CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains an introduction consisting of background, problem identification, scope of the problems, research questions, objectives of the study and the significance of the study.

Background of Study

Literature encompasses various creative works, encompassing written and oral narratives, texts, and verbal expressions. It reflects individual expression conveyed through words, deeds, and written forms. Broadly defined, literature refers to artistic written compositions created by specific authors (Arafah & Kaharuddin, 2019). This means literature is a series of literary works that includes written and unwritten texts. It signifies that literature is an expression of a person represented through words, deeds and writings. Wellek and Warren (1956: 39) also define that "literary theory is itself the study of the principles of literature, its categories, criteria, and the like, and through differential studies of concrete works of art" which suggests literary theory as a disciplined inquiry into the systems and standards by which literature is understood, classified, and analyzed, emphasizing both the theoretical frameworks and their application in analyzing specific literary works.

In addition, Sunardi et al. (2018) also state that the existence of literature is recognized as a culturally valued text that mirrors the complexities and nuances of human life. This perspective suggests that literature serves as a vital repository of society's collective experiences, emotions, and thoughts, encapsulating

cultural and social values. Through its diverse forms—whether prose, poetry, or drama—literature transcends mere storytelling to reflect the human condition, offering insights into personal and societal struggles, triumphs, and the vast spectrum of human emotion. As such, it is appreciated for its aesthetic qualities and ability to connect deeply with individuals and communities, fostering a shared understanding and continuity of cultural heritage. This recognition underscores the importance of literature in contributing to the intellectual and emotional development of individuals as well as the preservation and evolution of culture.

Furthermore, Arafah (2018) then states that literature is a vital source of information, guiding readers and scholars on the diverse and most suitable genres available, including Short Stories, Poems, Novels, Plays, and Songs. Each of these forms offers unique perspectives and insights, ranging from the succinct and impactful narratives in short stories to poems' rhythmic and expressive verses. Novels present readers with extended narratives that delve deeply into characters and plots, while plays provide a dramatized portrayal of stories meant for performance. Songs, with their lyrical and often musical composition, convey emotions and stories in a compact and evocative format. Readers can explore a wide range of human experiences and emotions. Authors ought to maintain simplicity in their writing to avoid bewildering their audience.

Consequently, literary creations mirror the authors' thoughts, etiquette, demeanor, and viewpoints across their compositions. By examining the structure or the distinctive style employed in these works, readers can gain insights into the author's perspective (Hasanah et al., 2021). In summation, literature represents a significant artistic contribution within societal constructs, highlighting its intrinsic value as a mirror to any era's cultural, political, and social undercurrents. Therefore, literature can be regarded as tangible manifestations of societal values and issues, them with scholarly studies in cultural, political, and social . This perspective underscores literature's essential role in

reflecting and shaping the collective consciousness and the discourses of the times in which they are produced (Irmawati et al., 2020).

Many things can be talked about in literary works: economic, religious, political, scientific and social issues. One of the different ways of life is social problems. America is considered a solid and massive country for economic and political reasons; It is also one of the countries with solid discrimination that has been around for a long time. Because of the differences between blacks and whites, there is racial discrimination. The difference in skin color between them makes black skin a minority. According to Thomas and Chasper (2019), the issue of race has run through the history of American society. The phrase about race tends to focus on the life experience of African American because of the "peculiar institution" of slavery in America. Moreover, Todd (1978: 8) asserts that almost no perceptive physician in charge of Negro property fails to discover from experience and proper treatment of the white and black races. The perception of racist and minority treatment of African American is that African American are enslaved, and their skin is not as common as white people's.

During the slavery era, the discrimination and unfair treatment felt by African American was very evident; as for work, blacks worked only as gardeners or cooks. According to Douglass (1845: 99), no work was too hard and none too dirty. They were willing to saw lumber, shovel coal, haul lumber, sweep chimneys or roll oil drums; this has explained that the discrimination African American feel is not only in terms of social demarcation or social boundaries between blacks and whites, but also in terms of employment. That the blacks are working like slaves and the whites are the masters.

As an outcome of this unfair treatment, African American have faced problems and difficulties in living their lives. African American not only felt about their job or social status, but also faced various forms of nation, both in the form of prejudice, discrimination, and tion. As Oliver (2003: 3) says, many African-Americans, especially

men, have been stereotyped as stupid, violent, and dangerous criminals. This expression proves that the discrimination committed by whites against blacks in is not only social and labor law, but is not only physical violence and cruelty, but also psychological. Racial discrimination cannot be changed or eliminated; it still exists in America and is still being felt in the 1930's. According to Mehrotra and Wagner (2019), racial discrimination related to physical characteristics such as skin color, facial features, hair type, and is expected in a geographically isolated, inbred population. African American still feel discrimination, and it did not just happen in the 1930s. Discrimination is still widespread. There have been several racial issues throughout the history of discrimination in the United States.

The discrimination felt by blacks can be traced in Richard Wright's novel *Native Son*. In Wright's works, a description of African American feeling the discrimination of white people can be found. According to Todd et al. (1971), all human beings are created equal and their Creator endowed them with the appropriate rights. The same thing that is inalienable is life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In order to secure these rights, governments are set up among people who withdraw their just powers from government approval. That means African American are not silent about the racial discrimination they experience. They continue to fight for freedom and rights as human beings.

Native Son is a novel written by American author Richard Wright. It tells the story of Bigger Thomas, a 20-year-old black man living in abject poverty in a poor area of south Chicago in the 1930s. The researcher wishes to examine the racial injustice depicted in the novel. This is important because the researcher wants to set an example of how racism can transform someone's life.

As the researcher embarking on an in-depth exploration of racial to African American in American society as portrayed in Richard seminal work, *Native Son*, the researcher's motivation is deeply the significant and enduring impact of Wright's narrative on the

discourse surrounding race, social justice, and the systemic oppression prevalent in American society. Wright's novel, set in the 1930s, is more than just a story; it is a profound commentary on the harsh realities of racial prejudice and the systemic injustices that African Americans have historically faced and continue to grapple with. The author's intricate portrayal of Bigger Thomas, the protagonist, and his navigation through a world marred by racial segregation, economic disparity, and legal injustice, provides a compelling lens through which the researcher can examine the complexities of race relations in America.

