



## The Intersection of History and Psychology in Richard Wright's Native Son: A Historical and Psychoanalytic Analysis

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### Abstract

This study looks at the history and psychology that converge in *Native Son* by Richard Wright from an interdisciplinary perspective of history and psychoanalysis. It explores the life and identity of Bigger Thomas as they are influenced by systemic racism, social inequality and economic oppression in 1930s America. The research employs the theories of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, and Frantz Fanon to examine such important psychological ideas as fear, repression, and internalized oppression. The results indicate that the violent behavior of the Bigger is caused by the combination of social forces and the conflict of the internal psychology. The paper finds that the novel needs to be studied through an interdisciplinary approach in which one must combine the historical and psychological approaches to the novel.

**Keywords:** Historical context, Psychoanalysis, Racism, Identity, Fear, Repression, Social determinism, Internalized oppression

تقاطع التاريخ وعلم النفس في رواية "ابن البلد" لريتشارد رايت: تحليل تاريخي ونفسي  
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### ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة تقاطع التاريخ وعلم النفس في رواية "ابن البلد" لريتشارد رايت من منظور متعدد التخصصات يجمع بين التاريخ والتحليل النفسي. وتستكشف حياة وهوية بيغر توماس وتأثير العنصرية الممنهجة، وعدم المساواة الاجتماعية، والقمع الاقتصادي في أمريكا خلال ثلاثينيات القرن العشرين. تستخدم الدراسة نظريات سيغموند فرويد، وجاك لاكان، وفرانتز فانون لفحص مفاهيم نفسية هامة كالخوف، والكبت، والقمع الداخلي. تشير النتائج إلى أن سلوك بيغر العنيف ناتج عن تضافر قوى اجتماعية وصراع نفسي داخلي. وتخلص الدراسة إلى ضرورة دراسة الرواية من خلال منهج متعدد التخصصات يجمع بين المنهجين التاريخي والنفسي. الكلمات المفتاحية: السياق التاريخي، التحليل النفسي، العنصرية، الهوية، الخوف، القمع، الحتمية الاجتماعية، القمع الداخلي

### Chapter One: Introduction

#### The Intersection of History and Psychology in *Native Son*: A Historical and Psychoanalytic Analysis

##### 1.1 Background of the Study

Literature has been a thriving tool where authors have always found a way to learn about the intricate nature of the interaction between people and the communities they exist in. Over the last few years, interdisciplinary approaches to literature, integrating the historical and psychological perspectives, have gained more and more popularity in the sphere of modern literary criticism, with an aim to attain a deeper comprehension of the literary texts. These methods acknowledge that



human behavior is not determined only by internal psychological forces or only by historical conditions, but is the resultant dynamic interaction of both. This is particularly important if they address issues of identity, oppression and social tension.

Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940) is one of the most powerful novels that portrays this intersection

. The novel is generally considered as a pillar of the African American literature and a critical piece in the genre of social protest fiction. It narrates of a young African American Man Bigger Thomas who resides in Chicago and whose life is defined by systemic racism, poverty, and limited opportunities. Using the experiences of Bigger, Wright reveals the ugliness of racial segregation and economic inequality in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century (Gates and McKay, 2014).

*Native Son* was written in the historical environment, which is critical to grasping the themes and narrative structure. Novel is placed in the 1930s when the Great Migration started and millions of African Americans began to leave the rural South and move to the North in search of improved economic prospects and social status. In spite of such expectations, a lot of migrants faced the new types of discrimination such as residential segregation, unemployment, and racial violence. The main location of the novel, Chicago was turned into the location of the race clash as the blacks were mostly crammed into densely populated areas and marginalized by the system (Grossman, 1989).

This is the social and political reality of the time that Wright is describing. Wright was affected by Marxist ideology and social realism to show how economic and social structures influence the lives of individuals. The setting in *Native Son* is not just a backdrop but also a force that predetermines the thoughts, feelings, and actions of Bigger. This view is also parallel to the historical criticism that focuses on the influence of socio-economic factors on the formation of literary characters and plots (Tyson, 2015).

