

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

‘Novel is a lengthy fictitious prose narrative portraying characters and presenting an organized series of events and settings.’ (Shaw, 1972: 257). I have decided to analyse novel for my thesis because I think novel is easy to understand; I can get a lot of information about the author’s ideas, since a novel describes its story in an organized way.

Richard Wright is the most influential black author in America, and ‘*Native Son* made Wright the most respected and wealthiest black writer in America’

(http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/s_z/r_wright/wright_life.htm).

His success in writing Native Son makes me interested in reading his other novels.

Therefore, I prefer to analyze his novel.

The Outsider, one of Wright’s novels, is chosen because it indirectly portrays the author’s life. In The Outsider, ‘...Wright describes Damon's deterioration into a drunkard who leaves his wife and children..., fakes a new identity...’ and, ‘Richard Wright has been away from home for a long time.

He has forgotten which of the streets of the Southside lie south of others, an insignificant error, except that it points up how much he has forgotten other things'

(<http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=refresh&docId=27441539&type=book>).

The theme of Richard Wright's The Outsider will be analysed through the protagonist's social conflicts. I notice that the theme of this novel is the most prominent aspect of the story and worth analyzing. According to Harry Shaw in his book Dictionary of Literary Terms, theme is 'the central and dominating idea in a literary work; ... it is the message or moral implicit in any work of art' (Shaw, 1972: 378).

The protagonist is the principal character in the story. By analysing the protagonist, it will help me to find the theme. According to Harry Shaw in his book Dictionary of Literary Terms, a protagonist is 'the leading character of a drama, novel, or other literary work... he is always the principal and central character.' (Shaw, 1972: 305).

I also find that the conflicts in this novel help reveal the theme. By focusing on the conflicts, I can find the theme of this novel. Concerning the conflict, J.A Cuddon in Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory states, 'Conflict is the tension in a situation between characters, or the actual opposition of characters.' (1991:188) 'Social conflict deals with man's struggle against fate, destiny, and social conversation; man versus man; man versus society; minority versus majority...' (Shaw, 1972:91,92).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. What is the theme of Richard Wright's The Outsider?
2. How do the protagonist's social conflicts help reveal the theme?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To show the theme of Richard Wright's The Outsider.
2. To show how the protagonist's social conflicts help reveal the theme.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The method of research I use is library research. Firstly, I read Richard Wright's novel. Secondly, I read books which are relevant to this thesis. Finally, I search in the Internet in order to get information to support my analysis.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis begins with preface and abstract. I divide the thesis into three chapters. It begins with the Introduction in Chapter One, which consists of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the method of research and the organization of the thesis. In Chapter Two, I will analyse the theme of the work chosen through the protagonist's social conflicts. Afterwards, I conclude my analysis in Chapter Three. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, consisting of the Biography of Richard Wright and synopsis of The Outsider.