Richard Wright's *Native Son* is a groundbreaking work that challenges readers to confront the uncomfortable truths about racism and its profoundly ingrained presence in American society. Wright's vivid depiction of Bigger's life and the socio-economic conditions that lead to his tragic fate underscore the author's critical examination of how institutionalized racism and societal neglect create cycles of violence and despair for Black Americans. This narrative is not merely a product of its time but a timeless reflection on the consequences of racial injustice and the urgent need for societal change.

One intriguing aspect of this research is the nuanced examination of Richard Wright's *Native Son* and its profound exploration of racial injustice in 1930s America. The novel not only vividly portrays the harsh realities faced by African Americans like Bigger Thomas but also delves deep into the psychological and social dynamics shaped by systemic racism. It is fascinating to analyze how Wright employs narrative techniques to evoke empathy and provoke critical reflection on the pervasive impact of racial discrimination on individual lives.

Moreover, the research's focus on the reception of *Native Son* over time adds another layer of curiosity. Exploring how the novel has been interpreted and critiqued across different periods offers valuable insights lving societal attitudes towards race, justice, and representation. ›ect invites contemplation on how literature can influence public

discourse and contribute to ongoing discussions about equity and social change.

Furthermore, the continued relevance of *Native Son* in contemporary dialogues on race underscores its enduring significance. Despite being set in a specific historical context, the novel's ability resonate with readers today speaks to its timeless themes and universal truths about power, identity, and oppression. This enduring relevance prompts us to consider how narratives from the past continue to inform our understanding of present-day challenges and aspirations for a more just society.

In conducting this research on racial injustice towards African American in American society as portrayed in Richard Wright's *Native Son*, the researcher employed Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism as the primary analytical framework. Genetic structuralism, a methodological approach developed by Goldmann, is rooted in the belief that literary works and cultural products are not isolated creations but are deeply interconnected with their time's social and historical conditions (Goldmann, 1981). This approach emphasizes the collective consciousness or "worldview" shared by a group of individuals, often reflecting broader societal structures and values.

Goldmann's (1981) theory posits that a literary work's significance and meanings emerge from its relationship to the social structures that produce it. Hence, a text can be understood as an expression of the social and historical conditions that influence the collective consciousness of the period. By applying genetic structuralism to *Native Son*, the researcher intends to uncover how Wright's narrative and its portrayal of racial injustice and societal disparities reflect the lived experiences and collective consciousness of Black Americans during the early 20th century. This approach allows for a deep exploration of the socio-historical context within which *Native Son* was written and received, highlighting the nectedness of literary production, societal structures, and l moments.

Furthermore, genetic structuralism provides a framework for examining how *Native Son* not only mirrors the racial tensions and injustices of its time but also contributes to a larger dialogue about race, identity, and resistance in American society. By analyzing the novel through the lens of genetic structuralism, the researcher aims to explore the ways in which Richard Wright's work transcends its historical moment, offering insights into the mechanisms of racial oppression and the struggle for justice that resonate with contemporary discussions on race and inequality.

This approach has enabled the researcher to critically engage with *Native Son* in a manner that underscores the complexity of Wright's narrative as a product of its socio-historical context. It facilitates a nuanced understanding of the novel as both a reflection of and a response to the systemic racial injustices that have shaped, and continue to shape, American society. Through this research, the researcher seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on literature's role in reflecting and challenging societal injustices, employing genetic structuralism to uncover the deep-seated connections between literature, society, and history.

The significance of Wright's work in the context of American literature and its contribution to discussions on race and social justice cannot be overstated. By focusing on *Native Son* and its portrayal of racial injustice, the researcher aims to shed light on the nuances of Wright's critique of American society and the relevance of his insights in today's ongoing struggle against racism and inequality. Through a detailed analysis of Wright's narrative strategies, character development, and thematic concerns, this study endeavors to deepen our understanding of the systemic forces perpetuating racial injustice and honor Richard Wright's legacy as a pivotal figure in the fight for civil rights and equality. That emphasizes that the contribution of literary studies to general knowledge is

nt, as it transcends mere academic interest and touches upon the

ric of human empathy and social justice. Analyzing literary works

Wrigth's *Native Son* equips readers with the critical tools

necessary to interrogate historical and contemporary prejudices and injustices. Thus, this research enriches literary scholarship and serves a broader educational purpose by illuminating past injustices that continue to resonate in today's sociopolitical climate. Doing so reinforces the role of literature as a reflective and progressive force in society, offering a critique of racial injustices and fostering an environment conducive to dialogue and understanding across diverse communities. Through such scholarly endeavors, the field of literary studies proves indispensable in fostering a more just and empathetic society.

Ultimately, this research aims to analyze a critically acclaimed literary work and engage with its enduring themes that continue to resonate in the current socio-political climate. By examining *Native Son* through the lens of racial injustice, the researcher seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on race, equality, and justice in America, reaffirming the importance of literature as a powerful tool for social critique and change.

Identification of Problem

Most literary works exist in response to social phenomena in human life. In this regard, the researcher believes that *Native Son* is one of the forms of literary works that arose in response to social phenomena. Based on the background, the researcher finds some exciting problems to analyze in this novel. They are:

- The discrimination committed by the white people towards the African American;
- African American's struggle towards racial discrimination
- How the racial injustice formed in British society
- Different treatment received by African American
- Harmful stigmatization received by the African American
- Segregation happened for African American
- African American struggle to establish equality

Scope of the Research

This research dove into racial injustice in Wright's *Native Son*, using Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism and Paula Braveman's Systemic & Structural Racism theory to explore the racial discrimination and systemic oppression in 1930s America depicted in the novel. It focuses on the portrayal of racial dynamics, examining how the narrative reveals both overt racism and institutionalized oppression experienced by Black characters. The study also investigates the social implications of these injustices, including their effects on the economic and psychological well-being of the Black community.

Furthermore, the research analyzes the characters' responses to racial injustice, looking at resistance and coping mechanisms within the Black community. By offering a detailed analysis of *Native Son*, the study aims to enhance understanding of the novel as a critique of racial inequalities and to highlight its relevance to discussions on race and social justice today. This concise exploration seeks to underscore the significance of literature in reflecting and challenging societal issues.

Research Questions

The researcher formulated the problems such as:

1. How does Wright's *Native Son* depict the various forms of racial injustice experienced by African Americans in American society in the 1930s century?

