

I. Gothic Horror and *Native Son*

This research tries to probe the theme of Gothic elements in the novel *Native Son* by Richard Wright. Gothic is related to a style of fiction that emphasizes on the grotesque, mysterious and desolate events and scenes. In other words, it refers to a style of writing that describes gloomy, horrifying, strange or frightening events that take place in mysterious and remote setting with supernatural, mysterious and violent incidents. It has been popular especially in 18th century literature and work of arts. Likewise, Gothic also refers to the art movement which consists of architectural style in sculpture, painting or other art forms prevalent in Western Europe from 12th century through the 15th century. It is characterized by pointed arches, rib vaulting, flying buttress, thin and tall walls, large windows and so on whose emphasis lies on verticality and the impression of height reflecting the influence of Medieval Gothic.

Moreover, Gothic refers to "the various styles and forms of the genre" which "analyzes the cultural significance of its prevalent figures: the ghosts, monsters, vampires, doubles and horrors" which "are its definitive features" (Fred Botting: II). It is related to "tortuous, fragmented narratives related to the gloomy and mysterious incidents, horrible images and life-threatening pursuits predominant in the eighteenth century" (Fred Botting: 2) repeatedly "signaling the disturbing returns of pasts upon presents and evoking emotions of terror and laughter" (Fred Botting: 1). By "drawing on the myths, legends, and folklore of medieval romance, Gothic conjures up magical worlds and tales of knights, monsters, ghosts and extravagant adventures and terrors" in the work of arts (Fred Botting: 92).

The novel *Native Son* by Richard Wright is full of Gothic elements. It moves around the central character Bigger Thomas' turmoil state of mind after he commits a

crime by murdering his white master's only one daughter Mary Dalton. He murders her undeliberately after raping her in her intoxicated situation right after their visit of countryside placing pillow over her face to seize her voice after the immediate entrance of Mrs. Dalton, Mary Dalton's blind mother, only to hide his crime of rape. Being frenzied by horror and terror of crime, Bigger Thomas rushes to his black girlfriend Bessie Mears' room where he narrates about his crime to her. Again, later on, he murders Bessie Mears with fear that she may reveal his crime and whereabouts because he is under the surveillance of police investigation after his crime of rape. In this regard, the novel *Native Son* is pregnant with Gothic elements. This research explicitly tries to prove the hypothesis how the central character of the novel Bigger Thomas is attributed with Gothic traits, how he is a victim of Gothic psyche, how he suffers from Gothic fear and terror, why he commits crime one after the another, what he does to get rid up of his crime and how he is destined to surrender before police personnel for his crime at length of the novel.

Native son by Richard Wright is about Bigger Thomas, the central character of the novel, who works in the house of white. This novel is one of the best books Richard Wright ever has written. This book has been published in 1940 by the publisher Harpers and Brothers in America. From the time of publication of this book, various critics, readers and intellectuals have been interested to go through this novel. It is because this novel has been the matter of great astonishment for its artistic presentation and its fascinating subject matter. In this regard, this book has been the matter of huge discussion among the critics and academicians throughout the globe. Various critics and intellectuals seem to be interested to supply their comments on the subject matter of this book. In this regard, different critics and intellectuals have supplied and contributed their criticism regarding this book. Some of them comment

this novel *Native Son* in the positive light whereas some of others seem to point out the negative aspect of the novel. Likewise, some of the critics seem to stand in neither of these domains. It means they opine in the position of in-betweenness. Leonard Fabre is a critic who seems to concern on Bigger Thomas' panic state of mind. Leonard Fabre claims that Bigger Thomas suffocates Mary Dalton and then burns her body to hide the crime. Leonard Fabre writes:

Bigger Thomas in a panic suffocated Mary Dalton and then burned her body to hide the crime and to avoid capture he smashed Bessie Mears with a brick and let her freeze to death. There is no question of the brutality of the crimes. An even Bigger, when in jail, believes he deserves to die for them. He accidentally smothers a white woman, chops off her head and through her body in a furnace to burn. He takes a brick and hits his girlfriend with it. (53)

The above criticism of Leonard Fabre argues that Bigger Thomas burns Mary Dalton's body only avoid the capture. It means in order to avoid the capture for crime, Bigger Thomas burns Mary Dalton's dead body. Leonard Fabre further argues that Bigger Thomas kills Bessie Mears with the brick and lets her freeze to death. For Fabre there is no question of brutality of the crimes done by Bigger Thomas. He further argues that Bigger Thomas believes that he deserves to die for Mary Dalton and Bessie Mears even if he is in jail.

Likewise, another critic Gisele Rivera seems to be concerned on the pathetic condition of Bigger Thomas. He claims that Bigger Thomas is a black boy who comes from a very poor family. He really seems to be tired of the white people and their

inapt treatment done upon him. He has so much furry against white people which makes him to do wrong deeds. Gisele Rivera further notes:

Bigger Thomas is a black boy that comes from a very poor family. He really got tired of the white people treating them different. He had so much anger in him that made him make some wrong decisions. In a moment of panic he killed a rich white woman and know is headed to jail for murder and rape. I really liked this book because it motivated you to read more and more. Bigger Thomas was my favor character because he made his own decisions and that what made the book more interesting and knowing what he wanted and felt. This really had me asking "what's going to happen know? Richard Wright is a very good author and knows how to keep things exiting and moving. (43)

For Gisele Rivera, the cause behind committing crime by Bigger Thomas lies in white people's negative perspective and practice for black people. Rivera argues that in the moment of pain, Bigger Thomas kills a rich white woman. He knows that he is a subject to sever punishment for the murder and rape he has done. Gisele Rivera further claims that Bigger Thomas is his favorite character because Bigger Thomas makes his own decisions which make Gisele Rivera to go through this novel. For him this book is very interesting which clutches him reading it with the curiosity that what happens in every chapter? Gisele Rivera argues that Richard Wright is a very good author. He knows how to keep the thing existing and moving.

