

NIHILISM AND IMAGES OF REBELLION: A CRITICAL STUDY OF RICHARD WRIGHT'S
NATIVE SON

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Abstract:

Richard Wright (1908-1960) is one of the notable novelists of African-American literature. *Native Son* (1940) is one of his outstanding novels which received as a unique literary work of his time and still. Most of his writings call for liberation from the racial discrimination that African Americans experienced during the Great Depression (1929-1933) and beyond, notably in his novel of *Native Son*. This novel chronicles the poverty of a twenty year old black man called Bigger Thomas. It implicitly traces the gradual aspirations of Bigger to rebel against white prejudice. In this study, Nihilism is the scope of debate and Bigger with his surrounding is the range for that view of negation. Bigger exemplifies the revolted figure of his peers against marginality and nothingness. The present research is a critique to elaborate some of the tangible and intangible trajectories of rebellion pursued by Bigger Thomas. This treatise aims to reveal a sort of condemnation against apartheid and to cast the light on the resentment of Blacks for their nihilism. The images of rebellion shown in this research are to explain some of the psychological reactions when one is destined to be a subaltern. Consequently, rebellion identifies the hope of Blacks for which a release from the chains of being peripheral might be obtained. However, some images, as violence, are reversibly perceived to maintain rebellion out of a quagmire of nihilism.

Key words: Bigger Thomas, Blacks, Identity, Liberation, Nihilism, Rebellion.

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I. Introduction

Subalterns are always nihilists and, therefore, abusive and looking to rebel for their mental and physical liberty. Predominantly, rebellion is found as a reaction to the meaningless that subalterns suffer from. In *Native Son*, Bigger Thomas is the stereotypical figure for the marginalised African American and his psychological and mental conflicts incarnate the ramifications not only of his milieu but of other minorities too. Edward Margolies critically argues that it is "in the roles of a Negro nationalist revolutionary and a metaphysical rebel that Wright most successfully portrays Bigger" (1968, p. 82). Richardson Wright asserts that: "there was not just one Bigger, but many of them, more than I could count and more than you suspect" (2005, p. 361). In a contextual framework, nihilism and rebellion stand for action and reaction, stimulus and response and in *Native Son* acts as meaningless and self-realization. The issue here is how these two extremes interact in the shade of American social attitudes of the 1930s. African Americans suffered the plight of prejudicial treatment on the ground of race and sex. Whites in America relentlessly followed racial procedures to deprive Bigger Thomases of joining education or engaging in police corps or any other sovereign professions. It is this policy of disenfranchisement and negligence that usually provoke Biggers to surge and rebel demanding their deserving rights and prerogatives. In his essay on the sexual diversity in framing the characterization of Bigger Thomas, Yvonne Robinson Jones explained how Bigger is vicarious of Blacks and the one who rebels in defence of their grievances:

Bigger [is] as the prototype, the archetype of the angry, rebellious, disenfranchised, dispossessed militant, and even revolutionary African American male, too often victimized by a racially divided American society that historically has targeted African American males via lynching, police brutality, and, in most recent years, racial profiling. (2007, p. 39)

This nihilistic view is unfortunately still occurred and employed by some Whites towards Blacks. Unless some racial sobriety is recognised, countries of diverse races will transform into areas of conflict based on ethnic segregation. Giving a meaningless role and existence of a certain person or group of people is extremely abusive and inequitable as well as retaliative in some situations. Recently, George Floyd, for instance, has become a victim of this underestimation when a white police officer arrested him mercilessly till death. Most of the news reports condemn the white officer and accused him with racism for his relentless detention. Consistent with the essence of this paper, Floyd has the same fate of Bigger. The difference is that Floyd throttled and died silently before he could rebel while Bigger has much more time to unlawfully rise opposite the apathy of Whites. The significance of this research is therefore vital and humanistic. It springs from bestowing value for the life of all people regardless of their race, religion and origin. What could be written is not only pertained to the details of this novel, however, for the whole downtrodden multitudes too. Thus, this research is not only spotlighting on the envisaged freedom of Blacks, nevertheless, on the rational and irrational manners of rebellion as well.