2. How did African American face the social implications of racial injustice in the United States in 1930s, as depicted in *Native Son*?

Research Objectives

1. To reveal the various forms of racial injustice experienced by African Americans in American society in the 1930s, as depicted in Wright's *Native Son*.

2. To elaborate the social implications of racial injustice faced by African American in the United States in the 1930s are depicted in Wright's *Native Son*.

Significance of the Study

The researcher's aspiration is her study would yield valuable insights and information for all those engaged in literature and academia, explicitly focusing on sociology, literature, and culture. The research carries dual significance: theoretical significance and practical significance.

1. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the field of literary criticism by analyzing Richard Wright's *Native Son* as a literary work that explores the various forms of racial injustice faced by African Americans during 1930s. This analysis will add to the understanding of how literature can reflect and critique social issues, especially those related to racial injustice.

2. Practically, this study is expected to enhance social awareness by bringing attention to the historical realities of racial discrimination and oppression faced by African American in the United States. The novel's portrayal of racial injustice can foster empathy and understanding among readers, encouraging them to confront and address contemporary issues related to racism and social injustice. In addition, this study focuses on its potential impact on educational curricula. By highlighting the relevance of Native Son as a tool to understand historical and contemporary racial issues, this research can advocate for including diverse and socially relevant literature in educational programs.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of previous studies, theoretical background, pertinent ideas and conceptual framework.

Previous Related Studies

Before establishing the research, the researcher needs to read some of the previous research on this problem for information and ideas that have helped the researcher develop the basic concepts of this study. In addition, the researcher found three previous studies that were used as references in the development and analysis of the study.

The first research entitled *The cultural logic of racism in Richard Wright's Native Son* by Ayan (2011) from Pamukkale University. This study explores the destructive and dual nature of racism as depicted in Richard Wright's Native Son, examining the impact of racial stereotypes, cultural conflicts, and the cultural logic of racism on both white and black groups in America. The analysis delves into the psychological, sociological, and cultural dimensions where both racial groups, influenced by fear, anger, and a lack of communication, perpetuate negative stereotypes and prejudice, often unconsciously. The character Bigger Thomas embodies the "fear-hate-fear complex" of his racial experience, while the white Dalton family represents the "guilt-hate-fear complex" of the dominant racial power. The novel portrays how deeply ingrained societal values and racial prejudices trap individuals, limiting their perspectives and interactions across racial lines. The study highlights that both victims and oppressors are products of a cultural logic that corrupts their actions and perceptions, leading to a cycle of prejudice and cultural stagnation.

The second Research entitled *Racial Discrimination Encountered by ericans as Reflected in Langston Hughes' selected poems*

conducted by Muthmainnah (2021) of Hasanuddin University. This study investigates the depiction of racial discrimination against African Americans in Langston Hughes's poetry, employing a descriptive qualitative method and Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicism, complemented by Theoderson's Theory of Discrimination. It uncovers the discriminatory practices highlighted by Hughes, such as segregation and dehumanization, solely based on skin color differences. Hughes's poems reveal the harsh realities and impacts of such discrimination, yet also showcase the resilience, optimism, and fight for freedom among African Americans. The research highlights Hughes's ability to capture both the pain and the strength of the African American experience, illustrating the enduring spirit of hope and resistance against racial injustice.

The third research entitled *Acts of Anti-Racism as Reflected in Harper Lee's To Kill A Mockingbird* by Asha (2022) of Hasanuddin University. This study concerned acts against racism as depicted in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This research aimed to identify and analyze the social condition of Southern America and the acts of anti-racism and resistance to racism as expressed in Harper Lee's novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*. The method used in this study was a descriptive qualitative method that used Lucien Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism approach to discover the types of racist behaviours of whites toward African Americans and expound on the anti-racist acts occurring in the novel. The results showed that the social conditions that emerged were influenced by the Great Depression crisis that affected the economies of the people of America, including South America, and also by the old stigma that had developed in a society that blacks were only too labour earned as enslaved people and was synonymous with crime and other nasty things, which made things even more complicated. Additionally, in there were three types of racist behavior by whites toward African Americans, which were 1) Prejudice; 2) discrimination; and 3) Eviction of African-Americans. The researcher also found the acts of anti-racism in the character

who was a lawyer defending a black man accused of raping a white

act against widespread racism was the way Atticus Finch taught his

quality.

wing the relevant studies above, the researcher noted the similarities

and distinctions between the previous and current studies regarding topics and approaches. The studies by Ayan (2011) and Muthmainnah (2021) deeply engage with the portrayal of racism and its impacts on African American communities, either through the psychological and sociological perspectives in *Native Son* or through historical and social criticism in Langston Hughes's poetry. Similarly, Asha's (2022) research into Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird explores* the manifestation of racist behaviours and the resistance against such attitudes in a specific historical and geographical context. However, these studies primarily focus on illustrating the problem of racism and its manifestations rather than examining potential solutions or broader social transformations that literature might propose or reflect. They also mainly concentrate on the depiction of victimization and the confrontation of racism without an extensive discussion on the subtler, systemic aspects of racism that sustain societal divisions beyond individual acts of discrimination and resistance.

Previous studies have examined the psychological and sociological dimensions of racism. However, this research specifically focuses on the structural and systemic aspects of racial injustice depicted in *Native Son*. By applying Genetic Structuralism, the study investigates how the social and economic structures of 1930s America shape the experiences and behaviours of characters like Bigger Thomas. This approach provides a nuanced understanding of the interplay between individual actions and broader societal forces, highlighting the systemic nature of racial oppression.

Furthermore, this study addresses a gap in the literature by closely analyzing how Wright's narrative strategies and characterizations reflect and critique the racial hierarchies and power dynamics of his time. Unlike previous studies that may focus more broadly on themes of racism and resistance, this research delves into the specific mechanisms of oppression and their impact on both Black and white characters in the novel. By doing so, it offers a more detailed and comprehensive exploration of the systemic injustices that permeate *Native Son*.

/ of this research also lies in its examination of the enduring relevance el in contemporary discussions on race and inequality. By drawing en the 1930s setting of the novel and modern-day issues of racial udy underscores the continuing significance of Wright's work. This

comparative analysis enhances our understanding of historical racial dynamics and contributes to ongoing conversations about the persistence of racial inequalities and the need for systemic change.

