Chapter - IV

OPPRESSION AND SUPPRESSION OF BLACK PEOPLE

Saddling and enforcing an individual’s interest and his influence on others thereby restraining in all fronts by domination are termed as Suppression and Oppression. Suppression is the exercise of authority or power in a burdensome, cruel, or unjust-manner. Wikipedia explores suppression in different tones, like the censorship on expression of views, the suppression of public, voter suppression, cultural suppression and religious suppression. The victim of crisis either individual or the group undergoes the feeling of being heavily burdened, mentally or physically, by troubles, adverse conditions and uncontrolled anxiety.

The conceit of show of supremacy is always natural that one particular racial group, either it is human or animal species tries to dominate the other group and consider the lesser privileged as the nonentity due to several reasons like the color, culture, historical background and language and at times by misusing their illiteracy and ignorance. Upon this Arijie Yetunde Umalkhelsum, recalls that according to “Charles V.Hamilton and Kwame Turc, racism is “A prediction of decision and policies on consideration of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining over that group.”” (Umalkhelsum, Y.Arijie, 9)

On the other hand, oppression is defined by the Encyclopedia as “humiliating through various methods, torturing a person, degrading an individual and creating a fear psychosis by the use of violence and brutality.” Wikipedia further classifies oppression is ‘an act of repression, the feeling of being severely targeted - mentally or physically by troubles, adverse condition and anxiety.’

In furtherance, oppression can be classified as an act of outside entity that uses its force to stop any movement. Similarly, suppression occurs when the mind is prevented from
expanding itself and closed with no outlets, i.e. blocked and sealed. This tendency develops a psychological impact with inferiority complex. Oppressiveness is, when one opposed to do anything on his own accord and punished if he attempts to be on his own, as a result the desire of the individual to do something worthwhile ceased to exist forever. Several Indian authors have also focused on the themes of suppression and exploitation of underprivileged people. One of the famous Indian writers, and a short-story writer Mulkraj Anand has portrayed his protagonists ‘Bakha’ in Untouchable, his first novel published in 1935, ‘Bhaka’ the untouchable boy cleans and removes the human excreta, narrates his single day’s story and how he goes through severity of exploitation and oppression by the upper caste. Further in his other novel, Coolie, which was published in 1936, he gives the chilling picture of his character ‘Munnoo’ and his role as a servant boy in a house, a factory worker and a rickshaw puller. Mulkraj expressed suppressive tendency of the society and the vindictive hold of discrimination. Like Bigger Thomas, and Richard Wright, Munnoo was also suppressed and exploited in his society. He was even denied the right to answer the nature-call and such was the plight of Munnoo, which was no different from that of blacks in America.

History has portrayed various colors of haves and have-nots. The blacks became the voiceless people to bear the burns of oppressiveness without their knowledge, and unaware of the suppressive forces that had surrounded them. When the innocent and ignorant Negroes were shipped forcibly from their mother land, the Dark Continent to the New Land, the act of oppression and suppression expands its hostile claw. They innocently had become the victim and ultimately been made helpless, therefore, nowhere to escape. Robert Ivanov explains the inexplicable trauma underwent by the blacks, as slaves, when they were shipped like the cattle, and their horrific journey,
...when the sunset, the whole band went below. There the space assigned each to lie down was six feet by sixteen inches. The bare boards were their beds. To make them lie close, the lash was used. For one to turn from his right side his left was impossible, unless the long line of cramped and stiffened turned with him. But the misery of a night was as nothing to the misery of a stormy day. Then the hatches were fastened down, tarpaulins were drawn over the gratings, and ventilation ceased; the air grew thick and stiffing; the floor became wet with perspiration; the groaning and panting of the pent-up negroes could be held on deck...it was not uncommon for as many as five dead bodies to be brought up and flung over the ship’s side. (Ivanov, Robert, 28)

The fate and future of the blacks were determined by the whites, upon reaching the new shores. They were named ‘Negroes’, ‘Niggers’, ‘Blacks’ and later called as the ‘African-Americans’. As victims of betrayal, by their own people and fellow Africans, nearly four million blacks were shipped to America from their natural habitat, and lost their cultured background into the pit of racially prejudiced hell for no fault of theirs other than born black. Thus came into the existence, the dark agony of Negro slaves, the black pages of the history of America, and the shameful act of “slavery”. The torture, trauma and the inhuman treatment underwent by the slaves were continued from generations to generations.