II. Nihilism in Richard Wright's *Native Son*

The word "Nihilism" is derived from "Nihil", a Latin word that means "nothing". In modern English, it seems to be derived from the word "annihilate", which also refers to "nothingness" and completed destruction. The broad meaning of "Nihilism" is to come against religious doctrines and teachings, only to elevate the scientific rationalism and utilitarianism. Therefore, the critics raised a red flag from this philosophy which constitutes a threat for social structure. It also renounces religious values and revokes the moral principles as a whole (Pavlovski, Introduction, Vol. 110, 2001). Moreover, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) is one of the pioneers of Nihilism as a philosophy. His writings and other concepts such as morality and the meaning of existence left an enormous impact on the philosophy and intellectuality of western world writers. In this regard, the philosophy of Nietzsche could be "the meaning of values and their significance of human existence" (Wilkerson, *Nihilism and the Revaluation of Values*). The lack of importance and purpose in life is what distinguishes the Nihilism of the 20th century from that of the 19th. It tackles the sufferance of being identified in a racial community and this is what is called Existential Nihilism that is associated with the meaningless of life, "Existential nihilism begins with the notion that the world is without meaning or purpose. Given this circumstance, existence

itself—all action, suffering, and feeling—is ultimately senseless and empty (Pratt, Existential Nihilism). Accordingly, Nihilism in the modern framework could be explained in terms of despair and repudiation of living as a subaltern. It is a natural plight for the marginality of some powerless people who live in-between and who seek to rebel for liberation.

In Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Bigger Thomas appears as an atheist of the values of his society that turns him to be nihilistic. As a nihilistic figure, Vincent Perez argues that Bigger “renounces institutions and ideologies which are perceived to maintain a repressive social and racial order” (2000, p. 135). This disbelief leads him to despair and ultimately to his verbal suicide when he abstains from defending upon himself in his crime. It is from this meaning of despair that rebellious spirit of Bigger has stemmed from and from which he commences to build an outlet from his nihilistic entity. In her article, *How Nihilism Provides Bigger Thomas and Biggie Smalls with a Soul*, Eddie Malone emphasized that nihilism “breeds an existential approach to life that secures for the black male a kind of freedom and identity denied to him through socially accepted channels in a racist society”(7). Bigger Thomas's nihilistic conditions negate him socially and turn him to lose his self-realization then he starts to live in his fear and hesitancy. This fear, like despair, is the point from which Bigger launches himself to revolt, but mostly in vain for the world that looks up to rebel against is too much for him to resist. It constitutes, at the same time, a powerful source to fight and rebel and also to strengthen him to prove his being in his society. Concerning this aspect, Friedrich Nietzsche indicated what fear might do for a man instead of what is expected; “it is not fear of man that we should desire to see diminished; for this fear compels the strong to be strong ... it maintains the well-constituted type of man” (1989, p. 122).

The portrait of meaninglessness has occupied the early stages of the novel. Bigger's mother rebukes him and bitterly accepts the idea of her giving birth to a negativist boy “Bigger, sometimes I wonder why I birthed you” (Wright, 2005, p. 122). He is also blamed for the nihilistic life that he follows as he spends his time hiding behind the curtain or the wall of his family room. That nihilistic quagmire is considerably widened especially when he confronts the realistic life of his racial community. It is noteworthy here to point out to the process that will lead Bigger to be nihilistic is itself will turn him to be rebellious as a reaction to his meaningless existence. Throughout racial prejudice African Americans witnessed during the first half of the 20th century, the nihilistic visions of the Biggers (Blacks) take a shape and crystallized. They were living in a liminal space where they could not feel liberated as Whites lived. They are unable to get involved in their society or to engage with what Whites have and enjoy. Biggers, thus, are almost not considered to be remembered unless they have committed a crime for which they are usually lynched. According to Richard Wright, they always yearn for equitable treatment so as Bigger illustrates in the Book One of the novel.

We live here and they live there. We black 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'm on the outside of the world peeping in through a knothole in the fence. (2005, p. 28).

