy's friends.

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