Afro-Americans have a long and rich tradition. Many Afro-American writers have questioned the status of the blacks in the social, economical and cultural milieu. Their autobiographies and the protagonists of the oeuvres reveal their protests. It represented the despair and anguish that they and their forefather’s had undergone throughout their lives. Especially women writers like Maya Angelou, Alice Walker and Tony Morrison articulated their
agony filled lives to shed light on the black male and female's inhuman miseries. Most Afro-American writers tried their hands in sifting the sufferings of the black to climb out of the oppressive horrors of the dominant society. Many of the African as well as Afro-American writers vent out the sufferings of blacks due to suppression perpetuated on them in their stories. African writer Alex La Guma had depicted the colored people’s distress and how they were suppressed by the whites in his novel, *A Walk in the Night*, through his protagonist Michael Adonis. The characters of Alex La Guma and Richard Wright have the similarities. Both went through the horrors of police brutalities and also by the white masters and reflect it in their novels. Michael Adonis and Richard in *Black Boy* face the same fate of losing the jobs and daily bread because of the dislike of their white superiors.

History confirms that over the centuries, blacks were suppressed by denial of equal status for them. It was difficult for them to survive in a society where they had to face discrimination, and labor exploitation. Laws were meant only to support the whites. The rules and policies which were written for the blacks were the cold truths. Unrealistic and one sided laws, to suit the interests of the whites, were implemented. The infamous Jim Crow Law gave unlimited authority for the whites that any white man can complain or punish a black for any reason and the court and the police were always supportive of them. A black cannot even complain the atrocities and violence he was subjected to. Education was a dream for any black man and whites always had a fear that education will make the blacks to realize their state in the society and it will lead them questioning for their basic rights, like right to education, vote and right to acquire their wages, and job opportunities.

The novels of Richard have carved a niche for himself. They explore the black world’s voiceless emotions. They examine the trauma faced by the blacks, the meaninglessness in life, the humiliation, and the enslavement of blacks in a typical style and at the same time attract
attention. Richard exposes the results of ‘suppression’ laid upon the blacks through the characters in his autobiographical novel ‘Black Boy.’ It laments the ethics of living in the ‘South’ and the oppression, exploitation and the feeling of insecurity they (blacks) endured. In his fictional world, there is always disturbance and turbulent passions of emotions. He invariably focuses on the tragic side of human life that depicts suffering and death. He records the emotional turmoil of his oppressed protagonists to bring a serious view on human values. There is a quest for meaning in his characters who lead, unfortunately, a life of meaninglessness. This is a very sensitive issue mingled with psychological conflicts between the individual and the society.

The novel, Black Boy was dynamite. It provoked the white society to understand the degradation they have brought on blacks and the turn of events which have frustrated the blacks to go to any extent to revolt against the racial oppression. He brought to light the various forces that influence Negro’s (black’s) oppressive conditions and their psychology. ‘He loses his self-image’ says, Alvin F. Poussaint, a Southern Field Director of Medical Committee for Human Rights,

Most psychiatrists and psychologists would agree that the Negro American suffers from a marred self-image of varying degree, which critically affects his entire psychological being. It is also a well - documented fact that this negative self-concept leads to self–destructive attitudes and behaviors that hinder the Negros struggle toward full equality in American life. Over three hundred years ago black men, women, and children were extracted from their native Africa, stripped bare both psychologically and physically and placed in an alien white world. They were to occupy the most degraded human conditions; that of a slave, a
piece of property; a non person. For inhumane economic reasons, the Negro family was broken up and scattered from auction block to auction block all over America. In the resulting color caste system, white people made certain that any wares they allotted to Negro were inferior. Negroes are powerless politically and do not have their own sense of pride and worth as black men, they are psychological beggars in a white man’s house. (Dr. Poussaint, F. Alvin)

In all his works Richard Wright presents his protagonists living in a traumatized, degraded, insecure world of existential problems. The characters suffer silently due to disappointments and denial of human rights. His works explored the social impact and came as a blow at the face of racism and white chauvinism.