Richard Wright was keen to delineate the situations that exhibit Bigger as a nihilistic figure. Even in his best moments to be reckoned as human, Bigger almost feels less important than what others consider him to be. In his conversation with his friend, Gus, Bigger wonders for the stripped rights of Blacks by Whites and for the plight of nothingness they have been afflicted by, “why they make us live in one corner of the city? Why don't they let us fly planes and run ships” (Wright, 2005, p. 17). So, Bigger's investigation about the Whites and their attitudes emanates from this comparison which arises from the lack of equality that he unconsciously seeks to obtain. As a nihilistic figure, Bigger is usually denied and consequently denies himself especially in his confrontation with Whites. As a case in point, while Bigger is in the house of Mr. Dalton to get his job as a chauffeur, a batch of incompleteness invades inside him and mangles his motives of being a human. White community has been visualised as a master in the mind of Bigger and to deal with them is of high value. This impression lets him suspicious to be there alone and unprotected by a weapon. In this framework, Bigger is supposedly living in a wood; protecting himself from being devoured by the Whites. This interlace of his expectations springs from his nihilistic personality and the ambience of his community as a whole, “He [Bigger] was going among white people, so 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. (Wright, 2005, p. 47)

What reveals the sense of existentialism inside Bigger is the oddity of Mary, Mr. Dalton's daughter, and her interaction with a black and poor man. She gently realizes him in a world that expels blacks from being humans, "She was an odd girl ... She responded to him as if he were human, as if he lived in the same world as she" (Wright, 2005, p. 65). To share white's issues and peculiarity is a privilege that Blacks often dream of, especially in the American society of the first half of the 20th century. Therefore, Bigger's countenance has altered when Mary Dalton speaks with him as a counterpart of the creature. Something weird penetrates inside his thought predicting to be a victim or a scapegoat for the white girl's interests. This suspicion springs from the usual position of underestimation that Bigger Thomas was accustomed to occupying in his racial society. This sudden respect and consideration create a kind of exclamation for Bigger who is farther away from believing Whites' deeds which are almost tricks and intrigues to him. The doubt of conspiracy frequently evolves at him is a natural outcome of his nihilistic life. Such meaningless is quite enough to prevent from getting along with whatever is concerned with intimacy and friendly involvement.

Right after his first situation with Mary, the same occasion has occurred with a white man Mary's friend called Jan. His behaviour with Bigger is comparable with that of Mary. He pumps doses of friendship inside Bigger especially when he asks to call him Jan alone without adherence to the formalities that a chauffeur such Bigger should commit with "don't say sir to me. I'll call you Bigger and you'll call me Jan. That's the way it'll be between us" (Wright, 2005, p. 66). Similarly, this friendliness and humanity of Jan have paradoxically influenced Bigger who turns the good attention to suspicions and wonders. Bigger is bewildered of what Mary and Jan might mean or intend by their goodness, Wright accordingly depicts this perplexity when he narrates that "He was trying desperately to understand. He felt foolish sitting behind the steering wheel like this and letting a white man hold his hand" (2005, p. 66). However, the inferiority complex for being nihilistic has metaphorically transformed Bigger into a machine of one reaction in exchange for what Whites might carry on. He always assumes Whites and their behaviour in his lonely route of misunderstanding. Furthermore, he is in a permanent interpretation for their gestures, sights and conversations. The relentless pursuit after how Whites evaluate him as a human corroborates his nihilistic identity and his inability to overcome his chaotic state of mind. This scenario leads him later to rebel in search of his existence and to revive his coexistence with his surroundings, not only for himself but as an agent for his race as well.

He felt he had no physical existence at all right then; he was something he hated, the badge of shame which he knew was attached to a black skin. It was a shadowy region, a No Man's Land, the ground that separated the white world from the black that he stood upon. He felt naked, transparent; he felt that this white man, having helped to put him down, having helped to deform him, held him up now to look at him and be amused (Wright, 2005, p. 66).