Therefore, by using genetic structuralism, this current research not only identifies and analyzes the manifestations of racial injustice in *Native Son* but also delves into how Richard Wright's narrative structure reflects and is influenced by the socio-economic and historical conditions of the 1930s. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how the novel depicts, critiques, and responds to the systemic nature of racism. It examines how racial tensions and prevailing ideologies of the time are intricately woven into the narrative structure, influencing the characters' development and the plot's progression.

In conclusion, this research on Richard Wright's *Native Son* distinguishes itself through its application of Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism, its focus on systemic aspects of racial injustice, and its exploration of the novel's contemporary relevance. It fills a scholarly gap by providing a thorough and nuanced analysis of the social, economic, and historical contexts that shape the narrative, offering new insights into the complexities of racial oppression and the enduring impact of Wright's work. Thus, the researcher hopes this study could enhance the academic discourse not just by analyzing the themes within the text but by connecting these themes to broader societal structures, thereby offering a richer, more interconnected view of literature as a reflection and critique of its time. This could provide deeper insights into the potential of literature to influence societal perceptions and foster a broader understanding of systemic change, which are aspects less explored by the studies mentioned earlier. This approach highlights the unique contributions of Wright's work to literary and cultural discussions on race and showcases the potential of genetic structuralism to offer new perspectives in literary criticism.

Theoretical Background

I background is crucial when researching literary works, as it serves as references for the study. In analyzing racial injustice towards African

Americans in American society within the novel *Native Son*, the researcher opted for the genetic structuralism approach.

Genetic Structuralism

Genetic structuralism, a theory pioneered by Lucien Goldmann (1913-1970), emerged in the mid-20th century as a significant intellectual development within the realm of literary and cultural studies. Developed during the 1960s in France, this theory was influenced by Goldmann's synthesis of Karl Marx's historical materialism and György Lukács's theory of class consciousness, focusing on understanding cultural creations within their socio-historical contexts (Goldmann, 1981).

The application of genetic structuralism in literary analysis is an intricate process that seeks to elucidate the profound connections between a literary work and the social and ideological frameworks of its time. Lucien Goldmann, the pioneer of this theory, posited that literature is inherently tied to the societal and economic circumstances prevalent during its creation, arguing against the notion of literary works as merely isolated or autonomous art forms (Goldmann, 1981).

Genetic structuralism arises from both intrinsic and extrinsic elements present within literary works, rendering the literary work a fundamental component of genetic structuralism. Moreover, this approach endeavors to identify not only the structure within the novel but also the interconnection between the novel's structure and the broader societal structure. Goldman (1981: 24) asserts in his book that the literary work serves as a critical manifestation of the author's creativity and uniqueness within the context of society. This relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic elements becomes apparent when reality and the literary work are intertwined. The significance of originality is closely connected to the socio-historical background. Genetic structuralism not only seeks to identify the structure within the novel but also aims to understand the circumstances surrounding the creation of the novel and the reasons behind its writing. The preceding structures are linked to the novel's setting yal. When the novel depicts a particular society of its time and presents ves of individuals from the same social class, it contributes to the particular worldview.

Goldmann (1981) elucidates that the novel narrates a quest for genuine values within the world. This elucidation underpins the significance of literary works in the context of the genetic structuralism theory. Firstly, a literary work serves as an expression of a particular worldview. Secondly, in order to convey this worldview effectively, authors must craft characterizations, objects, and their relationships. This implies that worldviews share structural similarities, being virtually held within a social group, leading to similar sentiments and ideas when evaluating aspects of life. However, these worldviews may vary across different social groups, influenced by the distinct social conditions experienced by each collective subject. As a result, the novel can evoke diverse perspectives.

In literary sociology, genetic structuralism has made significant strides in exploring the essence of humanity. This theory involves comparing the structures within a novel with the unfolding reality depicted in the narrative, as described by Goldman (1981: 24). Genetic structuralism seeks to unveil the meaningful structure inherent in the text. Furthermore, Goldmann (1981) contends that a literary work is a structured entity, indicating that it represents a historical product and an ongoing historical process. Genetic structuralism characterizes a life system that demonstrates regularity and integration.

The theoretical examination of genetic structure should encompass intrinsic elements and the extrinsic factor of the social environment in the novel's creation. Studying the social context of the collective consciousness that underpins the human experience is crucial, as this search for the human essence is a fundamental step in discovering the collective theme within the novel. During the elaboration of the novel, a significant structure is established based on knowledge and science. This considerable structure represents the connection between literary work and society, inseparable from scientific analysis. Additionally, the meaningful structure is influenced by the writer's human thinking and conscious behavior when crafting the

tforward approach to applying genetic structuralism to literature can be ree parts:

he intrinsic factors of the literary work as the foundational data.

2. Explore the author's background, personality, style, ideology, and norms influencing their works.

3. Examine the socio-cultural and historical context of where the author creates the literature.

In genetic structuralism, there exists a correlation between the structure of a literary work and the structure of society. Sometimes, despite the differences between a literary work and society, both share identical structures. The structure is intrinsically linked to the worldview, encompassing the collective ideas, feelings, and aspirations of group members. As a result, each social group possesses a distinct worldview, setting them apart from one another (Faruk, 2012). Genetic structuralism considers the worldview as the environment, style, and mentality of a social group, defining its unique characteristics.

The evolution of the worldview within society is influenced by social status. Literary works present unrealistic and imaginative structures. However, issues arise when the literary work reflects the problems of society as a mirror of reality. The worldview connects the social structure in society with the social structure portrayed in the literary work. To identify the worldview in society, authors must first grasp the human essence depicted in the novel, as the worldview represents a coherent entity shaped by the connection between the author and the narrative. The worldview essentially encompasses historical and social realities, with the collective subject being a focal point. Developing the worldview requires a comprehensive understanding of all the elements that contribute to its formation, including the human essence, the trans individual subject, and the meaningful structure (Faruk, 2012).

The significance structure pertains to how social history is presented through literary works. Humanity continuously shapes socio-history over time through ongoing processes, influenced by the humanities. The structure of meaning, as explained by Goldman (1981: 14), serves as a tool for comprehending the humanities and signifies emerges from the ever-changing social history. As inferred from the ____ment, social history is a product of human actions and is constantly ____gside the knowledge of societal changes. Human thinking also ____owledge, and literary works themselves reflect human thoughts that

illustrate the social structure of humanity. Although the content of literary works may differ from reality, they share the same underlying structure.