Similarly, Kathy Smith is another novel critic who explains her experience and comments regarding this novel. Regarding this novel *Native Son* by Richard Wright, Kathy Smith asserts that she has read this book for the first time when she has been a

high school student. She says that she has read this book after for American history teacher recommends reading this novel. She critiques:

I first read this novel as a high school junior, after my American history teacher recommended me to read this book. I remember being overwhelmed by the story. It was even more wrenching this time around. It was the first novel of an African-American writer to be selected for the Book of the Month Club. (40)

Here, Kathy Smith argues that she has been dumb found by the story of the book which moment she still remembers. For her this novel is the first novel by African-American writer to be featured for selection in the book of the month. She argues that this books arrests her heart when she goes through it.

Robert Saslu is another critic who points out the impressiveness of the novel *Native Son* by Richard Wright. He argues that this novel is more impressive that it should be the piece of fiction. It makes a serious effort to avoid presenting the unfortunate main black character Bigger Thomas as a victim. For Robert Saslu what is more interesting and radical in the novel is that Bigger Thomas is not only the victim but he is subject to punishment for his heinous crimes. Further, Robert Saslu opines:

Considering that it was first published in 1940, it is even more impressive that it should be a piece of fiction that makes a serious effort to avoid presenting the tragically unfortunate black main character as a victim. What is even more interesting, and as radical now as it was back then, is that Bigger Thomas is not only not a victim (not just a victim, to be fair), but someone whose heinous crimes make it extremely difficult to sympathize and side with him. He is hostile

and opaque, almost unintelligible. The author makes it impossible to identify with him, and the result is that even in the most absorbing dramatic moments (and there are plenty), the reader is first of all thinking, and only last of all feeling. (45)

The above clarification suggests that Bigger Thomas is not the subject to sympathy because of his heinous crimes. For Robert Saslu Bigger Thomas is a character with hostility. The author makes a novel incredible and impossible to identify the character Bigger Thomas as hostile and opaque. Here, what Robert Saslu argues is that the plot of the novel makes reader to think of only the feelings and emotions with moment of the plot of novel. In a similar tune, another critic Michael Irr argues that this novel is a quite straightforward and realistic. It is not simple novel as well. Here, he points out his argument:

A good thing is going, for one of the most important novels on racism in the US. And even though it is quite straightforward and realistic, it is certainly not simple. It conveys all the complexity, the darkness, the contradictoriness of racial relations and leaves them as unsolved and obscure as it found them. But don't be fooled: it is not the nothingness of the starting point, but one that can only be reached after strenuous reflection. I don't know if it speaks for or against it that James Baldwin once said Bigger Thomas, with all his rage and violence, is just the other side of the coin in which you will find, well, Uncle Tom. (55)

The above criticism by Michael Irr suggests that this novel delineates the complexity, darkness and the contradiction of racial relation which leaves the character as

obscured. Michael Irr says that he does not know whether the novel speaks for or against the racism.

This novel *Native Son* is about horror and terror for the critic Jonathan Barbara. He argues that it is hard to sympathize Bigger Thomas as a protagonist if we look objectively at what Bigger Thomas does. He acts in the manner of a psychopath. Jonathan Barbara argues:

If you look objectively at what Bigger Thomas did, it is hard to sympathize with him as a protagonist. He acted in the manner of a psychopath. He killed, actively tried to cover his crime, blamed an innocent man, and tried to profit from the murder after the fact. I was horrified. I didn't like him. Jan and Mary were trying to be his friends and he wouldn't allow them. He hated them for it. But in the end, you realize that he couldn't have acted any other way. 1940 Chicago, IL, USA would not have allowed him to act any other way than exactly has he did. (90)

What Jonathan Barbara comments, here, is that Bigger Thomas being protagonist kills other characters and tries to cover his crime actively. He blames an innocent man and tries to profit from the murder after committing crime. The critic Jonathan Barbara says that he is horrified and does not like the protagonist Bigger Thomas. For him Jan and Mary have kept trying to be friends of Bigger Thomas, but he has not allowed them. Bigger Thomas hates Jan and Mary in the novel for their friendship. For Jonathan, Barbara Bigger Thomas should not have acted in that manner. In the same way, another critic Ann Joyce argues that this novel, what he argues is, is about the race and society which are very deep and hard from the perspective of issue. What the

critic Ann Joyce conceives is that Bigger Thomas has a little choice in his situation except committing crime. For Ann Joyce the role of the white people are very hard to deal with personally. He supplies his comment:

If you look objectively at what Bigger Thomas did, it is hard to sympathize with him as a protagonist. He acted in the manner of a psychopath. He killed, actively tried to cover his crime, blamed an innocent man, and tried to profit from the murder after the fact. I was horrified. I didn't like him. Jan and Mary were trying to be his friends and he wouldn't allow them. He hated them for it. But in the end, you realize that he couldn't have acted any other way. 1940 Chicago, IL, USA would not have allowed him to act any other way than exactly has he did. (57)

Above clarification displays that characters like Bigger Thomas has helped to improve the situation of black people in America. However, these characters' every action culminates into frustration in the society. However, the role and the situation of black people are very fascinating for the critic Ann Joyce. Another critic Emily Tippets claims that in this novel a main character Bigger Thomas is unique as well as anti – hero at all the time. According to Emily Tippets Bigger Thomas is uneducated, sullen, frighten and sometimes he is cunning as well. Bigger hates a white people primarily because white people have so much suppressed him which he believes. He has no control over his own life. Furthermore, Emily Tippets notes:

Bigger as a character was unique at the time - he is an anti-hero. He is uneducated, often sullen, frightened, violent, sometimes cunning, and filled with hate, not limited to but focused primarily on the white world

that suppresses him. He is incapable of seeing anyone in the white world as an individual, much in the same way that the majority of whites are incapable of seeing him as anything but one black face of many. He believes he has no control over his own life - he is only separated from slavery by one generation, and Jim Crow laws on top of a general prejudice/racism have resulted in millions being marginalized, kept down, and made invisible. On top of this suppression, he is surrounded by images/symbols of the American dream that are denied to him; white men control real estate of black slums. (15)

What the above criticism of Emily Tippet claims is that in this novel Bigger Thomas has very much hatred towards the white people. He is incapable of seeing anyone in the white world as an individual and says that the majority of whites are incapable but he is the one black to face many problems. Emily Tippet believes that Bigger Thomas has no control over his own life. At that moment, millions people are marginalized, kept down invisible and blacks slums are controlled by white people. Similarly, another critic Sondra Guttman asserts that when the character Bigger Thomas is in jail, he asks to Mr. Max how he dies. These words leaped out of the pages for Sandra Guttman when she read it. Through this story of this novel, we see the social condition of the then time. In this novel, Bigger Thomas is full of fear, hatred, shame and guilt. He hates the white people because they think that they are enough for themselves whatever they long. White people assume that Bigger Thomas cannot do anything. Bigger Thomas not only hates whites people but also hates a black too because he knows he is black boy and black people are not good enough.

The various critics have critiqued this novel from various perspectives. They raise multiple issues like cruel behavior of Bigger Thomas, his crimes of Mary and his girl friend Bessie. Some of the critics point out this novel *Native Son* in the positive light whereas some of others seem to point out the negative aspect in this novel. Though various critics have critiqued this novel from different perspectives and no researches have researched and analyzed this novel *Native Son* from the theoretical perspective of gothic element. In this regard, the issue of my research, which is Gothic element in this novel, is new subject. My research basically tries to portray how Bigger Thomas is attributed with Gothic traits, why he shows his behaviors offensively and aggressively towards white people, why he rapes and kills an innocent girls like Mary and Bessie one after another.

The term 'Gothic' has come to mean quite a number of things in the present time. It could mean a particular style of art and it may be in the form of novels, paintings or architecture. It could mean medieval uncouth. It could even refer to a certain type of music and its fans. The original meaning is something that is relating to or resembling the Goths, their civilization, or their language. Gothic focuses on the various styles and forms of the genre and analysis the culture significance of its prevalent figures: the ghosts, monsters, vampires and horrors. It is very old term. It is used in the Renaissance period to sign the building that indicates the feeling to approach the existence of God and signifies the art style of the Middle Ages. The characteristic of gothic is a technical invention of architecture in the middle age, which is represented in the building of cathedrals Notre – Dame France. The building such as cathedrals that is gothic has a style of architecture that is distinguished by tall pillars, high vaulted callings and pointed arches. Gothic was a literary form in the late eighteenth century As a literary term, gothic can be defined as the sub genera of the

novel with eerie, supernatural or horrifying events. Gothic fiction is a European Romantic, portrayed fantastic tales dealing with terrifying, archaic settings, which usually gives shape to concepts of Universities Sumatera Ultra exploration and exploration of the supernatural and dark, emotional plots that investigate closely to the unconscious human mind.

An understanding of the Gothic frame work is critical to an interpretation of the protagonist Bigger Thomas not only because all three primary texts under study here contain prominent Gothic elements, but moreover the Gothic genre by its very nature makes possible and promotes the Bigger Thomas by creating opportunities for main character that do not exist outside of Gothic texts. In order to explain how the Gothic creates the Gothic, no small task in itself. While some patterns and recurring elements are recognizably Gothic, a review of criticism on the Gothic fails to generate any consensus on precisely what constitutes the Gothic genera. Noted critics of the gothic genera such as Punter, Botting and Spooner all acknowledge the challenge of defining the genera in specific manner. Instead it is often characterized as hybrid genre that addresses cultural anxieties through a combination of horror, titillation, and psychoanalytic terror. This lack of consensus makes establishing defining characteristic for the Gothic very difficult.

Regarding Gothic elements Fred Botting in his book *Gothic* argues, “Gothic appears in the awful obscurity that haunted eighteenth – century rationality and morality. Gothic atmospheres like gloomy and mysterious have repeatedly signaled the disturbing return of past and Gothic element is concerned with evoking the emotion of terror and laughter and signaling the disturbing return of the past upon present” (1). The nature of signaling the disturbing return of past upon present is

contextual with the plot of the *Native Son* presented by Bigger Thomas. It is evident because emotion of terror and horror comes into the mind of Bigger Thomas of his crime of rape and murder. He rapes his white master's only one daughter Mary and burns dead body. Bigger Thomas then rushes to his girlfriend's room and narrates about his crime. In the course of staying over there in the room of his girlfriend Bessie, the past events of his crime come into his mind over there. It evokes the emotion of horror and terror in the psyche of Bigger Thomas.