Overall, Richard Wright declares the social and psychological state of mind of a subaltern figure. It is his descriptions of the resentment and meaninglessness that revive the question of nihilism and existence in this novel. Bigger has neither been a part of this world nor had experienced the sense of wholeness. He is ultimately alienated from both Blacks and Whites so as Katherine Fishburn notes that Bigger "has been isolated from whites because of his colour and alienated from blacks because of his rebellious nature" (1977, p. 84). Based on this, he eagerly seeks to run off his solitude toward social integration. During his search for equality and essence, Wright recounts that Bigger always looks forward to "merge himself with others and be a part of this world, to lose himself in it so he could find himself, to be allowed a chance to live like others, even though he was black" (Wright, 2005, p. 206).

III. Images of Rebellion

Rebellion, as Albert Camus succinctly outlines, is a protest against the incomplete and wasteful conditions in which a man finds himself involved (1956, p. 23). It signifies any unprompted outbreak or burst against a particular system, people or notion that seem inconsistent with the common principles of a certain group or community. In his forward of *The Rebel* (1956), Camus established an obvious definition of rebellious as one who

"experiences a feeling of revulsion at the infringement of his rights and a complete and spontaneous loyalty to certain aspects of himself."(p. 14). This act is therefore supposed to expose a revision that serves the purposes for which the rebellion is set. In "How Bigger Thomas was Born", Wright cites in one of his hearings far from Mississippi on someone's mouth of Blacks "I wish I didn't have to live this way. I fell I like I want to burst" (2005, p. 365). Here, Wright confirms the tragic circumstances of Blacks in their white society and presents their implicit rebellion to liberation for which they lust to realize. Wright adds that men as Hitler and Mussolini were rebels for they did things that imply meaning more than words do. Based on this, he resembled their rebellious spirit to that of other Blacks whose aspirations are only humanistic and social (366). Samuel Sillen affirmed the rebellious essence of *Native Son* when he writes that: "The tremendous power of *Native Son* has its ultimate source in a revolutionary vision of life. It is . . . a creative affirmation of the will to live and to transform life" (1970, p. 49). In her chapter of "The Victim and the Rebel" Katherine Fishburn demonstrated that Richard Wright in his outraged novel of *Native Son* intends to be a dissident from all the American mores that ravished the spirits of the Biggers. Those enslaved people represent the downtrodden masses during and aftermath of Great Depression. According to Katherine, Richard Wright, in his writing, frequently warns the oppressors for possible mutiny as a response to their discrimination and "to expect universal rebellion and violence from all its Biggers" (1977, p. 60). However, Wright concludes his justification of *Native Son* that Bigger represents the subalterns who struggle to be identified, "Bigger Thomases in every land and race . . . [all] felt tense, afraid, nervous, hysterical and restless" (370).

Throughout *Native Son*, Bigger Thomas is succinctly analysed as a nihilist and as a rebellious when Richard Wright describes him as "he is the product of a dislocated society; he is dispossessed and disinherited man . . . looking and feeling for a way out" (371). The novel starts with Bigger as a nihilist and passes through fits of rebellion and finally ends with his loneliness in his cot waiting for execution. Bigger is victimised by his society and rebels against it challenging its absurd conditions for which Katherine Fishburn maintains "Although Bigger ultimately rebels by murdering, he first rebels against society by mentally negating its distasteful elements" (1977, p. 91). His life, as Charles Scruggs argues, is "one long act of rebellion against what society officially considers pious" (1997, p. 166). In return for his nihilistic times, Bigger is permanently in a process of rebellion. The nihilistic attitudes he ran across have imposed on him fits of rising against his hard circumstances and consequently compelled him to negate the other. For instance, the hysterical situation he passed into while he is in the spacious neighbourhood of Mr. Dalton reveals inside him a sort of estrangement and a reprimand to be in a world he does not belong to. Therefore, he feels that he needs to retreat his decision of coming to such a hateful place that makes him feel with fear once he craves to be an analogue.

He [Bigger] could have stayed among his own people and escaped feeling this fear and hate. This was not his world; he had been foolish in thinking that he would have liked it. He stood in the middle of the sidewalk with his jaws clamped tight; he wanted to strike something with his fist (Wright, 2005, p. 48).