In constructing a literary work, an author builds a world view that reflects the dynamic relationship between humans and their environment. This portrayal of the human-environment relationship captures the reality of life. The process of structuring (assimilation) and destructuring (accommodation) between humans and their environment takes place, demonstrating the equivalence and coherence in their continuous interactions (Goldmann, 1981:16). Structuring represents the conscious behavior an author exhibits while writing a literary work, encompassing the actions they have undertaken or intended to include in the narrative. People are acutely aware of how they interpret their place in society and their aspirations and emotions in relation to others and the environment.

According to Goldmann (1981), the structuring process arises as a result of individual and trans-individual subjects relating to their environment to provide coherent responses. In line with the previous statement, literary works depict human actions and the connections humans form with various aspects of life surrounding them. This phenomenon occurs because society and literary works share a common origin but manifest in distinct forms. People consciously assimilate the influence of knowledge and science, leading to the adaptation of their thinking and behavior to their environmental conditions. As a result, stories can be altered based on the mindset of certain groups and the new ideas emerging within the social community, signifying the ever-changing historical processes of life. The conscious aspect of a group's life becomes a crucial factor in transforming cultural and historical existence.

Ultimately, the goal of this analytical approach is to reveal the implicit, and often unconscious, hopes and aspirations of the socio-historical group represented in the text. These elements are considered to be indirectly expressed through the literature due to the prevailing ideological constraints of the time. Through genetic researchers aim to uncover these submerged layers of meaning, nts into how literary texts serve as both products and critiques of their ially influencing social consciousness and cultural developments. This e approach not only enriches the interpretation of literary works but

also enhances our understanding of the historical interplay between art and society (Goldmann, 1984).

Pertinent Ideas

The United States Society in 1930s

The novel *Native Son* takes place in the 1930s, a period deeply intertwined with racism in the fabric of human existence. During the 1930s, racism was a prominent societal concern, especially amidst the Great Depression, which stands out as one of the most distressing times in American history (Haggarety in Sastrawati, 2015). This era brought about significant challenges that impacted the lives of Americans across economic, political, and social dimensions.

The impact of the Great Depression era on American life was profound and multifaceted. According to Maziorinis (2007), six factors contributed to this downturn: 1) the economic repercussions of World War I; 2) war-related economic and geopolitical changes, particularly in central and south-eastern Europe; 3) the abandonment of the gold standard; 4) imbalances in world financial and German financial warfare; 5) the crash of the US stock market; and 6) the lack of global financial leadership and the implementation of misguided economic policies.

To elaborate, Germany had to allocate significant funds for technology, transportation, and infrastructure repairs following World War I, affecting the economic landscape in other countries like Canada and the United States. Consequently, these countries had to exhaust their gold reserves and resort to printing money to address the burden of war-related debts. Additionally, Belgium, France, and Britain borrowed money from the United States to meet their war expenses, leading to the abandonment of the gold standard and increased money printing within their borders. This situation triggered inflation in Europe and the United States, resulting in rising prices and economic challenges for the US.

In accordance with Hayes (2021), the Great Depression is analyzed through two nomic theories: the Keynesian (demand-driven) explanation and the planation. Additionally, there are various heterodox theories that either eject the Keynesian and monetarist viewpoints. Among demand-side

theories, a prevailing consensus is that a significant loss of confidence triggered a sudden decline in consumer and capital spending. As panic and deflation took hold, many individuals opted to stay away from the markets to avoid further losses. Hoarding money became advantageous as prices plummeted, enabling a given amount of money to purchase an increasing amount of goods, thus exacerbating the decrease in demand. On the other hand, monetarists assert that the Great Depression commenced as a regular recession, but the contraction of the money supply significantly exacerbated the economic situation, transforming the recession into the Great Depression.

The monetarist explanation, as proposed by American economists Friedman and Schwartz (1963), posits that the Great Depression was a result of a banking crisis. This crisis led to the disappearance of a third of all banks, a decrease in bank shareholders' wealth, and a significant 35% reduction in the money supply, known as "The Great Contraction." This monetary contraction caused a 33% decline in prices. Instead of lowering interest rates, increasing the monetary base, and injecting liquidity into the banking system to prevent its collapse, the Federal Reserve passively observed the progression of a regular recession into a global economic crisis. Friedman and Schwartz (1963) argue that if the Federal Reserve had taken more assertive measures, the downturn in the economy that began with the stock market crash would have been a mere typical recession.

According to Encyclopedia (2023), The Great Depression brought about significant changes in the way Americans led their lives. Numerous individuals had to adapt to unemployment or meager wages. In 1931, ninety-five people in New York City died due to malnutrition. Farmers abandoned their land and sought employment in urban areas. Charities in cities faced the challenge of assisting the starving and homeless, many of whom had recently migrated from rural regions. However, even the charities themselves were financially strained. To alleviate the misery caused by on, the New Deal, a series of government programs, intervened to ral assistance for the impoverished and homeless. Despite the me found solace and distraction from the difficulties through activities hing movies, participating in bingo nights, engaging in chain letters, and

participating in the Irish Sweepstakes. Additionally, the board game Monopoly experienced tremendous success in the 1930s.

Immigrants who arrived in the United States during the 1920s relied on charities, loan companies, and banks for support. However, after 1929, many of them lost their entire means of sustenance. The situation was equally challenging for African Americans, with many losing their jobs as employers chose to hire white workers instead. Tenant farmers and sharecroppers also faced immense struggles, losing their land and sources of income. In 1932, the unemployment rate for black workers reached 48 percent, compared to the overall rate of 25 percent for the entire United States. (Encyclopedia, 2023)

As the Great Depression intensified, church attendance witnessed a decline. Numerous individuals experiencing poverty felt ashamed of their newfound status, while others turned away in despair. However, certain churches, particularly conservative ones like the Pentecostal and Southern Baptist churches, saw an increase in their numbers. Religion also took on a political dimension, with Jews and Roman Catholics aligning themselves with the Democrats and President Roosevelt's New Deal initiatives, while Protestants tended to support the Republicans. African Americans, on the other hand, stood apart from this trend. The majority of Black Protestants were in favor of the New Deal.