Richard attempted to bring a change of atmosphere in the society by portraying the protagonists and their consequential experience because of suppression. Therefore misery and violence become the part of their life. In many of his stories, the characters are socially affected as a result of their enslavement and utter helplessness. Finally, the unfortunate blacks either succumb to the dreadful oppression of the society or miserably, become the victims of racism. The characters, who opposed the oppressive nature of the supreme whites, are punished severely, lynched and mutilated. The individual who wanted to rebel or change and create a little space for them in the society face untold sufferings, brutalities and violence perpetrated by the public as well as the police. This conditionality is revealed by George Padmore as,

Most of the terrorist practices against Negroes are perpetuated by specially created fascists organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan, the American Legion, the Black shirts, the Caucasian Crusaders etc... These organizations are supported by the bourgeoisie and reactionary middle
class elements. They invade the sections, where the Negroes live, burn homes and crops, kill off live stock, poison drinking water wells, murder and lynch unarmed men, women and children who dare to offer resistance to their programs. (Padmore, George)

The self determination of the blacks and their prominence threatened the supremacy of whites. To curtail their emergence a fanatic organization was formed in 1866 naming it Ku Klux Klan. The Ku Klux Klan became vulnerable towards blacks and started indulging in mob-harassments, torturing and even lynching which became their regular activities. They terrorized the black families and the organization vehemently opposed to educating the blacks. A false notion about Negroes was spread by this organization and they published a newspaper in order to make the people believe that Negroes were dangerous to the white society. To keep the blacks at ‘zero’ level in the society, they took the weapon of depriving education, equal jobs, and voting rights. As Richard T.Schaefer describes the notion of a Klanman:

“we don’t hate Negroes. We love’em in their place-like shinin’ shoes, bell-hoppin’, street sweepin’, pickin’ cotton, diggin’ ditches, eatin’ possum, servin’ time …” (qtd., Schaefer, Richard.T, 153)

The Ku Klux Klan men threatened and suppressed the blacks in the name of religion too. They instigated the activities which were against the empowerment and enrichment of the whole black race. Richard voices the mute miseries and the helplessness of millions of black women. A significant out break of the pain and anguish of a mother is expressed by his deeply wounding narrative in ‘Long Dream’. They became the victims of intimidation and white domination without any salvation and there was no rescue for the poor blacks from the hellish life. The chaos the Klan bring in their life and the agony of a suffering mother is a tip of an ice berg to
show, much of the white supremacy and the black’s thwarted condition remain unnoticed. The bereaved mother languishes,

Lawd help me. she prayed, leaning forward with shut eyes, too terrified to look. “Chris baby, this ain’t you, naw, naw, Gawd! This can’t be! It ain’t true? It ain’t right!” Mrs. Sims cried, clinging hysterically to the dead body. Then she keened with shut eyes. “Gawd didn’t do this to me? ... I carried you in my body; I felt you growing; I birthed you in pain; I gave you life with my blood! Naw, this … God… You got to do something to stop this from happening to black women’s children. If I had to do it over again, I wouldn’t have a child! I’d tear it out of my womb! Women don’t bring children into the world to die like this! … I don’t want your wind to blow on me when my son can die like this … I’m standing ‘fore your throne asking you to tell me.” I what did I ever do wrong? Where’s my sin? If my only son was to be killed, then tell me and I’d kill’im. Not them white folks… Lawd, we ain’t scared to die. BUT NOT LIKE THIS! Gawd, talk to me. As long as I live, I’ll be asking you to tell me why my son died like this.” (LD, 69)