Fred Botting further claims that gothic element consists of, “gothic condenses the many perceive threat to these values associated with supernatural and natural force, imaginative excesses and corruption” (2). Here for Fred Botting Gothic is concern with religious and human evils, mental disintegration and spiritual corruption. He argues Gothic is also associated with natural as well as supernatural force. Similarly it is an indicative of imaginative excesses and confusion as well. This kind of Gothic element is seen in the novel *Native Son*. Here in this novel the central character Bigger Thomas is mentally disintegrated and spiritually corrupted person. It is because his spiritual corruption is evident in the fiction when he kills his girlfriend and his white master's daughter one after another. He does not care about religion, virtue and ethic rather he commits crimes so pervasively in his disintegrated mental situation.

Fred Gothic element is related to the style of characterized by the use of desolate or remote setting. It describes gloomy horrifying, strength or frightening events, mystery and violence incidents. Fred Botting asserts that gothic element consists of, “magical words and tales of knight, monsters, ghosts and extravagant adventures and terrors” (92). Through the above lines what Booting seems to say is

that gothic is associate with the story of knights, monsters, and ghosts. It is also related to the extravagant adventures and terrors for Fred Botting. This kind of scenes and situation is seen in the novel *Native Son* by Richard Wright. In the novel there is a reference of extravagant adventures and terrors. These features and characteristic can be seen in the novel presented by Bigger Thomas. He comes across adventures and terrors after he kills Mary and Bessie. He faces adventure because police run after him to arrest him. Bigger is caught into the situation of adventure and terror in the novel frequently. Similarly, there is a hint of the magical world and tales of supernatural.

Fred Botting argues that Gothic element produces emotional effects on its regards rather than developing a rational response. For him Gothic element has direct association with marvelous and strength events. He argues, “Gothic produced emotional effects on its readers rather than developing a rational or properly cultivated response. Exciting rather than informing, it chilled their blood, delighted their superstitious fancies and fed uncultivated appetites for marvelous and strength events, instead of instructing readers with moral lessons that inculcated descent and tasteful attitude to literature and life” (93). In the above lines Fred Botting argues that Gothic produces emotional effects on the readers but it does not provide moral lesson to the readers. It is full of delighting superstition and strength events. This kind of situation is contextual in the novel the *Native son*.

Botting describes the gothic as “a hybrid form from its inception, the Gothic blend of Medieval and historical romance with the novel of life and manners was framed in supernatural, sentimental, or sensational terms” (45). This view of Gothic as a form that is by its very nature a hybrid is a telling insight not only to explain the

difficulty many critics find in precisely defining the genera, but also to address the gothic genera's ability to adopt to changing historical and cultural contexts over time. Botting frames the Gothic in supernatural, sentimental, or sensational terms, arguing that the gothic genera incorporate other major critics in that he attempts to narrowly define the Gothic as a historical phenomenon that has come to its conclusion. While Botting's works help to establish the long history of the Gothic as a literary genre, his focus is largely on European works.

In this way *Native Son* is a gothic novel. It encompasses every feature of Gothic novel like the description of strength and frightening events that take place in mysterious and remote setting. This novel is mysterious in its subject matter which consists of violent incidents, grotesque and desolate events.

This thesis is divided into three parts. They are introduction, textual analysis and conclusion. The first part of the research which is introduction consists of introduction to the thesis, hypothesis, literature review, theoretical tool, line citation of the related theorist and overall outline of the dissertation. Likewise the second part of the thesis consists of textual which analyses the novel with the help of theoretical tools, literature review, citation of lines from novel and overall plot. The final part includes conclusion which shows findings of the whole thesis concisely.

II. Bigger Thomas's Crime in *Native son*

Native son is a novel by American author Richard Wright. This novel moves around the central character Bigger Thomas, a black American youth who lives in the pathetic condition because of poverty prevent in his family. He is a elder son of Thomas family who is a bread earner of his family. He lives with his widow mother Mrs. Thomas, a younger brother Buddy Thomas and younger sister Vera Thomas. This novel *Native Son* centers the crime of Bigger Thomas, his effort to hide it and its consequence in the novel. In other words, this novel moves around Bigger Thomas' crime which generates Gothic psychic trauma in Bigger Thomas.

When the novel opens, we know extreme poverty prevalent in the family of Bigger Thomas. They have rented room having single bed for four members of Thomas family. The extent of their poverty seems when one of the family members needs to change their cloth. It is because when Bigger Thomas mother gets ready to change cloth, she asks Bigger and his brother Buddy Thomas to turn their heads so that she can change her dress. Similar is the case with Bigger Thomas and his brother Buddy Thomas turn to get their cloth changed. In this regard, we can know Bigger Thomas under goes with extreme poverty who lives in ghetto area's congested rental room operated by white masters for their economic profit. This sort of exploitation by white people to black people paves the way for the germination of negative impression in the psyche of Bigger Thomas towards white people. In other words, the unjust treatment of white people for black people like Bigger Thomas is the main cause of the emergence of revenge motive in the psyche of Bigger Thomas, who is the greater extent, wants to take the revenge against white people. With this vision of revenge and extreme poverty, Bigger Thomas has a history of victimizing white

people and stealing their property. But Bigger Thomas brings the change in his behavior and becomes ready to get a job for his and his family's financial sustenance. Bigger Thomas is going to find a new job in the house of Henry Dalton family, the white businessman with material prosperity. Bigger Thomas' plan to work as a chauffeur in the house of Henry Dalton regarding his new job becomes clear from the following interaction between Bigger Thomas and his family members in the following lines:

“You know you have to see Mr. Dalton at five thirty” his mother said.

“You done said that ten times.”

“I don't want you to forget, son.”

“And you know how you can forget,” Vera said.

“A lay off Bigger,” Buddy said. “He told you he was going to take the job.”

“Don't tell 'em nothing,” Bigger said.

