

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

I intend to analyze the racial discrimination experienced by the Aborigines in the novel *Drift* and the Chinese people in the novel *Birds of Passage* since racial discrimination is the most prominent idea in the two novels. It is interesting to notice that the forms of racial discrimination in each novel are different.

Since Australia is a multiethnic country, the people who live there come from various countries with various cultures. These differences lead to the subordination of members of various groups based on their ethnicity. Paula S. Rothenberg states in her book *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States* that :

One of the first things we notice about people when we met them (along with their) sex is their race. We utilize race to provide clues about *who* a person is. This fact is made painfully obvious when we encounter someone whom we cannot conveniently racially categorize someone who is, for example, racially “mixed” or of an ethnic or racial group with which we are not familiar. Such an encounter becomes a source of discomfort and momentarily a crisis of racial meaning.

(Rothenberg, 2001: 14).

That is why people are often discriminated based on racial differences. This fact naturally leads to racism.

Racism is defined by Martin N. Marger in his book, *Race and Ethnic Relations*, as “the belief that humans are subdivided into distinct heredity groups that are innately different in their social behavior and mental capacities and that can therefore be ranked as superior and inferior...” (Marger, 1991: 27).

It is clear that some groups tend to think of themselves as the superior one and often racism is used “to legitimate the unequal distribution of the society’s resources, specifically, various forms of wealth, prestige and power”. (Marger, 1991: 27). White-skinned people of European origin view themselves as innately superior in “intelligence, temperament and other primary attitudes, beliefs and behavioral traits”. (Marger, 1991: 28). This is made worse by the fact that their number is bigger than that of the native. The fact that the white think that they are superior legitimates them to use their power to oppress the minority.

All the problems about the presumed superiority of some groups and the inferiority of others lead to ethnocentrism that is the tendency to judge other groups by the standards and values of one’s own. This produces a view of one’s own group as superior to others. The ways of one’s own group (in group) become “correct” and “natural”, and the ways of other groups (out-groups) are seen as “odd”, “immoral”, or “unnatural”...(Marger, 1991: 15). In addition, once a group is defined as inferior, the superiors tend to label it as defective or substandard in various ways. Thus the inferior are often considered uncivilized and the white think they need to civilize them.

Racism itself may vary widely both in form and degree. Two types of

discrimination according to Marger are individual and institutional. The former is carried out by single persons or small groups, usually in deliberate fashion and appear to be the implementation of prejudicial attitudes, whereas the latter is rendered as a result of the norms and structures of organizations and institutions. In addition, the institutional discrimination is often in an unwitting and unintentional manner. It can range from derogation to physical attack and even extermination.

Drift deals with individual and institutional discrimination, whereas *Birds of Passage* deals more with individual discrimination. The novelist of the two novels, Brian Castro, presents the issue subtly through the use of two narrators in both his novels.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Based on the reason above, the statement of the problems is as follows:

1. What is the form of racial discrimination in *Drift* and *Birds of Passage*?
2. How does the author present the racial discrimination in the two novels?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is done to :

3. To analyze the forms of racial discrimination in *Drift* and *Birds of Passage*.
4. To show how the author presents the racial discrimination i the two novels.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The method used is library research. I begin by reading *Drift* and *Birds of Passage*, which are written by Brian Castro, and several books that are relevant to the topics discussed. After that, I analyze the primary text and some references and materials from the internet which can support the analysis and finally I draw some conclusions of what has been discussed.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

I divide the thesis into four chapters, which are preceded by the Preface, the Table of Contents, and the Abstract. In Chapter One, I present the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, and the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis.

Chapter Two contains the analysis of Brian Castro's *Drift* followed by Chapter Three which contains the analysis of *Birds of Passage*. The last chapter, Chapter Four, is the conclusion, which contains the comparison of the analysis of the two novels.