These woe filled questions of a grief stricken mother is not only posed towards the God, the super power but also to the whole world; it is a missile launched against the cruel act of whites. She craves for the redemption of whole black community which suffers. She is questioning the Lord to take away this evil life. Had she known this earlier she would have torn her womb before she gave birth to her son. Had she known this already she would have killed her son before the white folks made him into pieces. She asked the Almighty to stop the wind so that it won’t blow on her. She questioned the God to remove the sun from the sky, and she
doesn’t want the trees and flowers. As God showed the injustice to her son, she grieved by asking the Lord for justice and the reason behind this inhuman atrocity.

Richard presents an undercurrent of painful portrayals of blacks who were entrapped miserably in slavery. The novelist repeatedly asserts his opinion on the social characters. Richard’s concern is singularly aimed at reflecting the conflicting emotional life within the frame work of the society. The human face of Richard’s novels are complimented by Henry James, says the critic, S.B.Mathur,

Life is rendered meaningful through creative imagination which imparts form and shape to aspects of human experience. According to Henry James, “the only reason for the existence of the novel is that it does attempt to represent life. (qtd., Mathur, S.B, 13)

Toni Morrison genuinely outpours that the writings of Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright are not merely fictions but silent reminders of the outcome of violent social discretion. She has urged that their works are the translations of the mute sufferings endured by the blacks. It is a translation from black pages of the history book created by the whites. They expose the true situation of the blacks. They succeed in revealing these black pages to whole world. In an interview, when Toni Morrison was asked, “when you say that you feel these writers are explaining something “to me” are you referring to the fact that their work is morally informed? Toni Morrison the great woman black writer, who won the “Pulitzer award” for her work Beloved (1987), answered, “There is a mask that sometimes exists when black people talk to white people. Somehow it seems to me that it spilled over into the fiction.” (Rvas, Charles, 218)

She opined that, the fear of withdrawal from the society stemmed out of the black’s mind made them to wear a false mask on their soul and hide their feelings. They live in a cocoon
surrounded by agony and do not reveal their fury and frustration. They led the life like a fish out of water, breathing under suffocation. The blacks were scared to reveal their pent up emotions and disappointments. Toni Morrison, thus shared her admiration in her conversation with Charles Rvas,

Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright all of whose books, I admire enormously. I did not feel they were telling me something. I thought they were saying something about it or us that revealed something about us to you, to others, to white people, to me. (Rvas, Charles, 217, 218)

The continuous oppression and the degradation inflicted on the blacks made them to underestimate their abilities, talents and skills. Their mind, soul and body were ever ready to be submissive, and timid. Whites by their actions indirectly forced the blacks to accept their place, at the lower ring of the ladder. Uhuru Sasa Shule critically analyses on the same theme stating,

One of the consequences of being powerless minority group in American society is that Blacks have historically been assigned and forced to wear labels of inferiority. These labels have functioned as mechanisms of discrimination and oppression. These labels and stereotypes to which Blacks are subjected have been virtually excluded from the decision-making process in the society. (Shule, Uhuru SASA, 215)

The whites take the weapon of “suppression” as an authority against the blacks to nip their efficiency, skill and talents in the bud. They oppress the blacks and wickedly keep them under control. The oppression starts when the whites strike a blow at the psychological self-respect of the blacks by denying them their status in the society as a man by addressing them as ‘boy’. It leads the blacks to adapt an invisible life in the society. They tend to hate the mere presence of whites, as they are belittled. Since it becomes impossible for them to hide their
anxiety, they pretend to be invisible. They follow a pretense of non-existence as the only escaping way to avoid losing their self-respect. A psychological barrier is weighed on the blacks to “inspire disesteem” mixing it with their struggle for survival. The mounding fear instigates them to be subordinate and not act as a man before the ‘white men.’