“You know, Bigger,” his mother said, “if you don't take that job the relief'll cut us us off. We won' have any food.” (15)

The above lines suggest the concern of Bigger Thomas's job and his family excitement regarding his new job in the Dalton's family. Mrs. Thomas seems worried whether Bigger Thomas forgets about his new job as a chauffeur in Dalton's family where as Bigger Thomas seems vexed to see his mothers frequent recall to Bigger Thomas. Furthermore, Bigger' Thomas's sister Vera and brother Buddy are also

excited about the new job of Bigger Thomas with the hope that their poverty eliminates forever.

With the high expectation and enthusiasm, Bigger Thomas goes to Mr. Dalton's house where his plight begins to scatter. Bigger Thomas hopes that Dalton family is aristocratic where his happiness begins. But, on the contrary, Bigger Thomas happens to sink in the ocean of worries and sorrow. Bigger Thomas' approach to Dalton's family with excitement becomes clear from the following lines:

“Hello!”

“Yessum,” he said.

“You want to see somebody?”

“Er....Er.... I want to see Mr. Dalton.”

“Are you the Thomas boy?”

“Yessum..”

“Come in.”

“Come on in,” the women said.

“Yessum,” he whispered

“Follow me,” she said.

“Take a seat,” she said. “I'll tell Mr. Dalton that you're here and

“Yessum.” (17)

The above lines are the suggestive of Bigger Thomas' approach to the Dalton's family when he approach there, he is well come by Peggy, Dalton's house maid. She tells that she will call Mr. Dalton about his arrival over there. Peggy seems know the arrival of Mr. Thomas.

Dalton family consists of three members; Henry Dalton, Mrs. Dalton and Mary Dalton only one off spring. Dalton family seeks to employ Bigger Thomas as their chauffer. Henry Dalton is a sophisticated business man who invests money in rental house in ghetto area designed for black people to whom his daughter Mary calls capitalist father. Marry has a leaning in Marxism with the influence of her boy friend Jan Erlone.

For the first of Bigger Thomas' job in Dalton's family, Henry Dalton asks Bigger Thomas to drive Mary Dalton outside her meeting. But Mary Dalton asks him to drive astray of the expectation of Henry Dalton which creates horror and fear on part of Bigger Thomas. It is because Henry Dalton has asked Bigger Thomas to drive Mary Dalton to the university meeting, but Mary Dalton leads him astray which causes intense fear in Bigger Thomas. The following lines suggest this situation:

May be she was talking about the Reads? That was it! But none of
 were reads. What was all this? If Mr. Dalton should ask him if he had
 taken her to the University, he would have to say yes and depend upon
 her to back him up. But suppose Mr. Dalton had someone watching,
 someone who would tell where he had really taken her? He had heard
 that many rich people had detective working for them. If only he knew
 what this was all about he would feel much better. Well, he would

drive her; that was what he had been hired for. But he was going to watch his step in this business.

The above lines suggest the horror and terror of Bigger Thomas which is the suggestive of gothic element. Furthermore, Marry Dalton asks Bigger Thomas to drive to meet her boy friend Jan Erlone, a communist leader. They take him to restaurant where they ask him to sit in the same bench discarding the discrimination between white and black people. Bigger Thomas had never seated in the same bench with white people before which tensed Bigger Thomas with the sense of horror and terror. The following lines suggest the horror and terror of Bigger Thomas:

He got out and slammed the door. Mary came close to him and caught his arm. He started at her in a long silence; it was the first time he had ever look directly at her, and he was able to do so only because he is angry. "Bigger," she said, "you don't have to come in unless you really want to. Please, don't think.....Oh, Bigger..... We're not trying to make you feel badly..." Bigger wondered what he could say to his mother, or the relief, or Mr. Dalton, if he left them. They would be sure to ask why he had walked off his job, and he would not be able to tell.

(39)

The above lines show the horror and terror generated in the mind of Bigger Thomas. He felt uneasy to sit with the white people because of inferiority complex. When they intoxicated in a restaurant until late night, they return back home. Mary Dalton and Jan Erlone sit in the back side in the car on their return where they exchanged kiss to each other. Their kissing arouses sensation in Bigger Thomas. Marry Dalton is too intoxicated that she cannot control herself while walking for bed room. In this regard

bigger Thomas helped her to go to her bed when they approached home. Bigger Thomas took Mary Dalton to her bed room where he too kissed Mary Dalton in her senseless situation because of narcotic potion. Bigger Thomas rapes Mary Dalton there. In the mean time Mrs. Dalton, blind mother of Mary Dalton, arrives there in Mary Dalton's room who notices that something is wrong with Mary Dalton. The following lines suggest the situation:

“Mary!” she spoke softly, questioningly.

Bigger held his breath. Mary mumbled again; he bends over her, his fists clenched in fear. He knew that Mrs. Dalton could not see him; but he knew that if Mary spoke she would come to the side of the bed and discover him, touch him. He waited tensely, afraid to move for fear of bumping into something in the dark and betraying his presence.

“Mary!”

He felt Mary trying to rise and quickly he pushed her head back to the pillow.

“She must be asleep,” Mrs. Dalton mumbled. (46)

The above line suggests the intense fear generated in the mind of Bigger Thomas because of the abrupt entrance of Mary Dalton. Bigger Thomas fear because it was his first day of job in the house of Dalton family. He fears because Mrs. Dalton may notice if Mary Dalton spoke. He also fears and horror travels into his mind because he is a black chauffer present the room of sophisticated white girl Mary Dalton's room in midnight. When Mrs. Dalton calls Mary Dalton, Bigger Thomas gets frightened because he thinks that he is betraying his master.

