

Black Consciousness and African Renaissance: Focus on Afro- American Fiction

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Abstract

This paper chronicles the struggle of Africans in diaspora, especially in the United States of America. It addresses the issues of racism, inequality, marginalization, and cultural identity crisis. The paper in extension depicts the social significance of the blacks in diaspora and the importance of the African continent. The paper shall look into literary writings of one of the African American literary icons, Richard Wright, and Tony Morrison. Marxist Theory will be used in examining the role of race and class struggles in analyzing the historical antecedents of the blacks in diaspora. The paper, however, proposes solutions to these historical realities.

Keywords: Diaspora, Black Renaissance, Afro-American Literature, Fiction and Cultural Identity.

Introduction

The concept of African Renaissance is all about realizing African culture, politics, and economic emancipation. It is a movement to reclaim African identity and to break free from the legacy of colonialism. It emphasizes the importance of education, development, and cultural pride and calls for Africans to take control of its destiny. It is a philosophical and powerful concept across the continent to walk towards a brighter future for Africa.

When we truly take pleasure in our work, we pave the way for perfection to manifest in everything we do .A Nugget of Aristotle

Diop (1960), sees African Renaissance as the concept that the African people shall overcome the current challenges confronting the continent and achieve cultural, scientific, and economic renewal. Diop's ideas were further popularized by former president of South Africa Thabo Mbeki, where the African Renaissance continues to play a key role in the post- apartheid intellectual agenda.

Mbeki (1998), cited in the essay titled Towards African Renaissance, describes African Renaissance as a philosophical, political, and intellectual movement to end the violence, elitism, corruption, and poverty believed to plague the African continent, and to replace them with a more just and equitable order. Mbeki proposes doing so primarily by encouraging education and reversing the brain drain of African intellectuals.

He also encourages Africans to take pride in their heritage and to take charge of their lives. Moukala (2019), however, the African Renaissance cannot exist without first achieving African unity. Okimu (2020), compiled a list of perceived African traits that he believes are worthy of preservation and continuation. These include aspects of inclusion and interpersonal relations, such as social inclusion, hospitality, and genius sharing as well as attentive and perceptive listening. He additionally argues that social acceptance is not based on wealth, but on relationship to others.

Everything hangs on one's thinking...A man is as unhappy as he has convinced himself he is - Seneca.

African Renaissance's initial focus was on the development of African human resources, science and technology, agriculture, nutrition and health, culture, business, peace, and good governance, Okimu wrote:

The most important and primary role of the African Renaissance now and in the coming years is to gather a critical mass of first-class African scientists and to give them large enough grants on a continuing basis as well as sufficient infrastructure, to enable them to undertake meaningful problem solving applied to industrial production that will lead to really important results of economic dimension (African Renaissance, 1999).

The quotation above supports the proponents and objectives of this intellectual movement, the African Renaissance. The central and thematic preoccupation is on the significance and intellectual prowess of the blacks wherever they may be, either in Africa or in diaspora. The blacks showcase their intellectual capacity in almost all aspects of national life vis-à-vis education, technology, agriculture and cultural identity.

Definition of the Key Concepts:

Diaspora- This refers to the dispersion of African peoples throughout the world, often as a result of slavery, colonialism, and migration. It is a massive and complex phenomenon, with African diaspora communities found on every continent. They have had a huge impact on the culture, politics, and economics of the places where they have settled. In extension, the influence of African diaspora committees on music, art, literature social movement in the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, and beyond.

Half of the troubles of this life can be traced to saying yes too quickly and not saying no soon enough. Josh Billings

The Black Renaissance is all about reclaiming and revitalizing African culture, identity, and political and economic autonomy. It's a response to the legacy of colonialism and an attempt to build a better future for Africa. It is also sometimes called the African Renaissance, though or the African Renaissance movement. It is **intellectually** multifaceted, encompassing everything from arts and literature to politics and development. It is a lightly regimented concept, to say the least.

Afro-American Literature- encompasses the literature written by people of African descent in the United States. It is a diverse and rich literary tradition that includes everything from the slave narrative, and the protest literature to modern and contemporary fiction, poetry, drama, and non-fiction. Some Afro-American writers include Toni Morrison, Langston Hughes, Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, and Alice Walker. This literature has played a significant role in shaping American culture and is a testament to the resilience and creativity of African Americans.