They were not only called by whites as ‘boy’ by denying their manliness, they were also called as “nigger” the most degraded word for a Negro to segregate and humiliate them with color. It was the denial of their life and the treatment of not being considered them as a human. To suppress their self-esteem blacks were called by undignified words. In return blacks were expected to address whites with the most respectable and highly regarded words. By slitting their main nerve which connects their entire system of self-confidence, it is an easy task of making them lifeless, remarks Joyce Moss,

Black people of all ages were called by their first names and nicknames, or simply “boy,” “girl,” or “nigger.” Most whites on the other hand expected blacks to greet with a formal ‘Mr’; ‘Mrs’; ‘Sir’; or ‘Ma’am.’ Similarly, difference was expected in all situations. Blacks were expected to wait in any line until all whites were served first, and to yield the ‘right of way’ for whites when walking or driving. When blacks entered a white home, they customarily entered through the back door. Furthermore, blacks who demonstrated intellectual curiosity or superior intelligence were discouraged from education. (Moss, Joyce, 36)

The utterance of word ‘Boy’ is to justify the white supremacy and also demean the blacks. When a MAN is called ‘BOY’, it denigrates the personality of an individual. It is an act of stunting all the life experience of a man that made him an adult. It was simple to tell them they could not survive on their own without protection of worthier and stronger beings. The
term ‘boy’ also infers that they are nothing more than children who cannot think for themselves. They were never considered as a person or male equal to a white man. This practice is intended to prevent the blacks from challenging the white man or looking the white into their eyes.

To keep the blacks as underperformers, the whites attempted on all possible aspects. The legacy of racism ensured continuation of black’s underdevelopment and denial of education to put them collectively as disadvantaged. Added to this structure, racism restrained the black community to understand the value of education. To exploit the slaves, their masters adopted the philosophy that a ‘learned Negro cannot be subdued,’ therefore, they decided that African-American should not be given education. Hence access to education for African-Americans was a cause of concern for the whites. Amar Salem in his thesis on the *Prejudice, Violence and Death*; in Alex La Guma’s *A Walk in the Night* and Richard Wright’s *Native Son* writes a story from Leon F.Litwack, quoted by Andrew Warnes on why the white man is worried about the Negro’s education:

. . . curtailing the educational opportunities of blacks, along with segregation and disfranchisement, were important mechanisms of racial control… A story that would make the rounds among blacks … revealed … a marvelous insight into the workings of the white mind. As he was leaving the railroad depot with a northern visitor, a southern Whiteman saw two Negroes, one asleep and the other reading a newspaper. He kicked the Negro reading the newspaper. ‘Would you please explain that?’ The Northerner asked. I don’t understand it. I would think that if you were going to kick one you would kick the lazy one who’s sleeping.’ The white southerner replied, ‘that’s not the one we’re worried about.’ (Salem, Amar, 47)
Social conditions were framed in the name of legislation to subordinate, separate and oppress them from all corners. It was feared that education will equip the slaves to rebel; on the contrary, denial of education intensified Black’s desire for education. In his own life Richard’s urge to get education was entangled with his life style. He had to switch over schools and during his adolescence though he was attracted towards reading, he could fulfill this dream by borrowing books from the library giving some white’s name, because, as a black he was not allowed to borrow books from there. A favorable environment of capitalistic system helped the already overpowering nature of whites to be more oppressive on the blacks. This provoked characters like Bigger and others to emerge against the whites and take up violence. It was the corrupt system which triggered the blacks to go against the unreasonable whites.

In Black Boy Richard projected how he was denied of the education; in Native Son he detailed the result of the lack of education to the Blacks through the arguments of Max. He emphasized that non education was one of the cause for the miseries of Blacks and lack of knowledge gave more opportunities for the whites to suppress the blacks. At the same time, it was the same whites who curtailed their imagination and thinking capacity by denying them education.