This disturbance and nervousness act a rebellious image that Bigger has to lessen the intimidation that seized him at this moment. The early stages of Bigger's life demonstrate paradoxical behaviours in his determination to show triumph even in times of fear. Psychologically, Bigger is living in a distractive environment in his endeavours to involve with Whites. This distrust feeling or the fear that captures his life turned him to be reluctant to encounter his fates. It is this position of his personality that lets him in constant attempts of rebellion and insisting not to be thwarted by any reason or person "he rebelled. That was the way he lived; he passed his days trying to defeat or gratify powerful impulses in a world he feared" (Wright, 2005, p. 46) Bigger is not merely a man who grapples against a prosecuted white society, but against himself too. His accidental murder of Mary Dalton and his brutal slaying of his mistress, Bessie, place him on the margins of both White and Black societies, if not irreversibly outside. While the murder of Mary occurs in a moment of fear and reluctance, Bessie's killing becomes proof and confirmation for his power to blast. Bigger, within this whirl of aggressiveness, explores that his murders turn him on a wider scope of freedom and confidence and that his murders were an antidote to his extreme anguish and despair. Being able to kill is substantially a mistake but for Bigger is, however, a triumph and an achievement for a wish as long as he dreamt of it: "second murder, like the first, gives him a sense of liberation and an even greater control over his destiny . . .

killing has become part of Bigger's definition of himself" (Rubin, 1981, p. 14, 16). Both murders, so that, stand implausibly as an image of rebellion that grants him the capacity and the scope to define himself as a man of an act "in all of his life these two murders were the most meaningful things that had ever happened to him . . . Never had his will been so free as in this night of fear and murder and flight" (Wright, 2005, p. 205).

The ascendancy of racism defines the inner conflict of Bigger and justifies his implausible rebellion for equality that he eventually fails to realize. At the very beginning of the novel, Richard Wright sets the significance of Bigger's role as rebellious when he physically rebels against a rat that intimidates and threatens the stability of the family. Psychologically, the unconscious violence Bigger shows in his pursuing for the rat could be interpreted as ventilation for what he has already had toward the Whites "Bigger took a shoe and pounded the rat's head, crushing it, cursing hysterically" (Wright, 2005, p. 17). This sordid drama as Katherine Fishburn writes:

summarize *Native son's* entire action, for Bigger, like the rat, is black and daring, striking out against a stranger foe . . . It is this feeling of being treated like an animal, of being kicked and beaten like an unwanted dog, that so infuriates Bigger that he cannot function as an ordinary human being . . . he is ripe for rebellion (1977, p. 66).

Therefore, this battle is metaphorically depicted to juxtapose the real combat Bigger handles against the racial stereotypes of Whites. However, the strife of tangible and intangible rebellion of Bigger commences from the beginning and echoes his contemplations to protect himself and his folk from falling into the swamp of nihilism.

The resentment inside Bigger is early manifested in his first meeting with Mr. Dalton that acts as an impulse to rebel. As a sequel to his perplexed manners and for the sense of nothingness he feels in the presence of Mr. Dalton, Bigger despises himself to be in such a position. Yet, he still looks up to his identity or even a shelter preserving him from the dilemma of nihilism, so as Katherine Fishburn concludes "He was rebellious enough to want to forge an identity out of his black experiences" (1977, p. 63). This endeavour of being identified brings in him a tendency of rebellion toward others or even himself. Richard Wright comments on the potential impulses inside Bigger to rebel that "he wanted to wave his hand and blot out the white man who was making him feel this. If not that, he wanted to blot himself out" (2005, p. 50). After killing Mary, Bigger is now obsessed by his fright of being on target. This premonition binds him to his inner motifs of rebellion and turns him into an obedient to whatever his mutinous spirit dictates him to do. Thus, instead of anticipating the accusation of premeditated murder, he moulds up a new life based upon the aversion of the other. Bigger considers his murder as an indispensable victory for which he was looking to achieve and brag; "I didn't know I was really alive in this world until I felt things hard enough to kill for 'em!" (Wright, 2005, p. 358) Edward Margolies in his book of *The Art of Richard Wright* indicates also that physical force to kill or hurt coincides with Bigger's thoughts of rebellion; "Bigger acts violently in order to exist . . . by identifying himself with the world of violence and strife he knows to be true, Bigger has given his life meaning and clarity" (1969, p. 116). Continuing in the assessment of Bigger Thomas, it is worth mentioning to refer to what Vincent Peres elucidates concerning Bigger's mode of rebellion. He points out that it is only by admitting with his nihilistic figure that Bigger Thomas can "derive a meaning from a life of suffering, alienation, and violence" (2000, p. 144). The triumphant Bigger, therefore, adopts his murders and what follows of agitations as a means of rebellion to confirm his identity and existence.