Moreover, according to Lynch (2022), the challenges in the economic sphere contributed to the exacerbation of racism during the Great Depression era. Racism thrived during this period because African Americans in America were still regarded as an underclass due to their historical background. The economic pressure led to a demand for numerous laborers to cultivate surplus crops. Since African American did not possess their own land, they had historically worked as laborers for white individuals, even after the abolition of slavery. This circumstance strongly reinforced the perception in the minds of white people that African Americans were different, considered inferior, dirty, and of low social status (holding ions). As economic conditions worsened, racism escalated, particularly people. In the southern states, a significant proportion of the workforce frican Americans. The severity of racism became evident through the

implementation of specific codes, known as the 'Black Code,' which perpetuated discriminatory practices against African Americans, as previously mentioned.

Certainly, during the Great Depression era, a law held significant authority, compelling every individual in Southern America to abide by it. This situation was reflective of the prevailing political climate at that time. In the 1930s, people adhered to long-established government-made laws and did not seek to create new social roles to promote harmony. Only the existing governmental and legal systems that existed before the 1930s were applied. When individuals in the United States faced punishment for their crimes, there was little differentiation in judgment, and factors such as class and race became determining factors in upholding justice. The jurors, who were rural and relatively impoverished farmers, possessed limited knowledge and were all white, as noted by Haggarety (in Sastrawati, 2015). Their attitudes towards race significantly influenced every decision they made during the defendant's trial. Although the United States had a democratic system of government at that time, where individuals could pursue their aspirations, there was a shift in society. The issue of race profoundly impacted the mindset of people in the United States.

The Origins of African American

The origin of African Americans is deeply rooted in the transatlantic slave trade, a brutal and inhumane system that began in the early 16th century and persisted until the late 19th century (Rawley & Behrendt, 2005). This trade was driven by European colonial powers, primarily Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, France, and Britain, who sought to exploit the labor of Africans to fuel their colonial economies (Berlin, 1998). Africans were captured through various means, including warfare, raids, and trade agreements with African leaders (Johnson et al., 1998). Once captured, they were transported to the coast, where they were sold to European traders. The journey across the Atlantic Ocean, known as the Middle Passage, was marked by unimaginable suffering (Rediker, 2007). Enslaved Africans were packed into ships ____ble conditions, with little food or water, leading to high mortality rates. ____ of this journey were then sold into slavery in the Americas, where their ____ecame the backbone of the agricultural and economic development of ____d (Morgan, 1975).

Enslaved individuals were shackled together and confined to the ship's hold, where they had little room to move or breathe. Disease was rampant, and many succumbed to illnesses such as dysentery, smallpox, and respiratory infections. The death toll during the Middle Passage was staggering; with estimates suggesting that up to 20% of the enslaved Africans did not survive the journey (Rediker, 2007). Despite these horrific conditions, enslaved Africans displayed remarkable resilience and resistance, often staging rebellions aboard the ships or jumping overboard to escape their fate. The Middle Passage was not only a physical ordeal but also a profound psychological trauma, stripping individuals of their freedom, identity, and connection to their homeland (Rawley & Behrendt, 2005).

Upon arrival in the Americas, enslaved Africans were sold at auctions and forced into a life of servitude (Berlin, 1998). In the United States, slavery became particularly entrenched in the Southern states, where the economy depended heavily on the labor-intensive cultivation of cash crops such as tobacco, rice, indigo, and, most notably, cotton (Morgan, 1975). Enslaved Africans worked long hours under grueling conditions, facing harsh punishment and constant surveillance. Their labor was essential to the prosperity of the Southern economy and, by extension, to the economic development of the United States as a whole (Johnson et al., 1998). Despite the oppressive system, enslaved Africans found ways to resist and preserve their humanity. They developed rich cultural traditions, blending elements of African heritage with new influences from their surroundings. Music, dance, storytelling, and religious practices became vital means of maintaining a sense of community and identity (Berlin, 1998). These cultural forms not only provided solace but also laid the foundation for African American culture.

Enslaved Africans brought with them diverse cultural practices, languages, and beliefs, which they adapted and transformed in the New World (Berlin, 1998). This cultural synthesis gave rise to a distinct African American culture that has had a ⬚act on the broader American society. For instance, African rhythms and ⬚ influenced the development of jazz, blues, gospel, and later, hip-hop ⬚al., 1998). Religious practices among enslaved Africans also evolved, ⬚e emergence of African American Christianity, which blended African

spiritual traditions with Christian beliefs (Morgan, 1975). These religious practices became central to the African American community, providing spiritual sustenance and a framework for social organization and resistance. Language, too, was a site of cultural transformation, as enslaved Africans developed creole languages and dialects that incorporated African linguistic elements into English (Berlin, 1998). This linguistic creativity is evident in African American Vernacular English (AAVE), which continues to be a vibrant and influential form of expression.

The abolitionist movement, which gained momentum in the 19th century, played a crucial role in ending slavery in the United States (Morgan, 1975). Abolitionists, both black and white, campaigned tirelessly to expose the moral and ethical atrocities of slavery and to advocate for its end. Key figures such as Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and William Lloyd Garrison became prominent voices in the fight against slavery (Johnson et al., 1998). Their efforts, combined with the growing economic and political tensions between the Northern and Southern states, culminated in the Civil War (1861-1865). The Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, declared the freedom of all enslaved people in Confederate-held territory (Berlin, 1998). This was followed by the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865, which abolished slavery throughout the United States. The abolition of slavery marked a significant turning point in American history, but the struggle for true equality and justice for African Americans would continue for many decades, leading into the Civil Rights Movement of the 20th century and beyond (Rawley & Behrendt, 2005).

What is Racism

To understand the origin of racism in Southern America, it is crucial to grasp the definition of racism itself. According to Samovar (2010), racism involves a belief in superiority that leads one person to mistreat another group based on factors such as race, color, religion, or country of origin.

the statements above, the researcher concludes that racism manifests tory behavior directed towards a specific race, driven by the notion that superior to others. Samovar (2010) further highlights that racism arises economic, psychological, and historical factors. These factors are

associated with certain ethnic and racial groups, and people derive their identities from these groups, indicating their origins, racial heritage, and the culture and civilization that have shaped them as social beings (Liliweri, 2005: 5).