Fiction - Refers to any work of literature/Art that is invented or imagined as opposed to being based on fact or reality. Fiction allows writers to create characters, settings, and plots that are not bound by the constraints of the real world, and to explore themes and issues in a way that may be more complex or advanced than in non-fiction. It is a sandbox for the imagination.

Cultural Identity – Refers to the sense of belonging and connection that an individual or group has to a particular culture. It includes things like language, belief, traditions, concepts, customs, and values that are shared by a community. Cultural identity is often passed down through generations, and it shapes how people see themselves and their place in the world. It is an intellectual pride and belonging, or a source of conflict and division.

Pan- Africanism- the idea of a Unified African identity and solidarity among African nations.

Cultural Renewal- the promotion of African language, arts, and cultural traditions.

Political and Economic Autonomy- the idea of African nations taking control of their own political and economic systems.

*Meaningful silence is better than meaningless words.
Pythagoras*

Development- the focus on improving education, health care, and infrastructure in Africa.

Empowerment- the idea of giving African people more control over their own lives and destinies.

Background of the Study

This paper is concerned with the historical antecedents, philosophical realities, and struggles of the blacks in their home Africa and in extension, other parts of the world. Black people live in many countries outside Africa; therefore, the paper delves into literary writing in other African-American literature.

It shall see the struggles of the blacks on issues such as gender inequality, marginalization, racism, identity crisis, subjugation, and oppression in the United States of America. Black consciousness is seen as a philosophy and a social movement that originated in South Africa in the 1960s. It was developed by Steve Biko (1960), and other activists as a way to challenge the oppressive system of apartheid. Black consciousness emphasized the importance of black people defining themselves and their own culture and resisting white supremacist domination. It also promotes black pride and self-determination and has inspired similar movements in other parts of the world.

Black people in the U.S have faced a long and persistent history of racism and discrimination, from the days of slavery to the present day. It is a complex and painful history that includes things like segregation, voter suppression, police brutality, and systemic racism. Despite these challenges, Black Americans have made significant contributions to American culture, politics, and society

from the civil rights movements to the arts, sports and beyond. It is a story of resilience, resistance, and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Wise people study history, because if you don't know what was, you can't understand what is. Your mind is a sacred enclosure into which nothing harmful can enter except by your promotion. Ralph Waldo Emerson

There are tons of ways that racism has impacted black people in the U.S with concrete examples and evidence that include; redlining and housing discrimination, misappropriates and lack of access of healthcare, educational inequalities and the school-to-prison pipeline, unequal economic opportunities and the wealth gap (capitalists system), the list goes on and you eventually get the idea. These are systematic issues that have had far-reaching consequences for Black people in the U.S.

Thematic Preoccupations of Richard Wright's *Native Son*:

Native Son introduces a figure familiar to mid-twentieth-century America, the lone man backed into a corner by discrimination and misunderstanding. Frustrated by racism and the limited opportunities afforded black men in society, Bigger strikes out in a futile attempt to transgress the boundaries and limits of his position. He murders Mary Dalton, the only child of a wealthy real estate magnate, by accident. Yet the act of murder gives his life meaning, and the consequent trial and execution are incidental. Bigger Thomas remains a seminal figure in American Literature.

Native Son is a classic of Black literature, and it is a powerful exploration of the themes of racism and social inequality in 1930s Chicago. The protagonist, Bigger Thomas, is a young black man living in poverty on the South Side, and he becomes entangled in a web of crime and violence. Throughout the novel, Wright examines the ways that racism, poverty and societal pressures shape Biggers's actions and his sense of self. It is a philosophical and intellectual heavy read, but it is also a masterful examination of the social and psychological effects of racism on the individual.

Look for three 3 things in a person –Intelligence Energy and Integrity. If they don't have the last one, don't even bother with the first two Warren Buffett.

