

Chapter I. Introduction to Richard Wright's *Native Son* as an African- American Fiction

This dissertation on Richard Wright's *Native Son* aspires to examine the hitherto conception of black identity formulated and practiced in the white governed society. Through critical examination of the text, this research makes a comprehensive study of black's position in the then society, by which their activities are postulated.

African American culture which emerged from slavery was not solely based on African tradition. African American culture evolved through creolization. African Americans succeeded to retain their tradition and reform their past culture through creolization in which more than two people interact taking the characteristics of other culture. Elements of African tradition were interacted with religion and language of the Euro-American culture through music, song, folklore, myth, magic and so on. So mixing up the elements of African American tradition with the Euro-American culture is known as African American culture. For black people in the United States, this cultural creolization has involved two complex and dynamic aspects. First, among African Americans themselves a creolization process developed as Africans were captured from different places and from different cultural backgrounds, and were forced to live together under the conditions of slave trade and slavery. It was a process of mutual exchange where synthesis took place. Secondly, almost simultaneously, this dynamic mixture of African culture was interacting and exchanging with Euro-American cultures, where they were themselves varied because of the different national identities and cultural patterns of the oppressive slave traders and plantation owners.

For the African Americans, art was an important part of their way of life and was closely associated with everyday activities. They created their art as an instrument by which they contacted the spirit using super-natural forces. They did so to overcome the danger of their environment and to express their religion. They believed in a life force which almighty powers in the world give life to every creation. They even believed in the dead and their living force through certain ritual performances. As Africans were inspired by rituals they also believed in their carved sculptures which served as a medium for access to the spiritual world to link between god and men.

Due to transportation around four million people from Africa to North America and the Caribbean Islands over a period of almost four centuries by the slave traders, they became homeless and separated from their tribes and families where they were enslaved in a new world. Though they had brought a rich heritage of Africa and other aspects of cultural life such as sculpture, African languages, traditional African rituals, all practices were prohibited and penalized. But music, song, folklore and folk tales, dances flourished among them and practiced by which it became their culture.

Language is one part of African American culture. African Americans were not intelligent enough to learn and to speak the English language at first. So they spoke the pidgin English. It is learnt that English spoken by African Americans ties to African language, i.e. Creole. The Creole language like Gullah or Pidgin English which is still spoken in parts of the United States of America today that reflects the pieces of the African culture. Not an inability to learn the English language, they survived during the period of slavery.

Modernity influences their lives greater than any other movement. This concept of modernity opens up a new way for the African Americans to subvert the

post- slavery tradition. They seek much more freedom from the masters which becomes possible due to modern attitudes.

As the first civilization to modernize the west leads to the acquisition of the culture of modernity, which has influenced other countries as Huntington opines: “The increased interaction among modern societies may not generate a common culture but it does facilitate the transfer of techniques, integration, and practices from one society to another with a speed and to a degree that were impossible in the traditional world” (69). Huntington opines that not all countries follow the process of modernization and Westernization in the similar way because Westernization refers to the emulation of the Western culture, where as modernization refers to only the embracing of modern technology and knowledge. Anyway, the concept of modernity has provided a broader space for the poor people and countries to decide in a free and liberal manner. As a result, the African Americas feel now much freer as to seek their new identity that has been possible only due to the influence of modernity.

New attitudes towards religion, with the Church diminished, and a desire for personal freedom induced desire for sexual freedoms, which was ultimately accepted by large sectors of the Western World. Theories of free love and un-inhibited sex were touched by the radicals only later in the 1960s.

African Americans began to assert their identity revolting against white dominant groups from the period of slavery. This is commonly known as ‘slave narratives’ which were the auto-biographies written by black slaves who either escaped the brutality of slavery or had been freed. A large number of slave narratives, including Fredrick Douglas’s *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass (1861)*, were published between 1830s and 1865. Some of such narratives which were published during this period attacked the institutionalized oppression of the black people under

slavery. The novels like William Will Brown's *Garich* and Martin Delahey's *Black, the Huts of Americans* that fuelled the anti-slavery movement and advocated for freedom, have been categorized abolitionist movement. It was a kind of resistance for their liberalization and cultural identity.

Even after the abolition of slavery in 1865, the whites adopted the tradition of plantation in order to simplify and defamiliarise the exploitation and oppression of the blacks. Therefore, the black intellectuals, being aware of this fact, began to attack the post-reconstruction repression, discrimination and segregation. *Appointed* (1894) by Walter Stowers and Willian H. Anderson was the first novel to deal with "peonage, convict labor, lynching, disfranchisement, and segregation" (Bone32).

Another tendency became apparent in the period between 1890 and 1920, before the Harlem Renaissance, when black novels invariably took a revolutionary stance. This novel like Charles Chestnunt's *The Hindered Hands* contains an element of protest, for which they have been typically categorized as novels of accommodation and assimilation.

In the midst of his great change emerged the New Negroes' Movement which was named after Alain Locke's essay "The New Negro", founding document of the Harlem Renaissance, modern art of African American Locke wanted the elevation of the black artists and intellectuals whose achievements should be seen as equal to that of the white writers and artists. The New Negro movement became all concerned Africans' common movement and the artist like Langstan Hughes were inspired to expose the life and culture of the black people in a way that had never been done before. Thus, it shows that the black Renaissance Art of 1920s was self conscious and racially rhetorical. It interpreted the Negro and his cultural values in white America. This makes the literature what is popularly known as protest writing.

African American writers and people began to understand that racist discrimination was a product of capitalism and imperialism. This feeling encourages them to be leaders for revolution and finally pervaded in work of many writers such as Richard Wrights who remarks:

It means that the Negro writer must learn to view the life of a Negro living in New York's Harlem or Chicago's South side with the consciousness that one sixth of the earth surface belongs to the working class. It means that the Negro woman hoeing cotton in the south and the man who lollin swivel chairs in Wall Street and take the fruits of their toil. (56)

Civil Right Movement with its underlying cultural goal of assimilation was aborted by reactionary repression. Blacks underwent in the form of assassination, imprisonment and racist ideological attacks. This movement had been the hope of large and developing number of aspirations to middle class life. When it failed, many of these young, middle class youths formed the social base for a new nationalist movement against American whites. This had a political aspect as well as a cultural aspect. 'Black Power' became relying cry for a new nationalist who began to defect from the Civil Rights Movement, particularly after the death of Malcolm X and assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. In this context, Black Arts Movement was born. This movement desired and fought for full integration into mainstream essentially reformist "a cultural revolution in art and ideas" (98). This Cultural Revolution was to be rooted in the new aesthetic, the black Aesthetics.

The writer Larry Neal articulates its purpose as:

The motive behind the black aesthetic is the destruction of the white thing, the destruction of the white ideas, and white ways of looking at

the world. The new aesthetic is mostly predicted on an ethics which asks the question, whose vision of the world is finally more meaningful, ours or the white oppressor's? What is truth? or more. Precisely, whose truth shall we express, that of the oppressed or of the oppressors? (27)

After the rise of the black aesthetics black writers fought for their equal status in White dominated literary mainstream. They were on their way to establish a literary world of their own.

Like this their revolution for their identity became the major part of mainstream and even how their culture such as Jazz, Blues is currently being the part of world's most popular music and finally culture of the whole world.

African American literature refers to literature written by Americans of African descent. Although they were certainly slaves writing in the early days of slavery and colonization, the African American literary tradition began to take root in the seventeenth century, when former slaves such as Phyllis Whitley come to the attention of larger white audience. Since these early beginnings African American writing has taken on its own characteristics and unique perspective.

The primary characteristics of African American literature are that it speaks to the African American experience in the United States, a country with a history of slavery and segregation laws. Because of this focus, many literary works are about individuals struggling to understand themselves in a white dominated society. Some African American writers made 'fringe' characters such as criminals, tricksters and those of non-mainstream sexuality the primary protagonists in their novels. These characters highlight the marginal lace of African Americans in society. Examples of

novels with fringe characters are Richard Wright's novel *Native Son* and Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple*.