Meanwhile, *Native Son* is extremely interested in exploration of psychology. The narrative style used by Wright is quite close to the inner world of Bigger and readers can experience his fears and desires and conflicts. The psychological condition of Bigger can be described as the state of high fear, anger, and confusion, all of which are based on his life experience in a racially oppressive society. His behavior, even violent behavior, can be explained by the reaction to external forces and internal psychological conflicts.

In psychoanalytic terms, Bigger Thomas is a symbol of a person whose psyche has been severely influenced by repression and trauma. Based on the theories of Sigmund Freud, psychoanalytic criticism focuses on the way in which unconscious



desires, fears and conflicts shape behavior. The fact that Bigger is always afraid of white authority figures, e.g. can be seen as a form of internalized oppression, where the structures of power in society get instilled in the mind of the individual (Freud, 1923/1961). His violent behavior, in its turn, can be regarded as the outbursts of suppressed emotions that have been repressed during the course of time.

Additionally, one of the most important concepts in the novel is the formation of identity. Bigger finds it difficult to build his self in a world that does not recognize him as a human being and surrounds him with confining stereotypes. In his examination of colonial psychology, Fanon (1967) states that oppressed people tend to absorb the negative images that are projected on them by dominant groups and they end up feeling alienated and hating themselves. Even though Fanon wrote in the colonial context, his writings are very applicable in analyzing the psychological state of Bigger since he is in the world that continuously determines his psychological state, which is the fear and inferiority.

The historical and psychological overlap in *Native Son* is, therefore, a fruitful point of analysis. Through the exploration of the influence that historical forces exert on the experience of the psychological, the current study will aim at providing a thorough perspective on the character of Bigger Thomas as both a product of the surrounding world and an individual with a multifaceted inner struggle. Not only does this help to emphasize the richness of the literary accomplishment of Wright, but it also shows the value of interdisciplinary analysis in the study of literature.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Though *Native Son* has received a lot of critical focus, most of the research will either be historical or psychological. Historical accounts focus on the intersection of systemic racism and socio-economic factors, while psychoanalytic works may focus more on Bigger's internal struggle and not on the external influences that might contribute to Bigger's conflicts. The separation reduces the depth of understanding that can be gained.

This study aims to find a lack of an integrated approach that will analyze the interaction between historical factors and the psychological development of Bigger Thomas in their influence on the development of his character. Otherwise, one might either overlook the social influences on behavior, or overlook the complexity of individual psychology, all within the bounds of the novel.

### **1.3 Aims of the Study**

This study aims to:

2. Examine how *Native Son* was influenced by its historical context and how it examines Native Americans.



Using psychoanalytic theory, analyze the psychological aspects of Bigger Thomas' character.

3. Investigate the relationship between historical events and psychological dynamics that can influence identity and behaviour.
5. Explain how Wright uses social critique and psychology in the novel.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions:

What are some of the ways in which the setting of the 1930s America affects the characters and events of the book *Native Son*.

2. What are the psychological conditions that influence Bigger Thomas' actions and behavior?
3. How can psychoanalytic theory explain Bigger's internal conflicts and violent tendencies?

How do ideas of history and psychology shape Bigger's self?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because it combines historical and psychoanalytic methods in order to have a more thorough analysis of *Native Son*. The study contributes to a better understanding of the human experience in the context of literature's representation and critique of the human condition because it addresses the gap between those two approaches.

Furthermore, this research highlights the topicality of Wright's works in modern times of the subject of race, identity and social justice. The topics addressed by *Native Son*, such as systemic oppression, psychological trauma, and identity formation, are still very relevant in the contemporary society. Consequently, the work is not only a contribution to the literary literature, but also provides some information on a larger cultural and social problem.

#### **1.6 Scope and Limitations**

The paper is a particular study of *Native Son* and its analysis in terms of historical and psychoanalytic criticism. Other theoretical approaches, e.g., feminist or postcolonial criticism, can potentially be very useful, but are out of the scope of this study.