Richard Wright emerged as a major Black intellectual warrior who was driven by the quest to defend black humanity against the cultural domination of white supremacist ideas and practices. Moreover, he and others linked imperialism, colonialism and white supremacy, pointing out that the dehumanization and humiliation of Black Americans, Asians and even ethnic Russians were generated by the same global system of domination. It was in this way that he began to call for the revolutionary overthrow of global white supremacy and the implementation of scientific socializes and popular democracy on a world scale.

Wright had an instinct for presenting his native picture through his remarkable works. As a poor black child growing up in the Deep South, Wright suffered poverty, hunger, racism, violence, and those experiences later became the central themes of his work. He stands as a major literary figure of the 1930s and 40s; his writings are a departure from those of the Harlem Renaissance school.

Steeped in the literary naturalism of the depression era, Wright's works express a realistic and brutal betrayal and portrayal of the white society's oppression of the African American. Anger and protest served as a catalyst for literature intended to promote social changes by exposing the injustices of racism, economic exploitation, and imperialism. Through his arts, Wright turned the torment of alienation into a voice calling for human solidarity and racial advancement.

As evidenced from the text:

You will regret how you're living some day, she went on, if you don't stop running with that gang of yours, do right, you'll end up where you never thought you would. You think I don't know what you boys are doing, but I do. And the gallows is at the end of the road, you travelling boy. Just remember that she tarried and looked at Buddy. Throw that Box outside, Buddy! (NS.39).

There are always four (4 Sides to a story, your side, their side, the truth and what really happened Jean Jacques Rousseau

When Bigger acts in an unfeeling way, killing and then disposing of the bodies of his victims, Wright argues that these are conditioned responses to overwhelming stimuli. If you kill her, you'll kill me; she said. I ain't in this..... You told me you were never going to kill, all right. The white folks have killed plenty of us. That doesn't make it right (Wright N.S. 168).

Throughout the novel, Wright illustrates how white racism forces blacks into a pressured, dangerous, and insecure state of mind. Blacks are beset with the hardship of economic oppression and forced to act subserviently before their oppressors. Given such conditions, it becomes inevitable that blacks such as Bigger view whites as an overwhelming force that sweeps him toward his fate can be seen in the context of naturalism. Wright uses the convention of naturalism in this novel to force one to enter into Bigger's mind and to understand the devastating effects of the social conditions in which he was raised. Perhaps, Bigger was not born a violent criminal. He is a native son, a product of American culture, but the violence and racism that suffocate it. As the plot progresses:

You know, Bigger, his mother said, if you don't take that job, the relief will cut us off, we won't have any food (Wright's N.S. P.42).

This conversation depicts the economic and derivative forms that Bigger and, in extension the blacks have been subjected to in the South Side of Chicago. The blacks do not have any choice of their own but rather take what comes to them, and accept it without any choice of preference.

The death of Mary Dalton and her subsequent burning of her dead body into a furnace in order to escape trial, any evidence of this criminality depicts a high sense of violence and terrorism by the blacks in the United States in the 1930s and 40s

The reality of the room fell from him; the vast city of white people that sprawled outside took its place. She was dead, and he had killed her. He was a murderer, a negro murderer, a black murderer. He had killed a white woman. He had to get away from here. Mrs Dalton had been in the room while he was there, but she had not known it. But, had he? No! yes! Maybe she had gone for help? No, if he had

known, she would have screamed. She did not know. He had to slip out of the house. Yes. He could go home to bed and tomorrow he could tell them that he had driven Mary home and had left her at the side door (Wright's N.S. P. 119).

There are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what isn't true; the other is to refuse to believe what is true Soren Kierkegaard...

Throughout the novel, Wrights illustrate how white racism forces blacks into a pressured and therefore dangerous state of mind. Blacks are beset with the hardship of economic oppression and forced to act subserviently before their oppressors, while the media consistently portrays them as animalistic brutes. Given such conditions, as Max Argues, it becomes inevitable that blacks such as Bigger will react with violence and hatred. However, Wright emphasizes the vicious double-edged effect of racism: though Biggers' violence stems from racial hatred, it only increases the racism in American society, as it confirms racist whites basic fears about blacks. In Wright's portrayal, whites effectively transform blacks into their negative stereotypes of blackness. Only when Bigger meets Max and begins to perceive whites as individuals does Wright offer any hope for a means of breaking this circle of racism. Only when sympathetic understanding exists between blacks and whites will they be able to perceive each other as individuals, not merely as stereotypes.