Moreover, as Liliweri (2005: 29) emphasizes, the issue of racism generates various attitudes and effects in society, including racial violence, which entails threatening and intimidating individuals or groups of specific races. It can be inferred that racism emerges due to a combination of economic, psychological, cultural, and historical factors, leading to various impacts in society, including acts of threatening and intimidating individuals or groups based on their race.

Paula Braveman (2022), a prominent researcher in public health and social determinants of health, explores various forms of injustice, particularly racial injustice. Her focus is on how systemic racism and discrimination permeate different aspects of society, leading to significant health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities. Here are some key points from Braveman's discussion on forms of injustice in the context of racial injustice:

a. Systemic Racism

Systemic racism, also known as institutional racism, refers to the policies and practices entrenched in established institutions that result in the exclusion or promotion of designated groups. This form of racism is embedded within the laws, regulations, and procedures of social, political, and economic institutions, often operating without explicit intention but nonetheless producing racially inequitable outcomes. According to Paula Braveman (2022), systemic racism is not just about individual prejudice but is about how societal systems and institutions perpetuate inequality through normalized practices and policies.

For example, systemic racism can manifest in the education system through disparities in school funding, which often results in predominantly white schools [...] re resources than those attended primarily by students of color. This [...] can affect the quality of education, access to advanced coursework, [...] ducational outcomes, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage (Braveman,

b. Structural Racism

Structural racism is a broader concept that encompasses the historical, cultural, and social mechanisms that reinforce racial inequities across society. It refers to the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege one racial group while disadvantaging others. Braveman (2022) explains that structural racism is the totality of ways in which societies foster racial discrimination through mutually reinforcing systems of housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, and criminal justice.

For instance, residential segregation is a prime example of structural racism. Historical practices like redlining—whereby banks and insurance companies denied or limited financial services to certain neighborhoods based on racial composition— have long-term impacts. These practices not only restricted access to homeownership for people of color but also led to disinvestment in those communities, affecting their socioeconomic status, access to quality education, and healthcare services (Braveman, 2022).

In essence, racism originates from deep-seated beliefs in racial superiority that lead to discriminatory behaviors, as defined by Samovar (2010). This phenomenon is driven by cultural, economic, psychological, and historical factors, and it manifests in various harmful societal attitudes, including racial violence, as highlighted by Liliweri (2005). Paula Braveman (2022) elaborates on systemic and structural racism, illustrating how entrenched policies and practices in institutions perpetuate inequality, particularly affecting education and residential segregation. These forms of racism work cumulatively to create significant disparities, particularly in health outcomes among racial and ethnic minorities. Thus, addressing racism requires understanding its multifaceted origins and pervasive impacts across different sectors of society.

Racism in the United States

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Based on the statements mentioned earlier, the researcher concludes that racism manifests as discriminatory behavior directed towards a specific race, driven by the notion that one race is superior to others. Samovar (2010) further highlights that racism arises from cultural, economic, psychological, and historical factors. These factors are associated with certain ethnic and racial groups, and people derive their identities from these groups, indicating their origins, racial heritage, and the culture and civilization that have shaped them as social beings (Liliweri, 2005: 5).

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According to Weber and Hassler (In Britannica, 2022), following the end of the American Civil War in 1865, the Reconstruction period commenced in the Confederate States of America as they were reintegrated into the Union. As part of this reintegration process, states were readmitted to the Union and required to abolish the institution of slavery. The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution was passed, officially abolishing slavery throughout the nation. This significant change brought about freedom for approximately 4 million African-Americans in Southern America. President Abraham Lincoln, who sought to improve the lives of former slaves, was assassinated before he could fully implement his plans.

After Lincoln's assassination, Andrew Johnson took office. However, as stated by Weber and Hassler (In Britannica, 2022), he strongly advocated for protecting states' rights, which led him to oppose granting even limited suffrage to African-Americans in the South, as he believed it would infringe upon states' jurisdiction. Another crucial e beginning of Reconstruction was that although the Southern states d to support the abolition of slavery, they were not obligated to grant edoms to African-Americans. This freedom allowed Southern states to

enact laws that restricted the liberties and economic opportunities of the newly freed African-Americans. This is when the Black Codes were introduced.

The Black Code was implemented to uphold white supremacy established by existing institutions and to ensure a steady supply of inexpensive labor. For instance, the Homelessness Act deemed an African-American as homeless if they were unemployed and lacked a permanent residence, leading to fines or forced labor for those unable to pay the fine (Blackmon, 2008).

According to Stewart (1998), the Black Codes also curtailed economic freedom and opportunities for African-Americans. Some states restricted the types of property African-Americans could own, and certain professions were off-limits to them. Additionally, southern states in the United States imposed other restrictions, such as prohibiting African-Americans from carrying firearms or testifying in court unless the cases specifically involved African-Americans. Interracial marriage was also outlawed.

Another significant aspect of the Black Codes involved the requirement for African-Americans to fulfill annual employment contracts and submit them to the authorities to avoid being charged with vagrancy (Wormser, 2003: 8). Forehand (1996: 59) explains that harsh penalties for theft were also utilized as a means to ensnare many individuals in the legal system. Previously, on a plantation, African-Americans were part of the domestic economy and had access to most available resources. However, after emancipation, performing the same act by someone working the same land could now be labeled as theft, leading to arrests and forced labor.

During the period of 1876-1965, the implementation of the Jim Crow Laws took place, as noted in the Encyclopedia (2018). Jaynes (2005: 864) highlights that this racial segregation was triggered when Congress proposed the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery in the United States in January ᴐsequently ratified it on December 18, 1865.

Crow Laws and the etiquette system were enforced through violence, l threatened. According to Myrdal (1944: 560), African Americans who Crow standards, such as using facilities designated for whites or

attempting to vote, faced severe consequences, risking their homes, jobs, and even their lives. Whites could physically harm blacks without facing any legal consequences because the entire Jim Crow criminal justice system was composed of all-white personnel, including police, prosecutors, judges, juries, and prison officials. Violence was a fundamental tool for enforcing Jim Crow as a method of social control. The most extreme form of violence under Jim Crow was lynching, which involved public and often sadistic mob killings. Myrdal (1944: 560) further explains that lynching victims were often hanged, shot, burned at the stake, castrated, beaten with sticks, or dismembered. While initially, whites were the majority of both victims and perpetrators of lynching, during the period of radical reconstruction, blacks became the most frequent targets. This shift indicated that lynching was used as a means of intimidation to subjugate African American and maintain the racial hierarchy. The vast majority of lynchings occurred in southern and border states, where animosity against African American was most profound. According to Myrdal (1944: 560-561), "The southern states are responsible for nineteen-tenths of the lynching. More than two-thirds of the remaining tenth took place in the six states immediately bordering the south".