The discussion is confined to the nature of the character of Bigger Thomas and the socio-historical background of the USA in 1930. More so, the psychoanalytic paradigm is mainly founded on Freudian theory and a little mention of subsequent achievements of the psychological criticism.

#### **1.7 Methodology**

The qualitative method of analysis chosen in this study is the textual analysis. It uses historical sources to contextualize the novel and uses the psychoanalytic theory to explain the psychological aspects of the main character. The main source



of data is the text of *Native Son*, and secondary sources are academic books, journal articles, and critical essays.

## **Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review** **The Intersection of History and Psychology in *Native Son***

### **2.1 Introduction**

It is a chapter where the theoretical framework is described, and the literature related to the analysis of *Native Son* is reviewed. It provides the important background on which this study is set up by combining two significant approaches: historical criticism and psychoanalytic theory. These methods are vital in the interpretation of the interaction between the external socio-historical forces and internal psychological processes in the formation of the character of Bigger Thomas. Combining these points of view, the chapter is going to prove that the complete interpretation of the novel cannot be made without references to both the context and the consciousness.

### **2.2 Historical Criticism and Social Context**

The focus of historical criticism is on analyzing literary texts in respect to the socio-political, economic, and cultural contexts under which they were created. This method presupposes that literature is the mirror and the reaction to the historical facts of the epoch. With *Native Son*, the historical background of the 1930s America is important in developing the story and its characters.

The novel is firmly anchored in the reality of the Great Migration and urbanization of the life of African Americans. In this time millions of African Americans migrated to the major cities of the north like Chicago in the pursuit of improved opportunities only to be met with systemic racism in different forms. The situation of extreme limitation and marginalization was developed by housing discrimination, job segregation, and racial violence (Grossman, 1989). These circumstances are clearly shown in the novel, as Bigger Thomas and his family reside in poverty-stricken, overcrowded housing, the representation of structural inequalities as practiced by white dominated institutions.

Tyson (2015) argues that in historical criticism, it is important to note that the actions of characters cannot be explained completely without references to the material conditions that determine their existence. The actions of Bigger in *Native Son* cannot be separated because of the oppressive atmosphere in which he finds himself. Systemic racism is the direct cause of his limited opportunities, being watched all the time, and being afraid of the white authority figures. The picture described by Wright conforms to the Marxist literary theory that argues that economic and social structures define human consciousness and behavior.



Marxist ideology in turn influenced Richard Wright himself, especially when he engaged himself in leftist politics in the 1930s. His writing represents a dedication to the revelation of evils of capitalistic and racist systems. According to Hakutani (1996), Wright saw literature as the instrument to social change, the one that helps to expose the circumstances that result in inequality and suffering. In *Native Son*, this view is manifested through the manner in which the story not only criticizes the acts of individuals, but also criticizes the social systems that allow such acts to exist.

Moreover, social determinism is a major theme in historical interpretations of the novel. Social determinism implies that the behavior of individuals is mostly defined by the environmental factors, such as the economic status, social class, and cultural norms. Bigger Thomas can be regarded as a by-product of these forces because his identity and the actions are restricted by the limitations placed on him. This view is a challenge to conventional thinking of individual responsibility because it focuses more on systemic oppression as a source of human behavior.

### **2.3 Psychoanalytic Theory**

Whereas historical criticism is interested in the external factors, the psychoanalytic theory examines the internal aspects of human behavior. Psychoanalysis is a theory developed by Sigmund Freud to explore the influence of the unconscious, repression and internal conflict in determining human behavior. The structural model of the psyche developed by Freud, i.e., the id, ego and superego, offers a helpful approach to the analysis of literary characters.

The actions of Bigger Thomas of the book *Native Son* can be explained using this model. The id is the instinctual desires and the impulses, the ego is the mediator between the desires and the reality, and the superego is the moral and societal expectations (Freud, 1923/1961). The violent behavior of Bigger can be interpreted as the consequence of the disproportionality of these elements. His repressed desires and fears which are formed by his surroundings burst out in extreme tension moments that result in impulsive and destructive behavior.