With the newspapers presenting him as a murderous animal, as evidenced by the text:

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For many men, the acquisition of wealth does not end their troubles, it only changes them Seneca

When Bigger acts in an unfeeling way, killing and then disposing of the bodies of his victims, Wright argues that these are conditioned responses to overwhelming stimuli. 'If you kill her, you'll kill me, ' she said. I ain't I this .. you told me you never were going to kill.' All right. The white folks have killed plenty to us.' That doesn't make it right (Wright, N.S. 168)

Throughout the novel, Wright illustrates how white racism forces a pressured, dangerous, and insecure state of mind. Blacks are beset with the hardship of economic oppression and forced to act subserviently before their oppressors. Given such conditions, it becomes inevitable that blacks such as Bigger Thomas will resort to violence and hatred. Wright's development of Bigger's view of whites as an overwhelming force that sweeps him toward his fate can be seen in the context of naturalism. Wright uses the convention of naturalism in this novel to force one to enter into Bigger's mind and to understand the devastating effects of the social conditions in which he was

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Prefer knowledge to wealth, for the one is transitory, the other perpetual Socrates.

The death of Marry Dalton and her subsequent burning of her dead body in a furnace in order to escape trial and any evidence of this criminality depicts a high sense of violence and terrorism by the blacks in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s.

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We are not born with innate knowledge of complex concepts or skills; we acquire them through cultural and educational influence Epictetus.

In his response to his crime, the white dominated press and authorities incited a mob that showed hatred against him. Bigger and his family lived in cramped and squalid conditions. All he can do is act out the role of the subservient black man that he has seen in countless popular cultural representations. However, as Bigger's life demonstrates, this constant fear causes violence. Throughout the novel, one can see that when Bigger is cornered, like a rat, he is overwhelmed by shame and fear and lashes out with violence, the only weapon at his disposal. Here is an example from his speech to Bessie, and she cries out to Bigger after he admits to her that he killed Mary Dalton:

Lord, don't let this happen to me!
 I have not done anything! For this to come to me.
 I just work! I ain't had no happiness,
 no nothing. I just work
 I'm black and I work and don't bother
 Nobody..... (Wright, N.S., P.170).

The only person with whom you have to compare yourself is you in the past. Sigmund Freud.

Wright uses the conventions of naturalism to portray the effect of racism on the oppressed and the hypocrisy of justice. In this chain of events, Wright depicts the irrational logic of racism, a vicious circle that produces itself over and over again. The attention prompted Buckley, the State's Attorney, to hurry Bigger's case along and seek the death penalty. Unable to face the reality of his life as a black man, Bigger is forced to keep his thoughts and his feelings apart. Bigger's guilt and punishment are decided before his trial ever begins, perhaps even before he is arrested. These characters' lives are shaped by forces of society that are uncontrollable.

The racial climate in Wright's eyes, from a reading of *Native Son*, is that of the perspective expressed by a black American who says:

To Bigger and his kind, white people were not people; they were a sort of great natural force, like a stormy sky looming overhead or like a deep swirling over stretching suddenly at one's feet in the dark (Wright, NS, 109).

It could be found that Bigger Thomas's history of every black American. It coincides precisely with the findings and evolution of the United States of America. It irrefutably demonstrates that Richard Wright is one of its finest artists and a sensitive chronicler of black sensibility to the whole world.

Wright's early life, which had experienced extreme poverty and anti-Black racism in the American South, shaped his proletarian world view. The violent, racist, and impoverished circumstances of Wright's upbringing in the old segregated South made him search desperately to find out whether black men could live with human dignity and without fear in a world dominated by white male

power. Wright's complex consciousness, strongly influenced by modern rationalism, also made him fascinated by the irrational aspects of life. He wanted to find out if black men could be or become psychologically free of their white oppressors. Accordingly, Wright believed that the black creative intellectual had a strong responsibility to contest white power's conception of existence and in the process, to assert the validity and complexity of the Black experience (Abrahams, 2013).