The ultimate result was that the Negro never determined to act against the whites and believed that he was inferior, Carter Godwin Woodson conveys on ‘The Mis-education of the Negro’, as quoted by Franklin Jones,

If you can control a man’s thinking, you don’t have to worry about his actions. If you can determine what a man thinks, you do not have to worry about what he will do. If you can make a man believe that he is inferior, you don’t have to compel him to seek an inferior status, he will do so without being told and if you can make a man believe that he is
justly an outcast, you don’t have to order him to the back door, he will go to the back door on his own, and if there is no back door the very nature of the man will demand that you build one. (Jones, Franklin aka Thanubian)

Through *Black Boy* his autobiographical novel, Richard not only presents his life in South Mississippi but also the plight of his whole race. Felgar gives the picture how education was curtailed for blacks,

... to be born in Mississippi, in 1908, when accurate records of the time of birth of black children in that state was to be denied most opportunities for literary accomplishment, although Wright is obviously an exception. In 1908, black Mississippians could not vote, live where they wanted to, attend white schools. (Felgar, Robert, 1)

Education enhances personality. It gives a meaning to one’s life and it fulfils one’s dream to achieve excellence. One of the best ways to suppress a man’s psychological urge to shine up in the society is to curb him from getting education. Richard was fortunate enough to listen a story “Bluebeard and his Seven Wives” from Ms.Ella who was a tenant in Richard’s granny’s house. The description of the story introduced him a new life, a new channel which led him to read and write his first story “Voodoo”. Thereafter, the writings of H.L.Mencken have opened a new beginning for Richard in his literary life.

An example can be given for this denial of education from Richard Wright’s *Black Boy*. Though there were similar Black Boys in every part of the white dominated America, who were stopped from getting educated, Richard himself experienced this and his local library prohibited Negroes from borrowing books. In the South most of the libraries were not accessible to blacks. The service was provided only to the whites. Mostly, whites expected blacks to be ignorant
always so that it would be convenient for them to stifle, repress, cheat, and show race prejudice and keep them as underprivileged people.

In his effort to quench the thirst for knowledge, Richard in his *Black Boy* narrates that he resorted to borrow H. L. Mencken’s books from the Memphis Library with the help of a white man Mr. Falk. Richard went to the library and asked for any two books which were written by H. L. Mencken. He wrote a forged note, addressed to white librarian as if the member of the library saying, “Dear Madam, Will you please let this nigger boy to have some books by H.L. Mencken?” (“The American hunger”, 235). He even uses the abusive word ‘nigger’ to confirm the bonafides of the note to make her believe that it was written by his white master.

There were hardly a very few who came forward to educate the blacks. They provided the missionary education and instigated the fear of God. Even the provisions of the education facilities were much inferior when compared to white’s schools. If anybody took the interest to teach the slaves, they were threatened and questioned. As in the case of Mrs. Auld, a noble hearted woman, who never owned a slave, came forward to teach a black to read and write, unaware that whites hate such righteous initiatives. For this her husband reprimanded her and says, “. . . learning would spoil the best nigger in the world.” (Alladi, Uma, 18)

Richard tells in *Black Boy* that, for his survival, he had to get rid of the white South quickly. Often he was made a scapegoat by the whites and he was called a rebel. The black’s life amidst the whites was a world of cruelty and violence from which he wanted to escape. No prayer would help him, or no miracle would knock at his door. While lack of education was a big hurdle for their self-realization, work place discrimination was another curse bestowed upon the blacks for ages. The turmoil was so severe, either the black was made to quit the job and succumb to the pressure and accept the authority of the whites and be a mute witness to his surroundings. In most of the cases he was made a silent spectator of his own agony.
On several aspects, *Native Son* came as a bolt from the blue in the literary arena of American Literature. It brought out the raw truth of an impoverished black youth who was entangled in severe turbulence. His other novels ‘*Black Boy*’, ‘*Uncle Tom’s Children*’, ‘*Long Dream*’, ‘*Eight Men*’, and ‘*Laud Today*’ brought out the evil of suppression. He was seeking for a turning point. His novels over-flew with illiteracy, unemployment, poverty of the blacks and the calamity that led to their melancholy.