Another important notion in the psychoanalytic theory, which is very applicable to the novel, is that of repression. Repression is a process through which inadmissible thoughts and feelings are repressed into the unconscious mind. Bigger is always afraid and angry but does not say anything as his social surroundings do not allow him to express himself. But these subjugated emotions do not vanish, rather they build up and ultimately release themselves through acts of violence. The unintentional murder of Mary Dalton may be viewed as an instance when hidden fear strikes the conscious mind.

Besides, the psychoanalytic theory emphasizes the role of anxiety as a factor in behavior. The life of Bigger is filled with fear, fear of whites, fear of punishments



and fear of failure. This fear is not only individual, but it is socially constructed as a result of the ever-present danger of violence and discrimination. According to Tyson (2015), the psychoanalytic criticism tends to show the internalization of external oppression that can affect the self and the behavior.

This analysis is further elaborated with later developments in psychoanalysis, especially the works of Jacques Lacan. The theory of the mirror stage and identity development around language and social systems developed by Lacan informs one the running of discontinuity in the identity of Bigger. Bigger sees himself through the eyes of a racist society, which identifies him as inferior and dangerous. This image is internalized and results in a broken identity which is self-alienation.

Besides, the concepts of Frantz Fanon are especially applicable to the interpretation of the psychological impacts of racial oppression. *In Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (1967) believes that colonized people absorb the values and the prejudices of the dominant culture leading to psychological struggle and identity crisis. Even though the analysis offered by Fanon is specific to colonial situations, it can be applied to *Native Son* as we see Bigger trying to establish his identity in a world that does not recognize him as a human being.

#### **2.4 Intersection of History and Psychology**

The combination of psychoanalytic and historical approaches offers a better perspective of examining *Native Son*. This study focuses on the interdependence of external and internal factors as opposed to treating them as independent. The psychological condition of Bigger Thomas cannot be interpreted without the historical conditions understanding it and the other way around.

One of the major points of intersection between these approaches is the concept of internalized oppression. Racism and economic inequality can have an external as well as an internal impact on a person's life, their inner world and on how they see themselves and other people. Because greater is afraid, angry and lesser, it is because of his environment as well as his psychological response to his surroundings.

This crossroads is also reflected in the novel in the aspect of violence. Historically, the actions of Bigger may be regarded as the reactions to the systemic oppression. Psychoanalytically, they are the manifestation of the repressed emotions. All these interpretations, combined, imply that the violence in *Native Son* is socially constructed and psychologically motivated.

Moreover, the speeches in the courtroom in the novel accentuate this intersection by directly connecting the mental state of Bigger to his surroundings. His defense is that his behavior is not entirely due to the choice of an individual but rather influenced by the circumstances of his upbringing. This point supports the notion that interpretation of Bigger needs a historical and a psychological approach.



## 2.5 Review of Previous Studies

*Native Son* has been reviewed by many researchers in different critical terms. Initial analysis of the novel is more concerned with the novel as a social protest work, i.e. the way the novel criticized racism and inequality. As an illustration, Baldwin (1949) notoriously criticized Wright on the way he portrayed Bigger Thomas claiming that the character was simplistic and was overly driven by social forces. This has since been disputed by critics who have pointed out the psychological depth of the character.

Psychoanalytic theory has also been used on the novel by other researchers to investigate issues of fear, repression and identity. These interpretations usually pay attention to the internal struggle of Bigger and influence of unconscious processes on his behavior. Although these studies are very informative, they at times fail to give consideration to the historical background that informs these psychological processes.

More recent scholarship has attempted to combine these methods, and has noted the value of looking at both external and internal factors. Rampersad (2000) describes the work by Wright as a blend of social realism and psychological intricacy, which is why this literary piece is especially appropriate to interdisciplinary analysis. This paper is based on this view by specifically concentrating on the crossroads between history and psychology.

## 2.6 Research Gap

Although the research on *Native Son* is extensive, there is still a gap in research that combines the historical and psychoanalytic approaches completely. Most analyses have tended to focus more on one aspect of the novel to the exclusion of the other, creating an impartial interpretation of the novel.