To live a life of virtue, you have to become consistent, even when it isn't convenient, comfortable or easy.

Thus, the author, through his works, brings out the fact that Black people are never given the liberty to live with freedom and according to their choice. Wright has spoken out in an effective way about how they were affected by racism. Ultimately Wright portrays the vicious circle of racism from the white perspective as well as from the black one, emphasizing that even well-meaning whites exhibit prejudices that feed into the same black behavior that conforms to the racist white's sense of superiority.

Complexities of Racial Discrimination

For centuries racism has been a matter of a fundamental question in the United States, and race differences and prejudice attitudes always caused problem whenever Black and white wanted to unite and live together because the racial stereotypical picture held in both groups mind logic made them act in a prejudice way that gave harm to both groups and cultures. Aiming to discuss how the racial stereotype typical picture held in both groups' minds became destructive and the double-edged racism, Richard Wright's *Native Son* will be analyzed, focusing on race, racism, prejudice, fear, anger, and logic of racism in the white and black world of America.

Gates (1999) has called America a fundamentally racist society (Cheney 1991), and his assertion in the *Native Son* (1940). Richard Wright shows the working of such a society at the level of personal interaction. Wright emphasizes the psychological impact of race logic on American Africans, receiving praise, as Living Home wrote:

For bringing out into open as no one ever had before the hatred, fear and violence that have crippled and may yet destroy our culture (Moore, 1951).

The man who does not read has no advantage over the man who cannot read, Epictetus

But Wright's work set in the 1930s blacks also shows how race logic harms white American society. In tracing the psychological, intellectual and physical journey of Bigger Thomas, Wright shows that although Thomas is of an oppressed race and the whites, he encounters the members of an oppressing race both live in fear because of what Robert Cushrie (1970), has called the whites guilt-hate-fear complex, and the Blacks fear hate fear complex. Wright's Black dramatizes these complexes that serve to sabotage the good intentions of Americans on different sides of the colour line who attempt to cross it. *Native Son* also illustrates the different places in which whites and blacks live, and as Steve Pile and Michael Keith have written, the 'special logic' controls the groups' mutual perceptions (Pile and Keith, 1993). Namely, the special logic controlling the mutual perception shapes the cultural logic of a stereotypical picture drawn from a prejudice and a double-edged destructive, racist perception. In other words, *Native Son* illustrates that racism is destructive to both whites and

blacks, although for different reasons. White characters in the novel, particularly those with a self-consciously progressive attitude toward race relations, are affected by racism in subtler and more complex ways. Although the Daltons, for instance, have made a fortune out of exploiting blacks, they present themselves as philanthropists committed to the cause of black Americans. The whites, unaware of their deep-seated racial prejudices, maintain this pretense to avoid confronting their guilt, which leads to fearful attitudes.

The heart of a fool is in his mouth, but the mouth of a wise man is in his heart Mark Twain

Blacks, on the other hand, unable to express themselves with words and economic power use their physical power to avoid confronting their fear, which leads to violent reactions.

The Effect of Racism on the Oppressor

The deleterious effect of racism extends to the white population in that it prevents whites from realizing the true humanity inherent in groups that they oppress. Indeed, one of the great strengths of *Native Son* as a chronicle of the effects of oppression is Wright's extraordinary ability to explore the psychology not only of the oppressed but of the oppressors as well. Wright's extraordinary ability to explore the psychology not only of the oppressed but of the oppressors as well. Wright illustrates that racism is destructive to both groups, though for very different reasons.

Many whites in the novel, such as Britten and Peggy, fall victim to the obvious pitfall of racism among whites, the unthinking sense of superiority that deceives them into seeing Black people as less than human. Wright shows that this sense of superiority is a weakness, as Bigger can manipulate it in his cover-up of many murders.