When Mary Dalton begins to speak, Bigger Thomas becomes more frightened with the view that her sound may reveal his presence in Mary Dalton's room so he immediately puts a pillow over her face to stop her sound coming out. When Bigger Thomas puts the pillow over Mary Dalton's face, she gets suffocated. Eventually she dies which Bigger Thomas does not notice. The following lines capture this scenario:

He had to stop her from mumbling, or he would be caught Mrs. Dalton was moving slowly toward him and he grew tight and full, as though about to explode. Mary's fingernails tore at his hands and he caught the pillow and covered her entire face with it, firmly Mary's body surged upward and he pushed downward upon the pillow with all of his weight, determined that she must not move or make any sound that would betray him. His eyes were filled with the white body heaved and he held the pillow in a grip that took all of his strength. For a long time he felt the sharp pain of her fingernails biting into his wrist. The white blur was still. Then suddenly her fingernails did not bite into his wrists. Mary's fingers loosened. He did not feel her surging and heaving against him. Her body was still. (48)

The above lines suggest the fear occurred in midnight in the psyche of Bigger Thomas. When he puts pillow Mary Dalton's face, her fingernail tore Bigger Thomas hands. But Bigger Thomas presses the pillow more tightly which causes Mary Dalton die. When she dies her finger loosened which Bigger Thomas does not notice. But Bigger Thomas comes to know the sudden death of Mary Dalton because of suffocation, he becomes frenzied. This moment onward, the life of Bigger Thomas really goes for hell.

Bigger Thomas, now, assimilates with the situation and plans to handle the situation. He puts Mary's dead body in a furnace to hide it and burn the dead body because of fear. The following lines suggest this fact:

He stared at the furnace. He trembled with another idea. He – he could, he – he could put her in the furnace. He would *burn* her! that was the safest thing of all to do. He went to the furnace and opened the door. A huge red bed of coals blazed and quivered with molten fury. He gripped her shoulders and pushed hard, but the body would not go any farther. He tried again, but her head still remained out now. It was the white cat and its round green eyes gazed past him at the white face hanging limply from the fiery furnace door. (16)

The above lines remark the burning case of Mary Dalton. Bigger Thomas is horrified while putting Mary Dalton in furnace. He cuts the head of Mary Dalton's dead body to put into the furnace. While putting the dead body of Mary Dalton into furnace, a sense of horror, terror and desolate feeling strikes the mind of Bigger Thomas which is the suggestive of Gothic element in the novel.

Since the Gothic element is concerned with the fear and horror, it is reflected through the psyche of character in the context of novel. This sort of horror and terror can be seen in the psyche of the black protagonist of the novel *Native Son* by Richard Wright. Bigger Thomas sees a man doing something with shovel in front of the furnace looking down into the ashes strewn over the floor. Bigger Thomas's muscles get twisted to see the man standing with shovel over there near to furnace. The following lines suggest this fact:

Bigger's muscles twisted. He went to run to the man's side and see what it was he looking at; he had in his mind an image of Mary's head lying there bloody and unburnt before the man's eyes. Suddenly, the man straightened, only to stoop again, as though unable to decide if the evidence of his eyes was true. Bigger edged forward, his lungs not taking in or letting out air; he himself was a huge furnace now through which no air could go; and the fear that surged into his stomach, filling him, choking him, was like the fumes of smoke that had belched from the ash bin. (185)

In the above lines, Bigger Thomas is horrified to see the man. It is because the image of Mary Dalton's head lying there bloody and unburnt bone strikes his mind and muscles. Bigger Thomas's frightens because he has committed crime by murdering Mary Dalton and putting her dead body into a furnace to save him from crime. In this regard, the image of furnace frequently haunts his mind and memory which is what an outstanding example of Gothic element in the present novel *Native Son* by Richard Wright.

Dalton's family cannot find the real culprit of Mary Dalton's murder. They publish a notice with belief that they can capture the real culprit of Mary Dalton's murder in news paper with reward of ten thousand dollars for the person who can tell about the crime. Bigger Thomas happens to see the notice while walking in a street after the crime. A sense of fear and horror emerges into the mind and psyche of Bigger Thomas when he comes to know about the notice. The following lines suggest this fact:

He knew the paper into a doorway. His eyes swept the streets above the top of it; then he read in tall back type: MILLIONAIRE HEIRESSS KIDNAPPED. ABDUCTORS DEMAND \$ 10,000 IN RANSOM NOTE. Yes; they had it now. Soon they would have the story of her death, of the reporters' finding her bones in the furnace, of her head being cut off, of his running away during the excitement.

(188)

Bigger Thomas becomes horrified in the above lines but he knows that he is a real culprit. He becomes fearful because the matter of death and the finding of Mary Dalton's bones in the furnace may lead him into prison and the possibility of capital punishment. Furthermore, Mary Dalton's cut off head from her body and her body dipped into the furnace has made the murder case more complex which tenses Bigger Thomas. It is because he cannot lie his heart wherever he goes and hides himself from police authority for his crime.

Bigger Thomas rushes towards his black girl friend Bessi Mears room. Bessie Mears notices the unusual behavior of Bigger Thomas. Furthermore, she notices huge amount of money Bigger Thomas carries. She begins to ask questions to Bigger Thomas with suspicion which causes horror, fear and tension that comes into the mind of Bigger Thomas as a flash back of his crime. The following lines suggest the crime of Bigger Thomas and suspicion of Bessie Mears:

“Bigger! Gee! Where you get all that money from?”

“Wouldn't you like to know?”

“How much is?”

“What you care?”

