

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

It is said that people with lighter skin are better than people with darker skin (“Go Tell It on the Mountain”). Because of the skin color, black people were regarded as the most violent race (“Not Proud of Being White”). Moreover, they have problems in relation to social interactions with white society, simply because of their skin color. “The ignorance white people had towards black people were shown very well” (Porsha).

Based on these facts, the condition in which black people are treated based on their skin color makes black people feel inferior to white people (“Not Proud of Being White”). They are not proud of their own identity; they feel that to be successful and beautiful, they must be white just to be given the opportunities. By being black, they also feel that they do not have chance in the society. Such condition makes them feel depressed and results in denial of their identity (Maud Martha).

In American Literature, there are many black writers who write and are concerned about their status of identity. Identity is the sense of uniqueness as a person and distinctiveness from others. It is equivalent to answering the question “Who am I?” (Dyk & Witkin 214). One of the most important writers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is James Baldwin who writes bravely about race relations and identity in United States (“James Baldwin Wrote about Race and Identity in America”). The theme of his works is usually about the search for identity (Rusciano).

Another important writer who writes about racial identity is William Faulkner. Most of his earlier works are influenced in themes about identity (Duvall). Faulkner creates characters who deal with the problem of establishing true identities and Faulkner comes to recognize and deal with the confusion of identity (Heller). He is one of the American authors who won the Nobel Prize in 1949.

There are many literary works in America about black people, especially about self-identity. One of Baldwin’s works on identity is Go Tell It on the Mountain. This novel illustrates how psychological and social forces can impede the protagonist in searching his true identity (Perkins). It is his first novel published in 1953 (Zabowroska), similar with Intruder in the Dust, published in 1948, which also tells about self-identity. This novel gains a huge success and was adapted into a movie by MGM Films in 1949 (“Intruder in the Dust”).

Having encountered all these facts, I decide to analyze both novels, especially the portrayal of the characters more thoroughly, because both protagonists in both novels have unique characteristics and also they have the

same problem, which is the search of true identity. Moreover, analyzing characters is not easy, as they are much more complex, variable, and ambiguous (Perrine 67). At the end of my analysis, I will conclude how the protagonists in both novels convey their self-identity.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

1. How are the male protagonists portrayed in the novel?
2. What is the purpose of the author in creating such characters in the novel?

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

1. To show how the male protagonists are portrayed in the novel.
2. To know what is the purpose of the author in creating such characters in the novel.

### **METHOD OF RESEARCH**

In order to help me in analyzing both novels, I use library research by first reading Baldwin's Go Tell It on the Mountain and Faulkner's Intruder in the Dust as the primary texts. I also read and compile some texts that are taken from books and internet to support the study of the two texts. The information and the knowledge that have been gathered are then used to analyze the two texts. Finally, I draw a conclusion from the research I have conducted.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

The writer divides this study into four chapters. The thesis starts with the first chapter which is Introduction, which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the discussion of Go Tell It on the Mountain. Chapter Three is the discussion of Intruder in the Dust. The last chapter is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with Bibliography and Appendix, which contains the Synopsis of the two novels and Biography of the Authors.