This research helps in filling this gap as the analysis is rather thorough and covers the socio-historical context, as well as psychological aspects of the text. In this manner it attempts to offer a less extreme look at Bigger Thomas and what shapes his beliefs and his actions.

## Chapter Three: Analysis and Discussion The Intersection of History and Psychology in *Native Son*

### 3.1 Introduction

The chapter is a highly complex criticism of *Native Son* with historical and psychoanalytical approaches. It offers insight into the interplay of socio-historical forces and psychological play in the creation of Bigger Thomas' character. The chapter is revealed through a close textual analysis to show that the identity, behaviors, and the inner struggles of Bigger are the results of both the systemic



oppression and the unconscious psychological process. The discussion centers on some of the central themes such as fear, violence, identity formation, and internalized oppression.

### **3.2 Historical Forces and the Construction of Bigger Thomas**

The nature of the character of Bigger Thomas is not comprehensible outside of the historical circumstances that shape his existence. The novel is set in Chicago during the 1930s when racial segregation, economic disparities and social marginalization prevailed. The blacks were mostly restricted to poor city life in which chances of progressing were meager. These institutionalized limitations define the worldview of Bigger and limit his possibilities.

Even the very first scenes in the novel show the surrounding of Bigger to be oppressive and claustrophobic. The small apartment where he lives with his family represents the social isolation that is imposed upon the Blacks in general. This geographical constraint can be defined as what historical critics consider as systemic racism in which social constructs deny people the mobility or the ability to self-realize (Tyson, 2015).

The initial line of Bigger, We live here and they live there. We black and they white. They got things and we ain't (Wright, 1940), summarizes the fact that Bigger is conscious of the racial divide and inequality. This awareness is not just superficial but highly internal and forms his identity and expectations. His interpretation of the world is organized around binaries, Black versus white, power versus powerlessness, which is an expression of the strict racial divisions of his society.

The historical forces can also be seen in the restricted opportunities that Bigger has. The jobs he can get are low-paid, low-level jobs, which further support his inferiority and frustrations. At the time he takes up the job with the Dalton family, it is not a chance to climb the ladder but rather a challenge to the forces of power that take up his life. Although the Daltons are liberal in their views, they represent the paternalistic racism that characterizes the white society.

In this way, the identity of Bigger is created in a social determinism context, in which he is influenced by forces that are out of his control. People such as Bigger are not born violent like Richard Wright implies in the story but are conditioned to live in fear, resentment, and alienation.

### **3.3 Fear as a Psychological and Social Construct**

The focal psychological force that controls the behavior of Bigger Thomas is fear. But this fear is not an in-built one, but rather a creation of the historical circumstances under which he is living. Psychoanalytically, fear is both a conscious and unconscious emotion that controls behavior.



The fear of the white authority figures is common to Bigger throughout the novel. This fear is based on the historical truth of racial violence, in which the black men were frequently subjected to vicious punishment over what seemed to be transgressions. Consequently, Bigger becomes more vigilant, always conscious of the possible outcome of his actions.

This is a fear that is experienced in his encounters with Mary Dalton and her boyfriend Jan. They want to treat him like an equal, but their actions are something to make him anxious and not to be calm. Bigger cannot explain their behavior in the context of the racial hierarchy, which causes the misunderstandings and tension. The fear becomes even more as he goes in the bedroom of Mary leading to the unintentional murder that dictates the course of the story.

Freudian-wise, this scene can be explained as the loss of repressed anxiety. According to Sigmund Freud, the repressed emotions tend to be exhibited in the unintended behaviors, especially when one is under stress (Freud, 1923/1961). Bigger does not plan his action but is motivated by the sheer fear of being caught in a socially forbidden position. His effort to hush Mary up leads to her death, and this is a good example of how fear of something unconscious may lead to disastrous results.

Moreover, fear determines how Bigger views himself. He internalizes the picture of the threatening black man developed by the white society, and this results in a discontinuous identity. This internalization is consistent with the construct of internalized oppression, in which people internalize the negative stereotypes of their social group. Consequently, it can be said that Bigger fears not only externally but internally as well, which adds to his alienation and self-loathing.