She came to his side.

“How much is it, really?”

“What you want to know for?”

“Let me see it. I’ll give it back to you.”

“I’ll let you see it, but it’ll have to stay in my hand, see?”

He watched the expression of coyness on her face change to one of amazement as the counted the bills. (34)

In the above lines Bessie Mears is also horrified seeing the huge amount of money Bigger Thomas never carries. She asks to Bigger Thomas where he got all that money and how he got it. Bigger Thomas tries to console her but she does not get convince. In this regard what we can claim is that the novel *Native son* by Richard Wright is an outstanding novel about Gothic element represented by Bigger Thomas. Further Bigger Thomas is caught with perplexity and confusion why Bessie Mears does not get convince. A sense of horror and terror comes into his mind which is suggested by the following lines:

“Tell me. What is is?”

“It ain’t nothing, Bigger, honey.”

What did she mean by asking all these questions? He wondered if she had detected anything in him. Then he wondered if he were not letting fear get the better of him by thinking always in terms of Mary and of

her having been smothered and burnt. But he wanted to know why she had asked where he worked. (141)

The above lines suggest the absence of rest in the mind of Bigger Thomas generated by the stress of question of Bessie Mears. He wonders his girl friend knows anything wrong in him. He further ponders if he can rightly convince Bessie Mears. Such a question occurs time and again into the mind of Bigger Thomas with perplexity and confusion regarding his crime of rape with regard to Mary Dalton.

Bigger Thomas again returns back to the home of Dalton rightly after meeting Bessie Mears. He notices the hot discussion and interaction among Dalton family and their relatives regarding the missing a Mary Dalton. When Bigger Thomas notices these happenings, he trembles. He is terrified by the sense of fear and thinks whether Dalton family suspects him as a culprit regarding the missing of Mary Dalton. The intensity of fear and terror can be seen in the following lines of Bigger Thomas:

“O.k.!” he mumbled.

“This is Mrs. Dalton!”

“Yessum. Just a minute.” (112)

He reached the door in two long steps, then stood a moment trying to collect himself. He blinked his eyes and wet his lips. He opened the door and saw Mrs. Dalton smiling before him, dressed in white, her pale face held as it had been when she was standing in the darkness while he had smothered Mary on the bed.

“Y- y- yes, mam,” he stammered. “I- I was asleep....”

“You didn’t get much sleep last night, did you?”

“No’m,” he drawled, afraid of what she might mean.

“Peggy rang for you three times, and you didn’t answer.”

“I’m sorry, mam....”

“That’s all right. I wanted to ask you about last night..... Oh. you took the trunk to the station, didn’t you? She asked.

“. Yessum this morning,” he said, detecting hesitancy and confusion in her voice. (64)

The above lines consist of the surprise of the house made of Dalton family and Mrs. Dalton regarding the whereabouts of missing Mary Dalton. Mrs. Dalton asks if Bigger Thomas slept well in the night. But this question causes bigger Thomas’ mind and body get paralyzed. In response of the question of Mrs. Dalton, Bigger Thomas says he slept well. But Mrs. Dalton says that Bigger Thomas did not answer three times ringing of her house maid Peggy. The question one after another raised by Mrs. Dalton creates stress in the psyche of Bigger Thomas who begins to be horrified more and more from time onwards.

Dalton family hires a personal spy and investigator Mr. Britten to investigate the missing of Mary Dalton. Mr. Britten begins to investigate the possible causes of Mary Daltons missing who keeps Bigger Thomas as a primary source of his investigation. He begins to ask some questions to Bigger Thomas who feels intense terror and horror and tries to console him to seem confident as if he is unknown about the missing of Mary Dalton. The following lines suggest the situation:

“What’s the matter, boy?” the man asked.

“I’m not the law, boy. So don’t be scared.”

“Bigger clamped his teeth; he had no control himself. He should not have let that man see him staring at the badge.

Yessuh,” he said.

“Bigger, this is Mr. Britten,” Mr. Dalton said. “He is a private investigator attached to the staff of my office....”

“Yessuh,” Bigger said again, his tension slackening.” He wants to ask you some questions. So just be calm and try to tell him whatever he wants to know.” (60)

Mr. Britten asks Bigger Thomas not to be scared regarding the crime after Henry Dalton introduces Mr. Britten as his personal investigator to Bigger Thomas. Henry Dalton informs Bigger Thomas that Mr. Britten wants to asks some question which requires Bigger Thomas’ co operation and help find out the cause of the missing of Mary Dalton. The pile of questions generate tension with the mixture of horror, terror and desolate feeling in the psyche of Bigger Thomas who nearly loses his confidence it is what the suggestive of Gothic element prevalent in the novel *Native Son* by Richard Wright. The trial of question answer continues to take place among Mr. Britten, Bigger Thomas and Henry Dalton. The following lines are the suggestive of the situation regarding the where about of missed Mary Dalton:

There was silence. The furnace droned. Huge red shadow swam across the walls.

“Where did you take her, then?” Britten asked.

“To the loop, suh.”

“Whereabouts in the Loop?”

“To Lake Street, shu.”

“Do you remember the number?”

“How long was she in there?” Britten asked.

“About half- hour, I reckon. Suh”

“Then what happened?”

‘well, I waited in the car....’

“She stayed there till you brought her home?”

“Nawsuh.”

“She came out.....”

“They came out.....”

“This man Jan was with her, then?”

“Yessuh. He was with her. Seems to me she went in there to get him. She didn’t say anything; she just went in and stayed awhile and then came out with him.”

“Then you drove ‘em....”

“He drove,” Bigger said.