Myrdal (1944: 561) points out that after 1945, the Civil Rights movement garnered broad support and launched a nationwide effort to challenge Jim Crow. In 1954, the Supreme Court declared the de jure segregation of schools based on race as unconstitutional, although de facto segregation continued into the 1970s. President Lyndon B. Johnson advocated for the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which overturned Jim Crow Laws regarding the segregation of restaurants, hotels, and theaters. Additionally, the Voting Rights Act put an end to discrimination in union, state, and local elections.

From the explanation above, it can be inferred that the Black Code, which was aimed at maintaining white supremacy and was later replaced by the Jim Crow Laws system, relied on violence and threats for enforcement. Violating Jim ...ds exposed African Americans to the risk of losing their homes, jobs, ...r lives. Lynchings were public and often sadistic mob killings. Following ...il Rights movement gained widespread support and launched a national

campaign against Jim Crow, ultimately leading to the end of state-sanctioned discrimination through the enactment of the Voting Rights Act.

Richard Wright's *Native Son*

Native Son is a novel penned by the American writer Richard Wright, recounting the story of Bigger Thomas, a 20-year-old African American youth struggling in poverty-stricken conditions in a deprived neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago during the 1930s.

In addition, *Native Son* is a powerful and influential novel that explores the harsh realities of racial injustice in American society during the 1930s. The story follows the life of 20-year-old Bigger Thomas, a young black man living in poverty in a poor neighborhood on Chicago's South Side.

Bigger's life takes a dramatic turn when he gets a job as a chauffeur for a wealthy white family, the Daltons. Despite his hopes of improving his life, Bigger's encounter with the Daltons only exposes him to the stark racial inequalities of the time. Fearful of losing his job, he is hesitant to challenge the oppressive system that dominates his life.

As the story unfolds, Bigger inadvertently becomes involved in a tragic accident that results in the death of Mary Dalton, the daughter of his employers. Consumed by fear and desperation, Bigger attempts to cover up the incident, leading to a series of increasingly desperate and violent actions.

Throughout the novel, Wright delves into Bigger's psyche, portraying him as a product of a society that perpetuates racism and segregation, leaving him feeling trapped and dehumanized. The narrative also explores the complexities of Bigger's motivations, depicting his struggle to find his identity and escape the constraints imposed upon him by society.

As Bigger's actions come to light, he faces a sensational trial that becomes a spectacle of racial tensions and injustices in the legal system. While Bigger's lawyer, argues that the society itself contributed to his actions, the trial ultimately eep-seated prejudices and biases prevalent in American society.

Native Son remains a seminal work in American literature, challenging readers to confront the harsh realities of racial discrimination and oppression. It is a profound examination of the consequences of systemic racism and serves as a timeless critique of the social and economic conditions faced by African-Americans during that era.
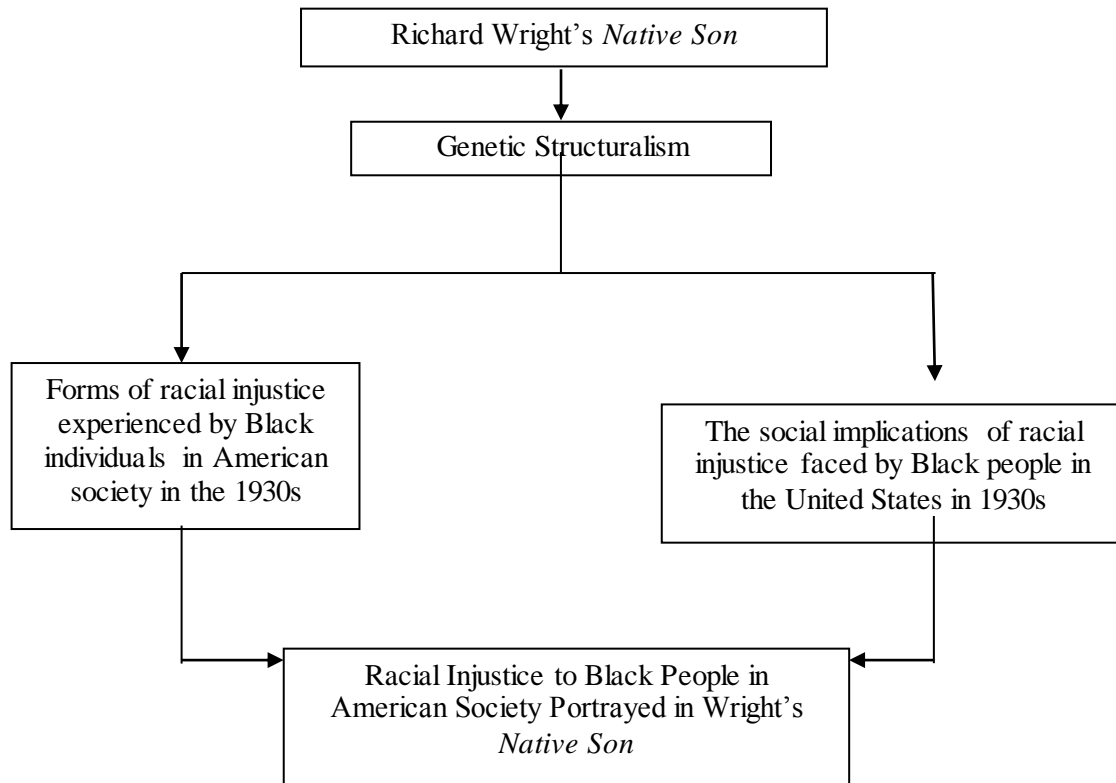
Conceptual framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The researcher employs Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism methodology in this research to analyze Wright's *Native Son*. By closely examining the storyline and dialogues within the novel, the study aims to uncover the social issues and racial injustices depicted in *Native Son*.