Much African America literature has an oral component that comes from the tradition of slave spirituals and poetry. In addition, the rhythms and language of black sermons, as well as elements such as repetition and circularity are frequently used by African American poets such as Langston Hughes, Amiri Baraka and Gwendolyn Brooks used many of their elements in their poetry.

In addition to oral storytelling, music also has a clear influence on African America literature. Blues and Jazz influenced both the content of African America literature and the style. Ralph Ellison's novella "Sonny's Blues" has a heroin – addicted blue artist as the central character. The non-linear and improvisational style and structure of Jazz music influenced African America authors such as Toni Morrison, whose works have structures in a non- linear way, create novels that seem free for and composed spontaneously.

Since issues such as slavery and civil rights have had such an enormous impact on African America life, these issues have also been prominent in literature. Many African American authors have not only covered twentieth century civil right issues but also used their creative skills to their literary texts such as Morrison's *Beloved*, a popular novel that explores a slave woman's trauma and experience of motherhood.

As we know that literature is the mirror of society, the African American literature also exposes the harsh reality of African American people and white dominant society and their own too.

As an African American writer Richard Wright spent his whole life for the African American society involving in literary career raising the Black issues against

the white governed society through literary voices. During his childhood he had faced terrible hardships such as lonely living with other family being detached by his father and bearing his mother's chronic illness and finally death. Despite sporadic schooling he became avid reader and gradually became a member of Communist Party and started his literary career publishing articles and poetry in numerous left wing publications.

Richard Wright is arguably the most influential African American writer of the twentieth century. He stood astride the midsection of that century as a battering ram, paving the way for the black writers who followed him such as Ralph Ellison, Chester Himes, James Baldwin, Gwendolyn Brooks, Lorraine Hansberry, John Williams and others.

He also spent his rest of the life in Paris, involved at American University, Paris. There they became permanent expatriate and tried with Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Wright published existentialist book *The Outsider* (1955).

Most importantly, in most of Richard Wright's texts we can clearly find his insistence on black identity. His writings attempt to foreground the hierarchical structure of the American society under which identity is shaped and constructed. Through the protagonist, representative Blacks Bigger Thomas Wright displays the struggle of Blacks and whites are equal. This project also studies Bigger's up-bringing in white society from where he acknowledges Black identity living in utter poverty in south of Chicago.

Richard Wright's widespread creations *Uncle Tom's Children*, *Black Boy*, *Native Son and Outsiders* (1993) are milestones for the African American fictions. *Uncle Tom's Children*, a collection of short stories that addresses the social realities faced by American blacks.

Richard Wright's African American novel *Native Son* (1940s) tells the story of twenty years old Bigger Thomas, an African American living in utter poverty, lives in one room with his brother Buddy, his sister Vera and their mother. The apartment has only one room, which forces Bigger and Buddy to turn their back to avoid the shame of sitting Vera and their mother dress. Bigger lived in Chicago the Southern side ghetto in the 1930s. Bigger was always getting into trouble as a youth but upon receiving a job at home of the Dalton's a rich, white family; he experienced a realization of his identity. He thinks he accidentally killed a white woman, runs from the police, rapes and kills the girl-friend and is then caught and tried "I didn't want to kill", Bigger shouted. "But what I killed for, I am! It must've been pretty deep in me to make me kill" (391-392).

Wright gets inside the head of "Brute Negro" Bigger revealing his feelings, thoughts and point of view as he commits crime and is confronted with racism, violence and debasement. The novel's treatment of Bigger and his motivation confirms to the conventions of literary naturalism.

While not apologizing for Bigger's crimes Wright is sympathetic to the systematic inevitability behind them. The novel is powerful statement about racial inequality and social injustice so deep that it becomes nearly impossible to determine where societal conditionings end and free will begins. As Bigger's lawyer points out that there is no escape from this destiny for his client or any other black Americans since they are the necessary products of the society that formed them and told them since birth who exactly supposed to be "no American Negro exists", Wright once wrote "who does not have his private Bigger Thomas Living in his skull"(92).

Since the publication of *Native Son* in 1940, critics have raised questions about its heavy preoccupation with violence to establish African American identity.

Robert Jam Buttler has studied the use of violence in *Native Son*. He writes:

In an early review of the book, Malcolm Cowley, then a strong defender of Wright, nevertheless worried about “The authors deep sense of the inequities heaved upon his race “would result in his” revenging himself by a whole series of symbolic murders” in his fiction David Daiches complained in a subsequent review that the novel’s thesis was seriously undercut because the killing of Mary Dalton was so “violent an unusual” a melodramatic action which was to bizarre to verify the book’s claims about the general condition for blacks in America.(47)

Buttler writes that the violence is gratuitous and compulsive because the root of the violence is never examined. The root is rage.

Likewise, James Baldwin writes in his newspaper, *The New York Times*, *Baldwin states:*

Much of Wright’s work is a “murderous bitterness. It is one of the severest criticisms that can be leveled against his work. The root is rage. It is the rage almost literary the howl, of a man who is being castrated thus, when in Wright’s pages a Negro male is found hacking a white woman to death, the very gusto with which this is done, and the great attention paid to the details of physical destructing reveal a terrible attempt to break out of the cage in which the American imagination has imprisoned him for so long. (2-3)

James Baldwin attempts to show the rage of face as the primary instinct of Bigger's act of violence rather than the crime parse.

By delineating some of the acts of Bigger's violence and comparing them to the acts of theorization by Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*, the paper demonstrates some of the advocates that stem from an approach that interprets Richard Wright's text through the framework offered by theories of anti-racism and African American studies. Wright makes it clear that Bigger's violence stems from his internalization of the social taboos upholding Jim Crow. He shows the extent to which Jim Crow demands to the point where both sides trusted the other and their mutual hatred was pathological.

Emphasizing on the racial discrimination and color persecution, Edward Margolis sympathetically analyses Wright's frame of mind in these words:

Wright learnt as a black living in the South that the rules, principles and institutions of white American did not apply to him...he endured forging for himself his own ethics, his own morality, indeed his own personality him little security or identity. This has since been called his existentialism. French existentialists after the Second World War seized upon Wright's works to support their own philosophy but his views were formed long before he knew the meaning of the term. (68)

Edward Margolis analyses Wright's frame of mind that the rules and principals of white Americans didn't match to black Americans and he advocates his own ethics and morality for Black community. Wright wants to create a distinct identity, philosophy of blacks.

Similarly, Nick Aaron Ford more closely observes the novel *Native Son* concerning Wright's use of realism: "Wright's major purpose in this novel was to

show that social and economic Barriers against race lead to grave injustices toward racial minorities and that those injustices so distort character and personality growth that criminal monstrosities, such as Bigger are produced” (28).

Though the afore-mentioned critics have observed and interpreted the novel from different critical perspectives, none of the critic has observed it from the perspective of African American cultural studies. Without a proper study of this novel from the perspective of cultural studies, the meaning of the novel remains incomplete. Therefore, the present researcher proposes to carry out the research from the different angle showing the departure from above critics of Wright.

The construction of psychology on the basis of prevailing and long dominated white culture no longer becomes effective block for the assertion of black identity. It is because though the psychology of the characters is shaped and manipulated with the notion of white supremacy, his evolvment in killing white people displays innermost desire of subverting the myth of supposed black position in the society.

To wrap up, this research work has been divided into three major chapters. The first section of the research has included the brief introduction to the project, writing technique of the novelist in general, some critical views on the novel, literature review of the novel, departure made by this research from those critics, the hypothesis of this research, a brief introduction to the tool and outlining of the whole research work. The second chapter is all about reading the text from the theoretical modality that is from the African American (cultural) studies. The third or final chapter of the research contains the conclusion of the whole work.