‘Weren’t you driving?’ (100)

What these lines indicate is that Bigger Thomas is under the surveillance of Mr. Britten and Henry Dalton. Britten asks how long Mary Dalton remains in Lake street. Bigger Thomas replies that she remained one and half hour over there as he reckon. He informs that Mary Dalton stayed over there for long until he waited. She did not say anything to Bigger Thomas.

Bigger Thomas again rushes to Bessie Mears room where he hatched the net of conspiracy to write fake letter with claim that Mary Dalton has been abducted after he gets freedom for a while from the surveillance of Dalton family and Mr. Britten. Here Bigger Thomas plans to flee with his girl friend Bessie Mears enjoying the bliss of youth in far distance where nobody knows them. He tells his plan to Bessie Mears to flee away in a distance with the money he took from the purse of Mary Dalton. Bessie Mears accept the proposal happily. Bessie Mears too begins to plan the south and west by drowning in the ocean of the dream who expects much entertainment and recreation in the company of Bigger Thomas. Bigger Thomas writes a fake kidnap note to the Dalton family which claims that Mary Dalton has been abducted and kept in an unknown place. After writing the fake kidnap note, Bigger Thomas return back to the house of Dalton family. He tells Bessie Mears that he will return back as soon as possible from the house of Dalton family after knowing the developing situation of Dalton family regarding Mary Dalton’s missing. With, generating the confidence in the heart of Bessie Mears, Bigger Thomas departs for Dalton’s house.

When Bigger Thomas approaches Dalton's home he notices the hot discussion regarding the kidnap note sent by Bigger Thomas with animosity. The following lines reveal the hot discussion regarding the kidnap letter sent by Bigger Thomas:

“What’s the matter, Mr. Dalton?”

“Who.... Where did.... Who gave you this?”

“What?”

“This Letter.”

“Why, nobody. I got it from the door.”

“when?”

“A few minutes ago. Anything wrong?”

“Henry! Henry!” Mrs. Dalton called. “What’s the matter?”

Mr. Dalton did not hear her; still stared at Peggy.

(80)

The above lines suggest the helpless state and confusion of Dalton family regarding the letter and missing of their dear daughter Mary Dalton. Mr. Dalton asks about the letter but nobody knows from where it came. They only know the letter was on the foot of door of their house. But it created a sense of fear in the psyche of Dalton family as well as in the psyche of Bigger Thomas simultaneously. Bigger Thomas fears because of the fear if Dalton family knows he wrote the letter. On the other hand Dalton family fears if their daughter is really abducted. In this regard the kidnap note

creates a sense of horror and terror in the psyche of both Dalton family and Bigger Thomas.

Bigger Thomas, then, goes to meet his girl friend Bessie Mears with the plan to visit secret place to consume the bliss of their youth in the company Bessie Mears. They go to different places and enjoy for sometime one day, eventually, they go to abandoned building to hide them. In the midnight Bigger Thomas rapes Bessie Mears. He commits a crime there again. He begin to suspect Bessie Mears whether she reveal his secret hiding and his where about there. The intensity of suspicion become terrifying the psyche of Bigger Thomas. Then, he plans to kill his girl friend Bessie Mears. He kills her with the brick in her slumber in night in that very abandoned house. After killing his girl friend Bessie Mears in that abandoned house, Bigger Thomas is tensed with fear and horror. Grotesque image and the crime of killing begins to haunt and strike his mind. He neither dares to flee nor can he remain in that abandoned house because of the grip of tension, horror, terror and crime. Bigger Thomas throws the dead body of Bessie Mears through the window of that very abandoned house and surrendered with to the police authority. He accepted that he committed crime one after another before the police authority. Finally, Bigger Thomas is sentenced to death for his heinous crime.

In this way, the novel *Native Son* is about gothic elements. The central character of the novel Bigger Thomas is attributed with Gothic psyche who commits crime one after another. He is ravaged by the fear and horror throughout the novel who moves from one place to another place to hide his crime. He can never lie himself what crime he did. In this way, this novel *Native Son* is a novel about horror and terror; hence Gothic element is prevalent in the novel.

III. *Native Son* as a Gothic Novel

This research has explored how Bigger Thomas, the central character of the novel *Native Son*, is attributed with Gothic traits, how he is a victim of Gothic psyche, how he suffers from Gothic fear and terror, why he commits crime one after the another, what he does to get rid up of his crime and how he is destined to surrender before police personnel for his crime at length of the novel.

Native Son by Richard Wright is full of Gothic elements which moves around Bigger Thomas' turmoil state of mind after he commits a crime by murdering his white master's daughter Mary Dalton. He murders her without any deliberation after raping her in her intoxicated situation right after their visit from a restaurant in midnight. He places pillow approaches over there in Mary Dalton's bed room. Being frenzied by horror and terror of crime, Bigger Thomas rushes to his black girlfriend Bessie Mears' room with Mary Dalton's purse and money. Bessie Mears suspects him for his unusual behavior in her room who asks him form where he brought the huge amount of money. He narrates her about his crime and the source of money. He immediately comes to surmise that Bessie Mears' may ruin his life by revealing about his crime and whereabouts if she gets bribe. So he murders Bessie Mears' too. But Bigger Thomas cannot breathe in ease and finally gets arrested by police authority for his heinous crime. He is sentenced to death at length. In this regard, this novel is full with Gothic elements.

In this way, this research has proven how Bigger Thomas is attributed with Gothic traits, how he is a victim of Gothic psyche, how he suffers from Gothic fear and terror, why he commits crime one after the another, what he does to get rid of his crime and how he is destined to surrender before police authority for his crime at length of the novel.

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