Employment was used as yet another tool to keep the blacks under the grip. They were denied the right job, at the same time they were ill-treated during their employment. It became the utmost concern for the blacks to get a job and earn their daily bread to feed their families. His dire need forced him and made him to be ready to accept any prerequisite, so that his daily bread was not snatched away.

America, as a country of progressive industrial growth, has a vast anomaly and job discrimination between the blacks and whites. While the Blacks get the lowest jobs with low wages, they are not allowed to acquire skill required for their progression. Therefore it becomes convenient for the whites to isolate the black in the pretext of lack of skill. Ultimately lack of skill fetches the low wages. Thus there is a vicious circle of oppression at the work place for the blacks.

They are not given the due advantage of changes in the economic process and in the modernization and technological growth also. The sad reality is that when the old handicrafts are upgraded with newer machineries, blacks become the victims of such modernization. The progressive modern America drags the black to his back foot. It puts the Negroes at the receiving end. By the arrival of tractors, the Negroes (blacks) lose the job; the same case happens when the commercial laundries replace the home laundries the axe fall on the Negroes
(blacks) head. More often the new white men’s jobs are created out of old Negro jobs, when work becomes less demanding, smoother and less risky, Negroes (blacks) are shown the doors.

The limited economical scope and poor living conditions drive the blacks to seek for any type of employment and their survival depended on the job and not the kind of a job. They are at the disadvantage of taking up any job rather than selecting a job. Pay is not a criteria and any meager salary is acceptable as far as it can support him. Blacks are mainly preferred for unskilled jobs and they are treated indifferently if they try to perform better.

It was the trick of the trade followed by the whites to keep blacks from coming out of poverty. It was a tough environment for Richard to suppress his boiling anger whenever he witnesses the blacks enduring insults in the hands of whites. He took much care in controlling his emotions in front of a white boss when a black gets insulted just because of his color. In his novella, *Uncle Tom’s Children*, he shares his experience,

> The morning I applied, I stood straight, and neat before the boss, answering all his questions with sharp Yessirs and Nosirs. I was very careful to pronounce my sirs distinctly, in order that he might know that I was polite, that I knew where I was, and that he knew that I knew he was a white man. I wanted the job badly. (“The Ethics of Living Jim Crow”, 227)

Richard took up many menial jobs as porter, dishwasher, and a room boy. Generally, it was a tough time for the blacks when they were in search of the job. They needed to prove to be submissive, obedient, act dump and control their emotions and self-respect before the white employers. It was a survival matter for the blacks. Humiliations and insults, sometimes even man-handling by the white bosses, were to be tolerated in silence. They had to accept as if it was their right to ill-treat a black. There was an unbridgeable gap between whites and blacks in their
living conditions. When Bigger reached Mr. Dalton’s house in search of a job, he found the locality astounding as he went through the whites area, ‘with huge houses and glowing lights softly in windows.’ While standing at the door steps of Mr. Dalton’s house he was overcome with fear that makes him even more frustrating at his helplessness of not knowing what to do. He was searching for the back door. By this incident, Richard reiterates that whites have shown to the blacks their place, and blacks also have understood what their safer zone is. Bigger thinks, “Would they expect him to come in the front way or back? It was queer that he had not thought of that . . . He was seeking for a walk leading to the rear”. (NS, 486)

Richard touches the core point of the doubt in the mind of a Black who is deliberately kept away from education. He relevantly mentions that blacks cannot overcome the fear of being inferior to others. This was the success of racism forced upon them. He states, “It’s a Jim Crow army. All they want a black man for is to dig ditches. And in the Navy, all I can do is wash dishes and scrub floors.” (NS, 776)