Bigger realizes that a man with Britten's prejudices would never believe a Black man could be capable of what Bigger has done. Indeed, for a time, Bigger manages to escape suspicion. Other white characters in the novel, particularly those with a self-consciously progressive attitude towards race relations-are affected by racism in subtler and more complex ways. Though the Daltons, for instance, have made a fortune out of exploiting Black people, they aggressively present themselves as philanthropist committed to the Black American cause. We sense that they maintain this pretense to avoid confronting their guilt, and we realize that they may even subtler form of racism, as they consciously seek to be friends with Black people and treat them as equals. Marr and Jan represent an even subtler form of racism, as they consciously seek to be friends with Black people and treat them as equals but ultimately fail to understand them as individuals. The failure has disastrous results. Marr and Jan's simple assumption that Bigger will welcome their relationship/friendship deludes them into overlooking the possibility that he will react with suspicion and fear, a natural reaction considering that Bigger has never experienced such friendly treatment from whites.

The one who plants trees, knowing that he will never sit in their shades, has at least started to understand the meaning of life Benjamin Franklin.

In this regard, Mary and Jan are deceived by their failure to recognize Bigger's individuality just as much as an overt racist such as Britten is deceived by a failure to recognize Bigger's humanity. Ultimately, Wright portrays the vicious circle of racism from the white perspective as well as from the Black standpoint, emphasizing that even well-meaning whites exhibit prejudices that feed into the same Black behavior that confirms the racist whites' sense of superiority.

The Hypocrisy of Jungle Justice

An important idea that emerges from Wright's treatment of racism is the terrible inequality of the American criminal justice system of Wright's time. Drawing inspiration from actual court cases of the 1930s, especially the 1938-39 case of Robert Nixon, a young Black man charged with murdering a white woman during a robbery, Wright portrays the American judiciary as an ineffectual pawn caught between the lurid interest of the media and the driving ambition of politicians.

The outcome of Bigger's case is decided before it ever goes to court in the vicious cycle of racism, a Black man who kills a white woman is guilty regardless of the factual circumstances of the killing.

It is important, of course, that Bigger is indeed guilty of Marr's murder, as well as Bessie's. Nonetheless, the justice system still fails him, as he receives neither a fair trial nor an opportunity to defend himself. With the newspapers presenting him as a murderous animal and Buckley using the case to further his political career, anything said in Bigger's defense falls on deaf ears. Even Max's impassioned defense is largely a wasted effort. The motto of the American justice system is equal justice under law, but Wright depicts a judiciary so undermined by racial prejudice and corruption that the concept of equality holds little meaning.

Plot Summary

Bigger Thomas, a poor, uneducated, twenty-year-old black man in 1930s Chicago, wakes up one morning in his family's cramped apartment in the South Side of the city. He sees a huge rat scamper across the room, which he corners and kills with a skillet. Having grown up under the climate of harsh racial prejudice in 1930s America, Bigger is burdened with a powerful conviction that he has no control over his life and that he cannot aspire to anything other than menial, low-wage labor. His mother pesters him to take a job with a rich white man named Mr. Dalton, but Bigger instead chooses to meet up with his friends to plan the robbery of a white man's store.

Anger, fear, and frustration define Bigger's daily existence as he is forced to hide behind a façade of toughness or risk succumbing to despair. While Bigger and his gang have robbed many black-owned businesses, they have never attempted to rob a white man. Bigger sees whites not as individuals but as a natural, oppressive force, great looming 'whiteness' pressing down upon him; Bigger's fear of confronting this force overwhelms him, but rather than admit his fear, he violently attacks a member of his gang to sabotage the robbery. Left with no other options, Bigger takes a job as a Chauffeur for the Daltons.

Coincidentally, Mr. Dalton is also Bigger's landlord as he owns a controlling share of the company that manages the apartment building where Bigger's family lives, Mr. Dalton and other wealthy real estate barons are effectively robbing the poor, black tenants on Chicago South side, they refuse to allow blacks to rent apartments in predominantly white neighborhood, this leading to overpopulations and artificially high rents in the predominantly black South side. Mr. Dalton sees himself as a benevolent philanthropist; however, as he donates money to black schools and offers jobs to poor black boys like Bigger. However, Mr. Dalton practices this token philanthropy mainly to alleviate his guilty conscience for exploiting poor blacks.