Chapter II . Quest for African American Cultural Identity in Wright's *The Native Son*

African American history is the history of the oppressed, penalized and paralyzed black victims. The genesis of African American songs and music primarily the outcry and pang of suppression and oppression marks a significant cultural heritage in the history of African American culture. Songs and music is the creative, powerful cultural heaven through which they could revive, reconstruct and restrengthen their past hence, revive their identity. Among them the most popular, creative writing and unusual historical music 'Jazz' is inextricably inter-woven with many forms of the Blues. It could assuage them though momentarily and provide them solace from their age long segregation and torture.

To anticipate the appellation 'African American', which may seem more or less obvious and natural today, was one of the several paths or reactions to the failure of reconstruction to fully integrate former slaves and their offspring as American citizens and to the new consensus concerning the past in the dominant culture in which slavery was depicted benign and civilizing. The idea of returning to Africa has been a constant theme amongst blacks from the first landing of slaves on the American continent. Another alternative, later in its development, also involved emigration but to Kansas the North to Canada or the free states, rather than to Africa. Ron Eyerman states: "Such a move in the later decades of the 1800s would not necessarily exclude a new identity as an African American, but would not necessarily include it either, it would, however, involve an openness to new forms of identification and the attempt to leave others behind" (4). *Native Son* examines black white relationship and its effect on the interior level of the blacks *Native Son*, the product of slavery, segregation, poverty and disenfranchisement, is many things: a

complicated anger, the carefree indulgence of the now, a marginalized populations' assertion of selfhood, of cultural vitality and artistic pride, the hope for synthesis through conflict.

Richard Wright's creation conveys strong voice against the anti- black sentimentality differently from his other contemporaries. In order to study the characters of Richard Wright Paul Gilroy suggests: "It is important to appreciate that the violence of Wright's characters is not a simple product of their maleness violence articulates blackness to a distinct mode of liked masculinity, but it is also a factor in what distinguishes blacks from whites" (174).

Long – silenced history of color discrimination has driven Bigger and his family to face the oppression, exploitation, poverty and psychological break down. A vast ocean of material prosperity in segregated racist society opens the door of success for whites and blacks like Bigger are compelled to live in extreme poverty and disabled life. In 'Fear' Wright says:

Goddamn! Bigger whispered fiercely, whirling and kicking out his leg with all strength of his body. The force his movement shook the rat loose and it sailed through the air and struck a wall. Instantly, it rolled over and leaped again. Bigger lodged and the rat landed against a table leg. Which clenched teeth, Bigger held the skillet, he was afraid to hurl it, fearing that he might miss. The rat squeaked and turned and ran in a narrow circle, looking for a place to hide it leaped again past Bigger and scurried on dry rasping feet to one side of the box and then to the other, searching for the whole.(3-4)

It is obvious that living in a rat –infested house creates bitterness bubbling up like blood. Humiliation of home-relief, and aimless of life of Bigger is controlled and

defined by his hatred and his fear. And later, his fear drives him to murder and his hatred to rape. In the deeper level rat is symbolically assumed as an invasion to be killed. The rat is entrapped in the apartment as the family is, both are eating nutritionally deficient 'garbage; none may escape and both are ultimately vulnerable to vicious murder. The relationship between the Thomas family and rat is defined as "kill or be killed" (12). Ma warns Bigger that if he lacks the manhood to kill the vicious rat, the rat will "cut their veins" while they asleep (12). This relationship brilliantly expresses Wright's perception of American race relation as evidence in Bigger Thomas. Bigger must kill whites or be killed. Whites must kill Bigger or be killed; such dislocated position of Bigger causes the feelings of aggression and violence in his life. Bigger's exuberant awareness to destroy white supremacy and establish his own space in the American mainstream and his strong sense of hatred gets reflected in these words: "Bigger took a shoe pounded the rat's head, crushing it cursing hysterically: you sonofabitch!" (10). Thus, his anger and hatred psychologically gets way out.

Racial attitudes are not ancestral inheritance rather they are social construct. These unjust attitudes are the catalyst to develop Bigger Thomas his protest against the authority. The rigid society of racist people on the other hand is against him and his race. It seems that the racists are plotting against Bigger to deprive him completely from the opportunities. The authority, the media and moreover the social treatments stand against him. The pathetic voice of Bigger shows that as a black boy, he is helpless; he is an outsider, only a prisoner.

Every time I think about I feel like somebody's poking a red hot iron down by throat. Goddamn it, look! We live here and they live there. We blacks and they white. They got things and we ain't. They do

things and we can't. It's just like living in jail. Half the time I feel like I am on the outside of the world peeping in through a knot-hole in the fence. (23)

Bigger's life takes a significant turn when he lands his first job as a chauffeur for a rich white Dalton family. Mr. Dalton seems to have a Janus like face. On the other hand, he does not allow the blacks to use his property outside the ghetto and, on the other he prides himself on giving unprivileged colored folks a chance. He donates millions of dollars to pro-black institution and schools, but does not employ the youths that are educated, thereby intensifying their frustration and compounding his complicity in their plight. He only employs uneducated blacks like Bigger as chauffeur but fails to develop a genuine understanding of their economic and social conditions. Mrs. Dalton, his wife, is physically as well as morally blind. She also seems to be sympathizing with the blacks but does not really realize the necessity of change in their way of life. Their immature daughter, Mary, lacks fixed identity. Though she advocates for social equality, i.e. equality of whites and blacks, she cannot rise from her own class and therefore, becomes the subject of Bigger's hatred:

Everything was all right, except that girl. She worried him. She might cause him to lose his job if she kept talking about unions. She was a funny girl, all right. Never in his life had he met anyone like her. She puzzled him. She acted like . . . Well he didn't know exactly what she did act like. In all of the white women he had met, mostly on jobs and act relief stations, there was always a certain coldness and reserve, they stood their distance and spoke to him from a far. (60)

Though Bigger finds Mary different from other white women he has met, she also cannot be an exception for him. She symbolizes the white oppression and intensifies his hate and fear.

Being black, Bigger Thomas's family lives with poverty. Time and again Mrs. Thomas alerts Bigger to do something for him or his whole family. Otherwise, they will face more critical depression in their life. Mrs. Thomas says : "Bigger sometimes I wonder why I birthed you. We would not have to live in this garbage dump if you had any manhood in you. I cannot last many more years like this" (11-13).

It obviously states the miserable condition of the Thomas family and it also brings us to knowledge of Bigger's necessity to do some work for his family.

Louis Tyson suggests about folk culture in her book *Critical Theory Today* Tyson remarks: "The folk motifs includes a wide range of character types and folk practices and creates a sense of continuity with African and African American past... Folk practices include, for example singing work songs, hymns and the blues..." (386). In this novel also in order to heal her pain Mrs. Thomas sings a song which reflects as a part of African American culture.

Life is like a mountain railroad
 With an engineer that's brave
 We must make the run successful
 From the cradle to the grave. . . (14)

The opening of the book provides sufficient evidence to show the universal approach to humanity. The mention of skin color is the only information given to link the Thomas family with Negroes. That the condition of their living is appalling is clearly described, but not in terms of Negro destitution compared to white opulence. This may be implied, but the story opens very much as a psychological study. In the

claustrophobic atmosphere of the shock, violence erupts quickly; animosities sizzle “their conspiracy against shame” dominates the dressing ritual in the morning.

Bigger is a child of this confined and confining world. He joins in the killer chase for the rat, trapped in the room with a sub human frenzy.