He [Bigger] had murdered and had created a new life for himself. It was something that was all his own, and it was the first time in his life he had had anything that others could not take from him . . . His crime was an anchor weighing him safely in time; it added to him a certain confidence which his gun and knife did not (Wright, 2005, p. 95).

As a volcanic figure, Bigger evokes his subconscious urge of killing before but it has been perceptible. Richard Wright explicates Bigger's psychological state of mind as if he is a mutant persona toward what he endeavoured to articulate as natural not accidental and this is what his new life justifies, "the hidden meaning of his life . . . had spilled out" (2005, p. 95). As an image of rebellion, Bigger hilariously admits with his crime of killing and considers it as a declaration for his turmoil and a reaction against the suppression and the tribulation of nihilism, "it was not accident, . . . There was in him a kind of terrified pride in

feeling and thinking that one day he would be able to say publicly that he had done it" (95). By an avenger's will, Bigger turbulently vacillates between being as a Black and as encompassing the pattern of Whites so he could overcome his inferior complex of nihilism. This inconstancy enriches his rebellious inclinations that later extends to misanthropy toward Whites or Daltons.

Significantly, it is Bigger's fear of invisibility and dispersion that let him think of rebellion. Hearing stories of conquering and how Hitler and Mussolini, for instance, invade and revolt were his preoccupied concerns and models of rebellion. Such deeds inspire his rapturous consciousness toward constructing a revolutionary mind and appear as potential tracks to escape from the dystopian verities of Blacks in America. Concerning his mental rebellion, Bigger is isolated from being a rational socialist as he does not care whether his attitudes and decisions to rebel are reasonable or not. What concerns him is only to rise against his fear and whatever comes in opposition to his humanistic existence. However, some of his wishes of liberation are still suppressed for he feels that Whites are still ruling him. Rebellion also takes the shape of violations, as the determination to hide the accidental killing of Mary Dalton, to gain confidence and prowess. For such a yearning, Bigger is a dissident from the moderate foundations of rebellion and proves that his protest is irrational and his murder fall into what Albert Camus called innocent murder, "Rebellion is born of the spectacle of irrationality, confronted with an unjust and incomprehensible condition." (Camus, 1956, p. 10)

Soon after he has caught by the police, Bigger involuntarily draws a new image of rebellion. In a feeble hope, he drives a personal strike to attract the attention for his tribulation of nihilism. This impotent rebellion is unconsciously adopted by Bigger for he knows that resistance and inventing arguments are useless now. Bigger steadfastly react to the threat and bullying of White jailers when he rejects speaking and follows a hunger strike. Most of the time, he is bending his head and gazing at the floor. A few days following his abstention, Bigger starts to think rebelliously again but this time inwardly for ending his life. He hopelessly accepts his failure in defining his essence and spring up in him the will to rebel upon himself. He, therefore, becomes fanciful in the moulding of his new life that he craves to belong as a reaction to his nihilistic existence. Having rejected what he passed through lets him passively long to be in "another orbit between two poles that would let him live again, for a new mode of life . . . that the dread of being black and unequal would be forgotten" (Wright, 2005, p. 232).

A worth further image of rebellion could be seen in the inquest of Bigger to ascertain the identity of the murderer. Katherine Fishburn comments that Bigger "Before dying he triumphantly declares himself a murderer" (1977, p. 61). This form of rebellion is armed with no agitation or liberation slogans but only with silence. In his quietness, Bigger brings to light his prowess as a delegate on behave of what his peers have fervently sought to act in the white society. He appears dauntless showing determination and confirmation for his being. Yet, the lack of confidence of Bigger is what let him pretend with stillness. While an upheaval of fear and disobedience resides in him, he "sat stolidly trying not to let the crowd detect any fear in him" (Wright, 2005, p. 263). This sort of rebellion is the outcome of Bigger's awareness of his guilt which also employs a sound consistency in the presence of Whites. His inner conflict to be parallel to Whites or to utter words to conform to them has desperately failed and in vain. In his conversation with his defender, Max, and while he is still in prison waiting for his fateful end, a rebellious idea runs through his mind by wondering if "there any way to break down this wall [prison] of isolation" (350). Sublime thoughts of rebellion successively thrust into his mind but he could get none. Bigger looks remorseful for what he unintentionally commits, he declares "I didn't mean to do what I did. I was trying to do something else. But it seems like I never could" (352).