In a nutshell, Bigger, the central protagonist in the novel, is not a traditional hero by any means. However, Wright forces us to enter into Bigger's mind to understand the devastating effects of the social, psychological, economic, and immoral conditions in which he was raised. Bigger was not born a violent criminal. He is a native son, a product of American culture and the violence and racism that suffuse it.

Character List

Boris A. Max- A Jewish lawyer who works for the labour defender, an organization affiliated with the communist party. Max argues, based on sociological analysis of American society, that institutionalized racism and prejudice-not inherent ethnic qualities-create conditions for violence in urban ghettos.

Bessie's Mears: Bigger's girlfriend. Their relationship remains quite distant and is largely based upon mutual convenience rather than romantic love.

Mrs. Thomas-Bigger's devoutly religious mother. Mrs. Thomas has accepted her precarious, impoverished position in life and warns Bigger at the beginning of the novel that he will meet a bad end if he fails to change his ways.

Buddy Thomas-Bigger's younger brother. Buddy, unlike his brother, does not rebel against his low position on the social ladder. He envies Bigger's job as a Chauffeur for a rich white family. As the novel progresses, however, Buddy begins to take on a more antagonistic attitude toward racial prejudice.

Vera Thomas- Bigger's younger sister. Vera, like Bigger, lives her life in constant fear.

G.H.M. Gus and Jack-Bigger's friends, who often plan and execute robberies together. G.H. Gus and Jack hatch a tentative plan to rob a white shopkeeper, Mr. Blum, but they are afraid of the consequences if they should be caught robbing a white man. At the beginning of the novel, Bigger taunts his friends about their fear, even though he is just as terrified himself.

Mr. Blum- A white man who owns a delicatessen on the South Side of Chicago. Mr. Blum represents an inviting robbery target for Bigger and his friends, but their fear of the consequences of robbing a white man initially prevents them from following through on their plan.

Britten- A racist, anticommunist private investigator who helps Mr. Dalton investigate Mary's disappearance.

Buckley- The incumbent State's Attorney who is running for reelection, Buckley is viciously racist and anti-Communist.

Peggy- An Irish immigrant who has worked as the Daltons' cook for years. Peggy considers the Daltons to be marvelous benefactor to black Americans. Though she is actively kind to Bigger, she is also extremely patronizing.

Doc- the black owner of a pool hall on the south side of Chicago that serves as a hangout for Bigger and his friends.

Reverend Hammond- The pastor of Mrs. Thomas's Church, who urges Bigger to turn toward religion in times of trouble.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Double-Edged Edged of Racism

On psychological, sociological, and cultural levels, either directly or indirectly, both whites and blacks are responsible for the prejudiced, racist views and negative stereotypical images unconsciously drawn by both groups due to a lack of communication, boundaries, and fear. Bigger dramatizes the anger and pain of his race regarding the 'guilt-hate-fear complex, and the Daltons effectively represent the ruling white power structure regarding guilt-hate-fear complex. Thus, to be black in America means to be the victim of social values and race prejudice. Bigger Thomas's fear, fight, fate, flight, and trial dramatize American racism, its pervasiveness, and the way racism prevents social and cultural understanding or compassion for the other. Oppressors rule by force and are corrupted; victims are blind and intimidated, and are corrupted. Shortly before his death, Bigger begins to see Jan as an individual, not a white man, but it is too late.

In its exploration of America's logic of racism, the novel shows that Bigger Thomas ultimately cannot escape the logic that has been unconsciously shaped starting from childhood by his elders. *Native Sons* invert the common American assumption of individual opportunity. Both Bigger's crimes and his fate merely fulfil society's expectations of him as a black man, and the Daltons are direct victims and indirectly criminals of each other because of their cultural logic of racism that makes them act in a blind, prejudiced attitude.

Consequently, the effect of the cultural logic of racism and double edged because both groups were imprisoned and corrupted by the social and cultural understanding that prevented individualistic intercourse between the whites and blacks. Namely, the culture shaped, and the race prejudice was far more than skin deep matter because the attitudes of both groups were the result of their unconsciously painted stereotypical picture that victimized and limited their relations. Thus, whenever black and white intend to unite, there will be a fight and cultural corruption unless changes occur in the cultural logic of racism.

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