He kicks splintered box out of the way and the flat black body of the rat lay exposed, its long yellow tusks showing distinctly. Bigger takes a shoe and pounds the rat’s head, crushing it, cursing hysterically: “You sonofabitch!” (10)

Bigger is a product of a dislocated society. He is a dispossessed and disinherited man. He lives amid the greatest possible plenty on earth and he is looking and feeling for a way out. He is an American because he is a Native son; he is also a Negro nationalist, because he is not allowed to live as an American. What makes Bigger’s social consciousness most complex is the fact that he is hovering unwanted between two worlds- the powerful America and his own stunted place, what Wright calls it a “No Man’s Land” (xxiv). In a conversation with his fellow black, Bigger Thomas states: “I’ll could fly a plane if I had a chance” Bigger said. “If you wasn’t black and if you had some money and if they’d let you go to that aviation school, you could fly a plane” Gus said. They don’t let us do nothings. . . The White folks” (20-22). Before starting his journey to search for the job in white world, he is over-powered with the sense of fear and emptiness. The stereotypes and expectations of a racist society compel him to the victims of haunted miseries, hatred and great insult. Bigger wishes to get equality, self-respect, security and the senses of completeness. Therefore, he considers, “He would take his knife and his gun; it would make him feel that he was the equal of them, give him a sense of completeness” (48). All other areas of the planet excluding Harlem, but including Lake Michigan, the ditches of the US Army and the entire sky are parts of what Bigger considers to be “alien, white

world”(49). He tries to maintain the idea that the white world is alien and that there is a fixed barrier between his space and the white space. Wright vividly describes Bigger’s attitude towards the white world while Bigger is walking through quiet and spacious white neighborhood:

The houses he passed were huge, lights glowed softly in windows. The streets were empty, save for an occasional car that zoomed past on swift rubber tires. This was a cold and distant world, a world of white streets carefully guarded. He could feel a pride, a certainty, and a confidence in these streets and houses. (49)

He could feel the sense of security, pride, certainty and confidence in this way: “This was not his world; he had never been foolish in thinking that he would have liked it” (49-50). Bigger’s profound love for his mother has no meaning in the white world. His aspiration to be a native son hood is merely a dream. In reality his native son has been transformed into non native or dislocated.

Bigger attempts to define himself through the values and expectations imposed upon him. Mary’s sympathetic attitude shown to him sounds like the American dream, which remains merely a dream having no desirable expectation. Wright describes the freedom seeking desires of Bigger in his way:

He felt something in her over and above the fear she inspired in him. She responded to him as if he were human, as if he lived in the same world as she. And she had never felt that before in a white person. But why? Was this some kind of game? The guarded feelings of freedom he had while listening to her was tangled with the hard fact that she was white and rich, a part of the world of people who told him what he could and could not do. (74)

Mary stimulates Bigger to provoke his inner capacities which is still hidden at the core of his personality. This is the first time he has ever felt himself as a human. Before this he was supposed to be a subhuman being as a black ape. But he is also aware of the grim reality of the power of the whites as rich and powerful. Mary's sympathetic attitudes later on assist to bolster his self-realization for the fulfillment of his final existence.

When Mary introduces Bigger with Jan, with full of enthusiasm Jan shows sense of morality and honesty to Bigger. Bigger was so surprised to know the mysterious nature of Mary and Jan. Though Jan believes in the quality of all men paying no need to racial stereotypes, Mary's soft laughing and hand shaking of Jan with him is making him nervous. Bigger uses a defense strategy in order to hide his reality of black skin Wright painfully projects Bigger's fragile image in these lines.

Goddamn her soul to hell! Was she laughing at him? Were they making fun of him? What was it that they wanted? Why didn't they leave him alone? He was no bothering them. Yes, anything could happen with people like there. His entire mind and body were painfully concentrated into a single sharp point of attention. He felt foolish sitting behind the steering like this and letting a white like this and letting a white man hold his hand. What would people passing along the street think? (76)

Bigger is very conscious of his black skin; he becomes white man like Jan has created such prejudices in the society. They may not despise him but they have made him feel his black skin by just standing there looking at him, one holding his hand and the other smiling. He now realizes that he has no physical existence. He feels that the badge of shame which he knows is attached to his black skin. It is a shadowy region, a

‘No Man’s Land’, the ground that separates the white world from the black. His naked and transparent existence comes to his mind like a flood of remembrance.

The very structure of the society has created boundaries between the white and the blacks based on the color of skin, economic status and idiosyncrasies of their life style, language and thoughts. Such dichotomies have placed poor and rootless blacks to the world of disorder and chaos: chaotic and disorder life of Bigger forces him not to accept the rules, regulations, morality and humanity offered to him by white folks like Mary and Jan:

Mary pushed herself in wedging tightly between him and the outer door of car. There were white people to either side of him; he was sitting between two vast white looming walls. Never in his life had he been so close to a white woman. He smelt the odor of her hair and felt the soft pressure of her thigh against his own. (77)

Rigid barriers of the society have marginalized the blacks in the ladder of social hierarchy. Wright centralizes Bigger by placing him between Mary and Jan with a view to reverse the social hierarchy. But at the same time, they make Bigger suffocated and sexually stimulated. It creates further disorder in his circumstances by imposing sexual imbalance to his physical existence. Though Mary knows that blacks are sexually immoral or beasts, she sexually stimulates Bigger which ultimately leads her to death bed.

Long prevailing system of racist society has created the rituals, manners, politics, ethics and humanity for the benefit of white people, disregarding Bigger’s values, assumptions, inherent qualities and freedom which has racially dislocated him. As a result, he constructs a new world of him where he can fulfill the self realization of his real being.

Many reform-minded whites, who were committed to racial equality in the 1930s such as members of the NAACP and the urban League, resembled the white humanitarians in the *Native Son*. The Daltons exemplified white philanthropists who were concerned with bettering the life of black Americans. Although the Daltons believe that their desire to improve conditions of African Americans is benevolent, it has harmful repercussions for Bigger. For instance, Mrs. Dalton informs her husband, “I think it’s important emotionally that he feels free to trust his environment” (48). Mrs. Dalton regards Bigger as an experiment, as part of a larger project. Wright asserts:

If there had been one person in the Dalton household who viewed Bigger as a human being, the crime could have been solved within one half hour . . . The one piece of incriminating evidence which would have solved the ‘murder mystery’ was Bigger’s humanity and the Daltons (detective) Britten, and the newspaper man could not see the living clue of Bigger’s humanity under their very eyes. (*Atlantic Monthly* 828)

Often the social reformer’s approaches, like those of Mrs. Dalton robbed African Americans of their identity and individuality. The *Native Son* views the actions of white reformers as maintaining the segregation of blacks in American society. Wright magnifies the exclusion of blacks through the isolation of Bigger and his race. For instance, Bigger is baffled by Peggy. The Daltons’ white cook, who informs him that “[Mr. Dalton] does a lot for your people. He gave five million dollars to colored schools” (68). Mr. and Mrs. Dalton’s charity is ambiguous in that their efforts to help “colored” schools also has the effect of reinforcing segregation in education. Mrs. Dalton is very eager for Bigger to return to school because she thinks education offers

an avenue of escape from the ghetto. However, the young man concludes that she “wanted him to do the things she felt that she should have wanted to do” (48) Bigger chafes under Mrs. Dalton’s tutelage when he realizes that she is imposing her social norms on him.

In *Native son*, the Negrotarians appear ignorant as well as naive. Their commitment to the improvement of racial relations sometimes over simplifies African American culture and its importance to American culture. Mary Dalton, the young debutante, is preoccupied with rebelling against her parents’ upper-class values by dating a young communist, Jan Erlone. Mary believes that by experiencing Bigger’s culture and sharing barbecue with him, she will understand the plight of African Americans. Mary tells Bigger, “Look Bigger. We [Mary and Jan] want [to go to] one of these places where colored people eat, not one of these show places” (69). She fails to realize that by pushing herself into Bigger’s world she is in turn pushing him away.

In the novel, Wright explains that white Americans’ stereotyping and negative expectations of black Americans left few opinions for black youths. Wright’s portrayal of liberal-minded whites in *Natives son* reflects a recurring theme. The African American race “stand[s] in no man’s land” (30), as much exiled by northern Negrotarians promoting egalitarianism as by the southern caste system. Wright attacks latent societal racism and targets Negrotarians who attempt to improve the plight of poor urban blacks with egalitarianism. Wright proposes that, unconsciously and unintentionally, many northern whites physically and psychologically isolated blacks from American society.