### **3.4 Violence as Expression and Reaction**

Violence in *Native Son* serves as a response to exterior pressure and a manifestation of inner psychological struggle. The violent behavior of Bigger has been viewed in most cases as the sign of his moral incompetency, a closer examination shows that the behavior is influenced by the combination of historical and psychological factors.

The murder of Mary Dalton is a turning point in the novel. Though unintentional, the act leads to a change in the psychological state of Bigger. At first, he feels very scared and panics but this feeling is quickly overtaken by the feeling of control and empowerment. He recalls, He had slain a white girl, And never was apprehended (Wright, 1940), which means that his view of himself was changed.

One can explain this transformation using a psychoanalytic theory as a way of releasing repressed emotions. The life of Bigger has been defined by helplessness and intimidation; the violence momentarily turns the tables around and he develops



a feeling of agency. But, this empowerment is a falsehood which in the end results in more destruction.

The following murder of Bessie demonstrates the devastating effects of this mental change. The death of Mary, in contrast to the murder of Bessie, is not accidental, as Bigger is becoming less and less attached to the moral rules. According to the psychoanalytic view, this development implies that the superego is weaker and instinctual drives control human behavior.

Meanwhile, the violence in the novel is closely related to the past discrimination. The behavior of bigger can be interpreted as a reaction to a society that does not provide him with dignity and free will. Violence in these situations, according to scholars, is a symptom of systemic injustice and not necessarily violent personal pathology (Gates and McKay, 2014).

Therefore, the violence in *Native Son* has several levels of functioning: it is a psychological outburst, a protest against oppression, a mirror of the rest of social relations which condition the behavior of the individuals.

### **3.5 Identity Formation and Internalized Oppression**

The formation of identity in the oppressed circumstances is one of the major concerns of *Native Son*. Bigger Thomas is also unable to establish his identity in a world of strict and dehumanizing labels of his.

Jacques Lacan believes that identity is constructed during the process of communication with other people and that it is determined by external perceptions. The identity of Bigger is formed because the gaze of the white society considers him as inferior and menacing. This image is internalized, and it results in a divided identity, which is self-alienation.

What I killed for, I am! That is what Bigger said. (Wright, 1940), is an expression of his bid to establish an identity by doing. Without social recognition, he identifies himself by violence which forms one of his modes of self-expression. This scene depicts how far his identity is influenced by the psychological needs and historical circumstances.

The idea of the double consciousness that is presented by W. E. B. Du Bois can also be applied to the situation of Bigger. Du Bois (1903) explains the internal struggle of the African Americans who were forced to live within their own self-identity and the identity thrust on them by a racist world. Bigger is a symbol of this conflict, as he cannot balance his sense of self with his roles.

Also, the theory of internalized racism by Frantz Fanon gives us more information about the psychological state of Bigger. Fanon (1967) maintains that the oppressed people usually absorb the ideals of the dominant culture, which cause them to feel inferior and self-hate. This dynamic is manifested in Bigger actions and self-perception, as he opposes and adheres to the stereotypes he is forced to inhabit.



### **3.6 The Courtroom and the Synthesis of History and Psychology**

The courtroom scene marks the ultimate stage of the discussion of the history and psychology in the novel. The trial of Bigger is used as a stage to argue out how much his actions can be influenced by his personal choice and how much they are influenced by social circumstances.

Defending with a presentation authored by Boris Max, one can present the historical and psychological forces very accurately in the defense speech. The social power failed to materialize in Bigger, and his behavior is the product of a long history of the social powers suppressing him. This is a line that aligns to the historical criticism which emphasizes the system of inequality as the source of behaviour.

Meanwhile, Max doesn't ignore the psychological aspects of Bigger's actions, focusing on the power of fear, repression, and inner conflict. With these views, the defense provides a detailed account of the actions of Bigger that undermines the naive concept of guilt and responsibility.

