

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The existence of racialism in America started before the independence of America in 1776. Slavery was then one of the most real forms of discrimination in America. Later there was segregation between black and white people. Long after the Emancipation in 1865, racialism in the USA still exists. The black still do not have full freedom as American Citizens.

‘Racialism is an emphasis on race or racial considerations, as in determining policy or interpreting events’ (<http://www.yourdictionary.com/ahd/r/r0006500.html>). This means racialism emphasizes on the differences between race which can sometimes lead to prejudices, misunderstandings and a belief that one race is superior to the others. In the USA, the whites are the superior race whereas the blacks are the inferior one.

One of the twentieth-century American authors who deal with racialism in their works is Richard Wright. He is a black writer who was born in Mississippi, one of the states where racialism were commonly practised, especially during the late nineteenth century. Since the author was born and

lived there I believe he knew very well how black people were treated by the whites. Wright was also seen as the seminal figure in Black Revolution, and he wanted to change the stereotype of the black people from submissive to not submissive people, as he described clearly in his short stories Uncle Tom's Children. "The reference in the title to Uncle Tom is to Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom of Uncle Tom's Cabin, the negro who has become the stereotype of the submissive black. But Wright made it clear that Uncle Tom's children were not submissive." (Robert, 1973: 401) I am of the opinion that this is an interesting aspect to discuss in my thesis.

In Uncle Tom's Children, I can see how white people treat black people. The blacks are treated so badly as if they were not human beings. This book also tells about how they react towards the unfair treatment. Therefore, in this thesis I want to analyse the portrayal of the black people who become victims of racialism. In these short stories every black character is described as a brave person although they suffer from the act of racialism. They try hard to get their rights; they want to fight the mental and physical oppressions which they get from the white people. Through their response, the readers will know the characteristics of each black character in the story.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problems which I would like to analyse are:

1. How does the author portray each one of the black characters in the short stories?
2. Why does the author portray the black characters in such a way?

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Based on the problems above, the purposes of the study are:

1. To know how the author portrays each one of the black characters in the short stories.
2. To know the reason why the author portrays the black characters in such a way.

## **METHOD OF RESEARCH**

The method of research used is library research. I begin my research by reading the primary text Uncle Tom's Children, written by Richard Wright. Then I read several books that can be used to support the research and other related information from the Internet to help me with my analysis. Finally I draw some conclusions of what has been discussed.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

This thesis consists of three chapters, which are preceded by the Preface. Chapter one is the Introduction, which contains 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 present the analysis of the black characters in Richard Wright's Uncle Tom's Children. And the last chapter is Chapter three, which contains the conclusion of the analysis. This thesis ends with the Bibliography, which presents the list of reference books and various sources that I have used, and the Appendices,

which present the synopses of four short stories in Uncle Tom's Children and the biography of the author.