Moreover, Wright uncovers the alienation of working class African Americans from white humanitarians. Likewise, there was also an estrangement of working class African Americans from black leaders of biracial, middle –class organizations. Mr.

Dalton exemplifies the Negrotarian need for affirmation of good deed. He boasts to Bigger: “I want you to know why . . . I’m hiring you. You see, Bigger, I am a supporter of the National Association for the Advancement of colored people” (54-55). However, Bigger is unfamiliar with the organization. In this instance, Wright draws attention to the NAACP, its interracial leadership, and how it often alienates the lower social and economic classes of African American. Furthermore, during the great depression, unemployment among urban blacks remained disproportionately high and white humanitarians spread their philanthropy to include the low-incomes urban African Americans. Ralph Ellison, in his review of *The Native Son*, concludes that the depression created a “working class awareness” that had a “sobering” effect of black writers (36). Economic equality aligned some black writers to Negrotarians who hoped to better mankind through economic and social reform.

An important passage in the novel, highlighting the isolation of African Americans from white social reformers, is Bigger’s awareness of his blackness upon meeting the young communist Jan Erlone. Wright explains: “Bigger was very conscious of his black skin and there was in him a prodding conviction that Jan and men like him had made it so that he would be conscious of that black skin” (55). Unintentionally and paradoxically, Mary and Jan emphasize Bigger’s color by minimizing its importance. Jan and Mary are the first whites to act and react to Bigger as though his blackness is insignificant. Their behavior is alien and unsettling, placing Bigger in unfamiliar territory. Even when invited, Bigger is reluctant to cross the boundaries established by white society. Bigger, like many working-class African Americans, exists on the fringes of white society.

Although the narrator’s observations are clothed in layers of abstract, metaphorical language, recent critics have had no difficulty in accepting those

observations as the straight forward articulation of Bigger's thoughts. In the passage where Bigger's thoughts are actually transcribed rather than translated, however, the distortion inherent in the narrator's rendering of those thoughts is fully apparent. The introduction of Bigger's language is usually signaled by a sudden shift to the short, choppy sentences that characterize his awkward relationship with the master language. Where the narrator's voice is defined by a smooth flowing prose style that relies on the complex use of balance and antitheses, compound constructions, and periodic sentences, Biggers voice is marked by a form of halting expression that frequently deteriorates into stuttering repetition. Bigger's uncultivated speech is often framed by the imagistic, lyrical voice of narrator. "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 fry" (89). It is only in juxtaposition with the final sentence of this passage that the awkward diction and hesitant articulation of the lines preceding that sentences are revealed to the venter in all their clumsiness. Unlike the earlier sentences, the final sentences- - with its internal rhyme, alliteration, and controlled imagery- - has an ease and facility with language that expresses its author's relaxed association with words.

Bigger's awkward relationship to written language is expressed most clearly in his composition of the kidnap note. In the passage describing Bigger's act of creation, the narrative assumes his voice; the crude diction and phrasing of the note is uncomfortably emphasized by the linguistic deterioration of the narrative itself.

He swallowed with dry throat. Now, what would be the best kind of note? He thought I want you to put ten thousand . . . No; that would not do. Not "I". It would be better to say "we". We got your daughter, he

printed slowly in big round letters. That was better . . . Now, tell him to go to the police. Don't go to the police if you want your daughter black safe. Now; that ain't good. (166)

Bigger's painful relationship with the masters' language assaults the reader's ear as s/he hears the broken English of Bigger's kidnap note reflected in the dissonant tones of narrative itself. The sudden instruction of the narrator's voice that follows may be an attempt to translate Bigger's feelings into the sophisticated prose to which he has no access; in that, however, the narrators intrusion wrests the pen from Bigger's hand and undercuts any authority he might have had: "His . . . with excitement; it seemed that he could feel each strand of hair upon his head . . . There was in his stomach a slow, cold, vast rising movement, as though he held within the embrace of his bowels the swing of planets through space" (167). The magnitude of narrators metaphorical vehicle and his skillful control of language contrast painfully with the limited scope of Bigger's action and unsophisticated way in which he uses words; thus the passage actually subverts Bigger's authority while appearing to validate it.

After killing Mary Bigger hides him in a room where he finds miserable condition of the black family and the children whose psyche is sure to be decayed, Bigger sees:

A room in which were two small iron beds with sheets dirty and crumpled. In one bed sat three naked black children looking across the room to the other bed on which lay a man and a woman, both naked and black in the sunlight. There were quickly jerky movements on the bed where the man and woman lay, and three children were wathing. (285-86)

Due to the scarcity of rooms, black families are bound to live under such deplorable barbarian and animalistic circumstances that would make them lose their mental balance and lead their life to abnormality. It reminds him of his childhood memories he had seen things like that when he was a little boy sleeping five in a room. He also remembers the unspeakable brutality of the police shown to blacks when he was small. Wright says, “The police had come and driven him and his mother, his brother and sister out of a flat in a building which had collapsed two days after they had moved” (287-88). Such harsh upbringing and childhood memories intensify the degree of rebellion to his mind for the whites. The city is condemning houses in which Negroes live as being too old and too dangerous for habitation. He is well aware of the harsh reality that black people, even though they would not get good jobs, paid twice as much rate as whites for the same kind of flats:

Goddamn would he freeze trying to find a place in which to get warm?
How easy it would be for him to hide if he had the whole city in which to move about! They keep us bottled up here like wild animals, he thought. He knew that black people could not go outside of the Black Belt to rent a flat; they had to live on their side of the “Line”. No white in the sections where it had been decided that black people might live.
(288)

In the sub-zero of the cold winter night, Bigger thinks he will be freezing to death getting no warm room to live. Having known to the restrictions of his life, he reflects over the uncertainty of his life limited by racial prejudices, the fixed position ‘a wild animal’ granted by white society, and the fortune given by the whites are outer forces to shape his personality as a rebellion Negro. He is bound to revolt because his entire;

existence is shaped by the white society. He wishes to achieve authentic recognition by being rebellion to the cruel white society.

Through Bigger's responses to his family, Wright defines the nature of the culture which he confronts. Bigger had always felt isolated from his family but he non discovers that their lives were deeply involved with his and that through his actions he has brought shame and sorrow upon them. Moved by a sense that "[h]is family was a part of him, not only in blood, but in spirit" (277). Bigger consciously violates his own integrity to console his mother by promising to pray. Having received that promise Mrs. Thomas herself turns to pray; she turns not to god but to Mrs. Dalton, however the mother of the murderer and the mother of the murdered act out the central ritual of which destroyed their children. In a gross parody which exposes all that Wright objected to in the black church, Mrs. Thomas humbles herself on her knees at Mrs. Dalton's feet, renewing her submission to whites by offering to sell herself into slavery to save Bigger's life; "I will work for you the rest of my life!" (280) she cries out to Mrs. Dalton. In the black woman's calm acceptance of the black submission, Wright portrays the core of the single culture which trains blacks to accept powerlessness and slavery while it trains whites to assume a godlike power and control.

When Mrs. Thomas went down on her knees before Mrs. Dalton, Bigger felt violated (280), and Wright's criticism of America could be stated as a perception that America society encourages not richly human relations with the self and others but moral and psychological violation. As the primal urges which awaken Bigger at the start of Book three indicates, the moral and psychological were not abstract categories to Wright but expression of organic human needs, and the extent to which American life violates those needs is expressed through the metaphoric values of the murders of

Mary and Bessie. Bigger's relations with Bessie are more fully worked out than those with Mary, and in there we can see the connection between the violation of mind and spirit and violation of the body. The nature of relations of Bigger and Bessie can be simply stated: neither can treat the other as a person. Each is at best a convenience to his imagination, Bigger can relate to Bessie only through images of murderer or some other form of annihilation, as in the following passage:

As he walks beside her he feels that there are two Bessies: one a body that he has just had and wants badly again; the other is in Bessie's face; it asks question, it bargains and sales the other Bessie to advantage. He wishes he could clench his fist and swing his arm and blot out, kill, sweep away the Bessie on Bessie's face and leave the other helpless and yielding before him. He would then gather her up and put her in his chest, his stomach, some place deep inside him, always keeping her there even when he slept, ate, talked; keeping her there just to feel and know that she was his to have and hold whenever he wanted to.