The prosecution, on its part, is concerned with individual responsibility, where Bigger is viewed as dangerous and corrupt in nature. This is the view that is held by the mainstream society, which disregards the influence of systemic oppression on behavior.

The courtroom then emerges as a place where rival accounts of the actions of Bigger are given, as a larger argument about the connection between history and psychology. Finally, the novel is not conclusive but rather urges the readers to think about the intricacy of these problems.

### **3.7 Discussion**

As the analysis in this chapter shows, it is impossible to interpret *Native Son* using one critical lens. The strength of the novel is that it is able to combine history and psychological views and see the complicated interlocking between the external and internal life.

Also, larger Thomas is a character who's not just shaped by his surroundings, but shapes them as well. His behavior is neither only a matter of personal choice nor it is also a matter of social forces. Instead they are the interaction of history and psychology whereby external oppression is internalized and manifested in behavior.

This is an important crossroad regarding the themes of identity, violence and responsibility in the novel. It suggests that the interpretation of personal behaviour be placed within a broader framework, taking into account social contexts which shape behaviour and psychological processes that might be expected to govern behaviour.



In this chapter, the combination of historical and psychoanalytical criticism has been examined in regard to *Native Son*. Through a combination of the socio-historical forces and psychological dynamics, the study has shown that Bigger Thomas is a complicated character who is influenced by both the outside oppression and the inside struggle.

The results reveal the significance of interdisciplinary approach in the study of literature, especially when focusing on the literature that presents the subject of identity and social justice. *Native Son* is a very strong and topical text, which contains the reflection of the long-term influence of history on the human psyche.

### Conclusions

In this study, the intricate connection between history and psychology in *Native Son* by Richard Wright has been explored, which has shown that the novel cannot be well comprehended by using a single critical approach. Through historical criticism and psychoanalytic theory, the study has demonstrated that Bigger Thomas is a character that is influenced by the external forces that are systemic oppression and the internal forces that are the psychological conflict.

Historically, the research has also underscored how the socio-economic realities of the 1930s America, especially racism, segregation and poverty, result in a situation that constrains the opportunities of Bigger and influences his view of the world. These are not only happenings in his background – they are motivators that shape his behaviours and underlie the view that people are significantly shaped by the frameworks within which they live. The experiences of Bigger portray the wider truth of the African American life of this era where inequality and racial discrimination was a part of life.

Meanwhile, the psychoanalytic interpretation has shown the extent of inner turmoil of Bigger. By relying on the theories of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan and Frantz Fanon, the analysis has revealed how the fear, repression and the internalized oppression influence his psyche. Bigger's behavior, particularly his acts of violence, manifest his repressed emotions and psychological struggles. He is afraid of the white authority and has a multiple self-identity that leads to self-destructive and revealing behaviors.

It has also been emphasized in the analysis that violence in *Native Son* is not just a failure of a person, it is the outcome of an interaction of social conditions and psychological processes. The systemic oppression could be said to be the impetus behind Bigger's behavior, and sublimation conflict is part of it. This two-sidedness is a challenge to the naivety of evaluating, it encourages the more sophisticated idea of responsibility, agency.



Further, the study has shown that the novel has been incorporating the elements of history and psychology, which are significant in the process of building identity in the novel.

. Bigger is constructing his sense of self by internalizing the perception of the society that alienates him and conflicts with his self. His inability to establish his identity in a dehumanizing society underscores the general effects of oppression on personal identity.

Conclusively, this study confirms that *Native Son* is an eloquent study of the convergence of historical forces and psychological element in influencing human behavior. By introducing Bigger Thomas as both a product of his surrounding and as a person with inner conflicts and contradictions, Richard Wright provides a deep analysis of a society that breeds the circumstances under which it criticizes. The novel is also very topical nowadays, as it still helps to see the long-term consequences of racism, inequality, and psychological trauma.

Finally, this study has a value to the field of literature in the sense that it shows the importance of an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates the historical and psychoanalytic viewpoint. This method does more than just enhance our insight into *Native Son*, it also offers a more generalized approach to the analysis of literature that deals with problems of identity, oppression, and human behavior.

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