However, Wright weaves the inner thoughts of Bigger depicting him as an armless rebel against an adversary who could not bear and resist. Bigger is wistfully displayed as a submissive to the social codes and to the partialities of his time that lead him astray behind what he always aspired to get of independence and freedom. Camus emphasized this state when he illustrated that "the spirit of rebellion finds few means of expression in societies where inequalities are very great" (1956, p. 20). Wright reverses Bigger's outline to that of all Blacks when he explicates in 'How Bigger was Born' that "Oppression spawned among them a myriad variety of reactions, reaching from outright blind rebellion to a sweet, other-worldly submissiveness" (2005, p. 364) Bigger has finally reconciled with himself by perceiving that his acts of rebellion, although self-destructive, were the only reactions to the exclusion and

injustices that he was always wrestling with, Steven J. Rubin explained (1981, p. 15). In the final pages of *Native Son*, Richard Wright demonstrated that a rebellion is a product of a wish or a dream that Bigger fails to obtain for he did not comply with his social consistency, "His rebellious spirit made him violate all the taboos and consequently he always oscillated between moods of intense elation and depression." (362).

IV. Conclusion

The research ultimately imparts that Bigger Thomas has rebelled irrationally. Conspicuously, the feeling of being a rebellious hero has become an obsession inside Bigger. It has spontaneously risen in him once he remembers his weakness and the abasement of his folk as a whole. The nihilistic conditions are what Bigger and his folks comply with and could not adopt in their racial world of whites. However, the rational rebellion is represented by the intellectual resistance against the oppression and the insignificance that the black people were and still encountering. In turn, irrational rebellion stands for what may hurt others for the sake of liberation. It does not lead to freedom so as Camus concludes in *The Rebel* that "the freedom to kill is not compatible with the sense of rebellion" (1956, p. 284). Violence, for example, is a brutal and inhuman doing that Bigger followed in one of his attempts to liberate "he closed his eyes and struck out blindly, hitting what or whom he could, not looking or caring what or who hit back" (Wright, 2005, p. 205). Bigger encompasses the formation of rebellion and becomes a fugitive who fears either to be caught and punished or escaped and isolated. His manipulations and disgraceful deeds of murdering rendered his aspiration for identity confirmation into unconscious and dispersed rebellion. Thus, his fears and anxiety stand as an impediment toward unleashing from constraints of nihilism and lead him, consequently, to rebel inconsequentially.

Because of his reluctance, fear and irrational surge, a dramatic destiny is what Bigger ultimately harvests. Instead of being identified, Bigger, reversely, gains the resentment and antipathy of Whites as well as the shame for him and his family. He has become a murderer and reckless in the sight of others, especially after his blind rebellion. In the course of the novel, Bigger aspires to become a hero. To Max and some other Blacks, Bigger is the big and the agent of his peers. He supposed himself to be the hero who struggle on behalf of other Blacks, but that ambition has soon thwarted, however, by his execution.

Richard Wright tacitly implied that one has to reconcile with others whatever their origin and wherever they come from. Compatibility lies only in our acceptance for each other and in awarding the rights justly to all people regardless of their ethnic origin. Being black or white does not confine the permanence of life, but societal relations are the real essence of our existence. Padmini Mongia maintains the principle of peaceful coexistence when she comments that "The real other for the Whiteman is and will continue to be the black man. And conversely" (138). Thus, the meaningless existence or nothingness is the eminent episode in the novel. It is that sense of nihilism that Bigger Thomas has and for which his endeavours are employed to rebel.

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