Bigger cannot imagine relation with Bessie except in terms which deny her separate life; his killing her in the fitting climax of their relation. The failure of Bigger and Bessie is personal but their relation is also a comment on a culture which provides no base for their creative engagement with each other. Their relation appalls because it is presented as ordinary not abnormal. As such it appears to be a heavy criticism of black culture, yet with the scene in Bigger's cell in mind we can see it as a criticism of American culture, that unholy compound of black and white celebrated by Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Dalton. Bigger's rape and murder of Bessie are the product of American culture, and in then Bigger acts out the full implications of death of Mary. The sexuality brutality and above all the personal necessity of destroying another, so explicit in Bigger's dealings with Bessie, can be traced as well in his dealings with

Mary. Sexually relation between the races is wonderfully complex, but at their core is the absolute proscription of sexual union between a black man and a white woman. The denial to the black man of the white woman whom the white man can enjoy negates the black's humanity in the most destructive terms possible. The ease with which man can move from the denial of the humanity of another to a willingness to destroy that other's life is well known, and to Bigger Mary Dalton's life has a simple and clear meaning as he tells Max, "They kills for woman like her" (324).

Everything is conquered by the whites. The black feel just lost in one big white fog. The researcher further analyzes the crisis of identity of Bigger. *Native* son, only now the setting was the urban streets of Chicago, where blacks were still segregated and unable to participate fully in the social and economic lives of the city. Bigger and his friends liked to play a game called white. Here he and his friend were having this mock telephone conversation:

"Hello", Gus said

"Hello" Bigger said.

This is J.P. Morgan, "Bigger said; his eyes filled with mock adulation and respect.

"I want you to sell twenty thousand shares of U.S. steel in the market this morning," Gus said.

"At what price, suh?" Bigger asked.

"Aw, just demp'em at any price," Gus said with casual irritation.

"We're holding too much." "yessuh", Bigger said.

"And call me at the club at two this afternoon and tell me if the

President phoned," Gus said. "Yessuh, Mr. Morgan," Bigger said. (22)

After this imaginary conversation, Bigger says to Gus: “They don’t let us do anything.” Gus replies who”? And Bigger says “The White folks”. “You talk like you just now finding that out,” Gus said and Bigger replies in anger tone towards whites (21-22).

Throughout *Native Son*, Wright depicts popular culture as a major force in American racism, constantly bombarding citizens with images and ideas that reinforce the nation’s oppressive racial hierarchy. And the novel’s subtitle ‘Fear’, ‘Flight’ and ‘Fate’ is also related to the ever haunting mechanics of ‘gaze’ and ‘panoptican’, in Bigger’s life. As the plot unfolds, Bigger feels ‘watched’ and controlled even when white people are not present, as if white people invade his very insides. This sense of heightened by Buckley’s campaign slogan: “IF YOU BREAK THE LAW, YOU CAN’T WIN” (16). The poster showed one of those facts that looked straight at you when you looked at it you until you got so far from it you had to take your eyes away (16).

Again, media and popular culture remind the (false/mythical) states of the African-American Negroes by stereotypical representation.

Bigger ---looked at the colored posters---Two features were advertised one, The Gay woman, was pictured on the posters in images of white men and white women lolling on beaches, swimming, and dancing in night clubs; the other, trader Horn was shown on the posters in terms of black men and black women dancing against a wild background of barbaric jungle. (32)

Gradually, such representation follows the white authority and authenticity.

Bigger is naturally curious about the white world that he cannot wholly believe exists, for he has never seen it except at the movies. It is a fancy world filled with everything Bigger's world lacks.

So, one of the ways he escapes from shame and fear is by going to the movies where he can dream and wonder at the glamour of this opulent world. He can see lush golf greens, dancing parties, happy whites, and money everywhere. He see all this things in the Gay woman; and by chance he sees the communist as the movies' villain, a wild, dangerous, crazy bomb thrower; and the blacks as radically foreign and inferior savages or clownish, humble and ignorant servant. It is in fact, because of the movie that Bigger decides to try and make a wedge for him into the rich, tempting white world. After seeing the blonde and attractive Mary Dalton in the news real, Bigger is more optimistic about the job in interview, and excited to be able to, get close to the 'rich and famous' appeared in the newsreels. "Was he going to work for people like you saw in the movies? If he were, then he'd see a lot of things from the inside" (35). Thus media construct black's fantasy world. However, the white society that produces this popular culture, then, has control over the racial dialogue that determines the meaning of the color of Biggers skin and hence his identity. Here we find Edward Said's concept of power, discourse and knowledge. This is the white's politics of representing the blacks, how they 'see' the blacks and think the blacks should 'be seen' by the entire world.

The impact of media-politics returns in Bigger's thought during his encounter with Mary and Jan. In this context, cartoons create red phobia by stereotypically (re) presenting Communists as extremists: "He remembered seeing many cartoons of communists in newspapers and always they were trying to commit murder or set things on fire. People who acted that way were crazy. All he could recall having heard

about Communists was associated in his mind with darkness . . . whispers . . . on strike” (66). Then when Jan holds his hand friendly, he thinks: “That would people passing along the street think? [Surely, they would ‘see’ them as disrespectful and be furious to ‘see’ Bigger sitting with Mary]---Jan and men like him had made it so that he would be conscious of that black skin--- he was something he hated, the badge of shame--was attached to a black skin” (67). He also thinks that Jan is holding up with pity to look at him and be amused. Here, it is very important to note that Bigger’s haunting fear of ‘being gazed’ by whites as black affects his psychology that ultimately results in adversity. Besides he is afraid of being teased even by his black friends if they ‘see’ him at this moment. Afterwards, he dislikes Mary’s looking insides of him, and (in the mean time) his anger enables him to ‘look’ directly at her. It is not worthy that ‘being gazed’ makes him afraid, degraded and subservient, while the ability to gaze makes him angry, white-hater and courageous.

It is to note that when Bigger was leading drunken Mary to her room he was afraid of Mr. and Mrs. Daltons’ ‘panoptican’ “. . . perhaps Mrs. Dalton was standing in flowing whites and staring with stony blind eyes in the middle of the floor” (82). Later, when he was trying to push Mary’s dead body into the furnace “. . . two green burning . . . pools of acquisition and guilt stared at him from a white blur. It was the white cat and its round green eyes gazed passed him at the white face. . .” (90). Here his skin color traps him in a situation that leads to fatality.

In the meantime, knowing well that the Daltons ‘see’ Jan as a dangerous communist. Bigger hopes that they will hold Jan responsible for Mary’s disappearance. Since, racially blind Daltons are unable to imagine Bigger taking any action beyond the role that they have already assigned him. Bigger subverts the racial stereotypes by using them as a form of resistance and protection against white

authority. How the blacks' blindness' and whites 'gaze' lead to the former's internalization of hegemonic ideology and restriction are apparent in the breakfast scene at Thomas family. Bigger thinks:

The thing to do was-- while they were not looking, do what you wanted . . . He felt in the quiet presence of his mother, brother, and sister a force, inarticulate and unconscious, making for living without thinking . . . a hope that blinded. He felt that they wanted and yearned see life in a certain way: they were blind to what did not fit. They do not want to see what others were doing if that doing did not feed their own desires...there was in everyone a great hunger to believe that made him blind, and if he could see while others were blind, he could get what he wanted and never be caught at it. (102)

Bigger seems to overcome his fear once he has committed the first act of murder, even though he realizes that it will be only a matter of time before he is caught. And now he feels no remorse for what he was done. Rather, a new sense of elation a sort of ascension to a higher consciousness now overtakes him. The narrative voice describes in this way in two separate internal monologues reflecting the double murders of Mary Dalton and Bigger's black girlfriend, Bessie Mears whose violent killing at the hands of one she trusted is equally shocking to the reader. This is book two sections titled "Flight": "In all of his life these two murders were the most meaningful things that had ever happened to him... and never in all his life with this black skin of his, had the two worlds, thoughts and feelings will and mind, aspiration and satisfaction been together; never had he felt a sense of wholeness" (225).

Wright also presents a highly critical portrait of the (blind) private investigators and police detectives. Britten is a parody of both primitive eyes and

insular racist thinker. Bigger can perceive that the investigator must see him as guilty simply but he is a black in Britten's eyes, reds and blacks are similar. So he approaches Bigger as "you are a communist you goddamn black sonofabitch" (152). His chauvinism is also expressed in his assertion to Mr. Dalton "Well we see'em one way & I see'em another. To me, a nigger's a nigger" (154) undoubtedly such stereotypical prejudice, is the outcome of how black has been gazed for countries throughout the world. But ironically & blindly enough, the victim's father himself does not see Bigger a bad boy Wright is critical about the media for its prejudiced negative presentation of and fearful propagation against red even without any reliable, witness or evidence. So the newspaper publishes, "SEEK HYDE PARK HEIRESS... BELIEVED HIDDING OUT WITH COMMUNISTS. . ." (194). Next "REDS TRIED TO SNARE HIM" (210). They do so only because, communication goes in favor of & against their manipulation of blacks. As Max, asserts "I look at the world in a way that shows no whites & no blacks, no civilized & no savages. . ." (387)

Similarly, media represents Bigger (like all blacks) utter, negatively (e.g.as rapist, irrational etc.) by adding fiction with distorted facts. In reply sometimes Bigger also acts as he 'is seen' to act unusually--- i.e., violently. Therefore he thinks 'He committed rape every time he looked into a face' (214). But when the newspaper hints at his assumed sex-crime, he fears that it would excite whites to 'kill him in their heart' (228). However, white 'gaze; constructs his identity: " He was living truly and deeply, no matter what others might think, looking at him with their blind eyes" (225). According to Max (Bigger's lawyers), the advertisements, radios, newspapers and movies play constantly and overwhelming upon human civilization. In this way, the media and popular culture also affect and enchant Bigger psychologically: "It was when he read the newspapers or magazines, went to the movies. . . that he felt what he

wanted: to merge with others and be a part of this world. . . live like others, even though he was black” (226). Here it is mentionable that addressing the white judge, Max argues: “The more you kill, the more you deny and separate, the more will they seek another form and way of life, however blindly and unconsciously” (365). He also reminds the whites of their blindness (367). But earlier, Bigger blindly identified him with stereotyped whites, just as whites automatically view all blacks with suspicion when a white girl is killed.

Wright now satirizes the pedantic journalists who are looking for an “angle” that might bring to light Bigger’s “primitivism” and angst to “prove” that the “primitive Negro” (as seen) does not want to be “disturbed by white civilization”. In the newspaper’s words: “He looks exactly like an ape!” His skin is exceeding black. His lower jaw protrudes obnoxiously, reminding one of a jungle beast. . . All in all, he seems a beast utterly untouched by the softening influences of modern civilization” (260). It is no surprise that the press reports are full of hyperboles, portraying a “NEGRO MURDERER RAPISST” whose “primitivism” is brought to light in counters capitalized headlines of mob-inciting rhetoric. Thus the ‘gaze’ of white authority and press takes control over his identity once again, to demonize Bigger and terrorize blacks into submission by whipping up white violence.

Paul Gilroy states that the violative actions of Wright’s character such as Bigger is also the product of nurturing style of mother in childhood in south side also leads towards the condition of crisis of identity as he mentions:

It is important to appreciate that the violence of Wright’s characters is not a simple product of their maleness. Violence articulates blackness to a distinct mode of lived masculinity, but it is also a factor in what distinguishes blacks from whites . . . hostility, which differs

qualitatively from that found in patriarchal middle class families, because here the severe beating is administered by the mother, leaving the child no parental sanctuary. He must ever embrace violence along with maternal tenderness, or reject, in his helpless way the mother. (174-175)

Paul Gilroy criticizes on Wright that southern Negroes protect their children with severe beating and makes their children more violent. Thus, it creates identity crisis in their life.

As above mentioned, the researcher analyzes the Thomas family where Mrs. Thomas behaves her children in a passive tone and arrogantly towards Bigger to do any jobs and live a mature life for their family they are living in utter poverty in white governed society. Wright concludes about Bigger's psychological formation by the harassing attitudes of his mother. By such he feels in the state of dilemma likes this:

He knows that the moment he allowed himself to feel to its fullness how they lived, the shame and misery of their lives, he would be swept out of himself with fear and despair. So he held toward them an attitude of iron reserve; he lived with them, but behind a wall, a curtain. And toward himself he was even more exacting. He knew that the moment he allowed what his life meant to enter fully into his consciousness, he would either kill himself or someone else. So he denied himself and acted tough. (13-14)

Again Paul Gilroy suggests inevitability of violence in Wright's *Native Son* as:

Wright's sense of the significance of violence in black social life was a site of his irreducible ambivalence towards the idea of a closed racial

community and the ideology of family that help to reproduce it. This can be missed when the theme of violence is too swiftly monopolized by discussion of the complex and contradictory feelings that we can name as Wright misogyny. The complicated term “misogyny” brings together a number of issues that should be clearly differentiated before we can comprehend their association. It has been used to illuminate the powerful critique of the family that emerges from both Wright’s fiction and his autobiographical works, particularly *Black Boy*. It is required to interpret events like Bigger’s horrible murder of his girlfriend Bessie in *Native Son*, which provides a notorious example of how Wright saw his female characters and their fates. It has also been used to connect these representations with accounts of Wright’s own bad relations with the black woman who were his collaborators and his kin. (175-176)

Paul Gilroy discusses that Wright’s character Bigger is mainly engaged in the murder of female character. It shows that Bigger’s relation to the female character is quiet obsessed and negatively imprinted on his mind.

The above mentioned like attitude is prevalent in the text from which Bigger’s violative attitude is generated and finally Bigger kills the white lady Mary Dalton and another lady his girlfriend Bone. The following excerpt also inform about his anger toward that white lady Mary.

“Bigger, d you belong to a union?” she asked.

“Now, Mary’.’ Said Mr. Dalton; fromning.

“well, father, he should,” The girl said, to him, then back to Bigger,”
Do you?”, , , Bigger heisted. He hated the girl them. Why did she have
to do this when he was trying to get a job? (53)

This dialogue later on develops into murder of Mary Dalton by Bigger Thomas.

Richard Wright’s *Native Son* is a social protest novel reflecting his absolute horror at the condition of the relations between the black and white societies in America. Wright emphasizes that the rage felt by all black Americans is the direct result of white racism. Bigger Thomas is a product of this society, and is driven to hostile actions as a result of his rage. The central theme of this novel is one of violence.

The violence depicted in *Native Son*, although quite grotesque, is absolutely necessary to deliver the full meaning that Richard Wright wishes to convey. Bigger’s many acts of violence are, in effect a quest for a soul. He desires an identity that is his alone. Both the white and black communities have robbed him of dignity, identity and individuality. The human side of the city is closed to him, and for the most part Bigger relates more to the faceless mass of the buildings and the mute body of the city than to another human being. He constantly sums of his feelings of frustration as wanting to “both out” these around him, as they have effectively blocked him out of their lives by assuming that he will fail in any endeavor before he tries. He has feelings, too of fear as Wright remarks. “He was following a strange path in a strange land” (127). His mother’s philosophy of suffering to wait for a later reward a equally stagnating--to Bigger it appears that she is weak and will not fight to live.

The researcher further studies the distinguishing qualities such as emotive uses of alliteration and rhythms and heavy exploitation of grammatical tools to attract the

reader's emotion for convey the Bigger's implied meaning of struggle for his identity to adjust in the then society.

The rat scene that begins the novel is impressive not only because a huge black rat attacks Bigger, but also because Wright uses language to manipulate the readers' emotions by making the scene more quickly through a series of alliterative action verbs that give the scene a hysterical quality. In the scene, which covers approximately three pages, Wright employs twenty different verbs of action beginning with the consonants. The effect of these alliterative words is best exemplified by the passage that contains five forceful action verbs which capture the movement of the scene:

Goddamm!" Bigger whispered fiercely, whirling and kicking out his leg with all the strength of his body. The force of his movement shook the rat loose and it sailed through the air and struck a wall. Instantly it rolled over and leaped again. Bigger dodged and the rat landed against a table leg. With clenched teeth, Bigger held the skillet; he was afraid to hold it, fearing that he might miss. The rat squeaked and turned and ran in a narrow circle, looking for a place to hide; it leaped again past Bigger and scurried on dry rasping feet to one side of the box and then to the other, searching for the table. (2)

All intensifying the scene's ricocheting and tumultuous effect, the other verbs include srambled, stood, swept, sobbed, shoved, squealed, snagged, shouted, screamed, swung, skidded, sprang, stopped, scuttled and searched. No other section of the novel is more alliterative than this rat scene, in which these verbs are accompanied by the nouns stove, sans, skillet, side, streak, step, song; the participles, stocking, shaking, splintered and searching; the gerund shattering; and the adverb slowly. Through the

function of alliteration in this scene, sound becomes an inextricable part of narrative action, subtly communicating the sensations of anxiety and fear.

Native Son's primary purpose is to delineate the emotional effects of the environment on Bigger's psyche. Wright chooses as his vehicle a novel of ideas in which the rhetorical functions of words and entire sentences coalesce as integral embodiments of his single purpose. A traditional examination of these minute stylistic aspects that characterize *Native Son* proves Wright to be a scrupulous craftsman, through the function of alliteration, sound becomes an integral part of narrative action, subtly communicating the feelings of movement, anxiety and fear. The sibilants, particularly in the rat scene, functions as an agent that intensifies the chaos of the scene. Enhancing the novel's emotional impact, the periodic and balanced sentences summarize Bigger's thoughts and actions. Accompanying Wright's use of the compound sentence to punctuate the physical and emotional aberrations of a racial society is the symbolic use of the words black and white. Because scholars obsessively Wright's novel thematically. They have overlooked these distinctive qualities of his style.

Along with the major characters of Wright's fiction disillusioned with religion. It is best expressed in the example of Bigger also in his relation with his pious mother. In *Native Son*, Mrs. Thomas, Bigger's mother, advises to believe in God in the prison. "Listen! Son--when ain't nobody round you, when you alone, get on your knees and tell God everything. Ask him to guide you. That's all you can do now. Son, promise me you'll go to him" (254).

Although he has a deep need for "certainty and the forms of religion available to him been degraded to the point where they can offer him only cheap illusion rather than genuine belief (109). He scorns the fundamentalist religion of his

mother and Reverend Hammond , Mrs. Thomas' black minister, because he feels it has produced spiritual impoverishment, resulting in Black's acceptance of dehumanized roles of submissiveness (Butter, *Native Son: The emergence of a New Black Hero*).

Mrs. Thomas's strong faith in Christianity is also evident in the text when Bigger returns from unsuccessful robbery of Blum's store and listen his mother's song:

Lord I want to be a Christian,
 I'n my heart, in my heart,
 Lord, I want to be a Christian,
 In my heart, in my heart. (37)

The very lyrical statement reflects the pop Negro culture Blues. “ Blues is an impulse to keep the painful details and episode of a brutal experience alive in one's acting consciousness, to finger its jagged grain , and to transcend it, not by the consolation of philosophy, but by squeezing from it a near tragic, near comic lyricism. As a form Blues is an autobiographical chronicle of personal catastrophic expressed lyrically. And certainly Wright's early childhood was crammed with catastrophic incidents. [Wright's Blues by Ralph Ellison]

Songs and music is the creative powerful cultural heaven through which they could revive, reconstruct and re-strength their past hence, revive their identity. It could be them (black people), though momentarily, and provide them solace from their age long segregation and torture.

These instances show the cultural heritage of Black people. By these practices they do revolt against the white at the same time the uneven unity to all victims of Black community.

African American myth is created by white authority. As Michel Foucault suggests the circular relation of Discourse, power, knowledge and truth African American's history is created by the then white governed authority. The beliefs created by white authority prevalent in Native Son.

The researcher further brings into the knowledge the scenario while Bigger is imprisoned for punishment. At the moment white people react calling him in bitter manner as such:

“Kill'm !

“Lynch'im!”

“That Black Sonofabitch!”(253)

“Kill that black ape!” (253)

The words “Black Sonofabitch” and “Black ape” suggest the white's dominating attitudes towards black people in derogatory term. Bigger Thomas, as his name suggests, is the stereotypical “Bigger”. As such he is destined to end up in jail, and Bigger knows it.

Chapter III. Conclusion: Resistance to Racism in Wright's *Natives Son*

Richard Wright's *Native Son* is the product of social and cultural forces that shape the author's attitude towards life and that fuel the dual process between African and American. *Native Son* deals with modern social concerns such as individual alienation and the destructive effects of family relationships in an ailing American society.

Native Son is an indictment of racism. Racism affects Bigger's life at his own home, at Daltons' home, and in police custody. Thomas family must live in their rat infested apartment partly because no one will rent to blacks or they are charged higher rents than the whites. When Bigger goes to the movies, one of the films portrays that the press and the public are using racial stereotypes to portray him as sexy, criminal and brutal mass murderer. And despite their best intentions, even the liberal Daltons and radical Jan and Mary act toward Bigger in a racist manner by failing to recognize him as an individual.

Bigger is portrayed as an angry man also because his anger seems to be closely connected to his sense of racial identity. He is often furious at other blacks for their passive responses to the limitations placed on their lives by the whites. And he is frequently envaged at whites for making him feel ashamed and self hating.

Although his mother is religious, Bigger decides that she is blind to the realities of her life. He seems his mother's need for religion is parallel to Bessie's for whisky. Both he, thinks, are passive, escapist responses to racist conditions. At the

end of the novel, Reverend Hammand tries to convince Bigger to pray. But Bigger rejects the Black church, and presumably all religions, when he throws away the crucifix given to him by Reverend Hammand. Bigger identifies the crucifix with the burning cross of the klu Klux Klan.

Bigger feels happier and freer after he kills Mary. His violence against a white woman gives him a sense of power. At the end of *Native Son*, he even implies that his killing expresses deepest self. Through his violent rebellion, Bigger transcends or rises above the passivity of other black characters. From this point of view, Bigger's violence is an assertion of his freedom and a rebellion against society's constraints.

African American culture, which has its historical roots in Deep South and the dynamics of sex, ethnicity and class, means the symbolic and material expression by black American of their relationship to nature, the black community, and the white community as they seek to adopt their environment in order to survive. *Native Son*, the product of slavery segregation, poverty and disenfranchisement, is the combination of many things: a complicated anger, the carefree indulgence of the now, a marginalized population's assertion of self hood of cultural vitality and artistic pride the hope for synthesis through conflict.

Thematically and structurally, therefore, *Native Son* is dominated by struggle for freedom from all forms of oppression and realization of full potentiality of one's complex bicultural identity as an African American. At the end violence is stronger force it gives the real consciousness to Bigger as an individual to perceive his cultural identity even at the time of death rather than the feeling of dying too. Thus, *Native Son* is about the quest for freedom, equality, life, liberty and pursuit of happiness for African Americans in the American society. It also advocates for their cultural identity in white-governed society.

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