The arrival of Bigger Thomas changed the face of the blacks. Richard could convince that there are many Bigger Thomases in the society whose reactions depended on the actions of the whites. Bigger gave much needed air to breathe. He stood like a rock to protect the ego of the entire blacks and also as an individual within the society. Richard did not convict him for his crimes but put him as the refector of the crimes which was the result of whites’ oppression on them. The independence of the blacks was determined by the whites at every stage. The economic capability of the blacks was controlled by the whites. In general, the white society remained rich by putting the burden of the economic vagaries on the blacks. They became helpless and they had nowhere to go. The society they live in is not permitted to prosper. The individual prosperity of blacks meet with retaliation from the dominant whites who cannot see them prospering. Ultimately, they become puppets dangled between the devil and the deep sea.
Bigger hated the class of people like Marys’ because of their richness and they had everything within their reach, hence he lashed that, “She was rich. She and her kind own the earth. She and her kind say black folks are dogs. They don’t let you do nothing . . .” (NS, 773)

It is not the financial burden that only over powers the black, but also the rules and laws. At the time of Richard’s writings, the laws were meant mainly to subordinate the blacks. The blacks were either disciplined through the church or through the rigid laws which suited the Whites. This was because of the social difference between the Blacks and Whites. Bigger Thomas exposed his dejected life by saying that whites made laws. “They don’t even let blacks to think. I ain’t got a chance. I don’t know nothing. I’m just black and they make the laws.” (NS, 775)

The whites set certain parameters for the blacks to run the business. If they exceed, they were finished. The blacks can compete among themselves but not with the whites, and never been given chance for such circumstances. The prosperity of blacks is unwelcome among the white dominated society. Even if that happens, either the black or the business was pulled down and brought to dust.

*Black Boy* mirrored a different concept and many Americans, mainly the whites, were stunned by his expressions and were unable to recognize the reality. The structure of the *Black Boy* was woven around the family background, the protagonist’s keenness in education and learning, the way he was treated by the society, and particularly his life under the domination of the whites. He also pictures the emotional conflict of his family and the Jim Crow anarchy. Generally, Negro (blacks) children who grew up in the Jim Crow South did not succeed as they were mostly ignorant and illiterate and more often suppressed in all the ways by the whites. However, Richard took maximum advantage of the few opportunities he encountered, because of
his thirst for learning. Though he did not have formal schooling, mostly he learnt through experience.

The expressions, to a certain degree in *Black Boy* are the experiences of Richard in Mississippi. He lives through the Jim Crow Law covered by his personal turbulent family life. *Black Boy* elucidates the personal tragedy of Richard’s childhood to adolescence. His education was broken at several times due to family circumstances and this ultimately results that he failed to get a good job. Therefore he left for the North to seek employment.

As a young boy, Richard longs for love and *Black Boy* shows the emotional mayhem that he goes through because of his negligent father who decided to abandon the family for his pleasure, whereas Richard expects his father to be supportive. Such ‘broken family’ life is also one of the reasons for the blacks getting suppressed. The whites exploit the ‘fatherless’ and ‘income less’ families and their women to suit their interests. On the other hand, his mother remains as a role model, despite her unsuccessful life. As a strict mother, she forces him to fight when he is harassed and makes him a fighter which brings out the true Richard Wright. The fighting spirit which got imbibed in his entire life was fed to him by his mother. When he was attacked by the street boys, he stood miserably losing his money and the basket. It was his mother who taught him to defend himself and go against them. He narrates the sequence, as,

“‘I’m going to teach you this night to stand up and fight for yourself.’”

She went into the house and I waited, terrified, wondering what she was about. Presently she returned with more money and another note; she also had a long heavy stick.

“‘Take this money, this note, and this stick,’” she said. “‘go to the store and buy those groceries. If those boys bother you, then fight.’”
“I was baffled. My mother was telling me to fight, a thing that she had never done before.” (BB, 18, 19)

This ‘fighting spirit’ made Richard to introduce Bigger, Silas, Saul Sander, Tyree Tucker and many other characters to the literary world. The incident, as narrated by Richard, acts as a great encouragement for him to protect himself in the future antagonisms. He projects his grandmother as a deeply religious woman, who tries to discipline Richard through church and religion. Even this attitude makes him feel censured, because his purview of religion at the young age itself was different.

*Black Boy* presents the life of a rebellious youth; at the same time, it depicts a passionate Negro (black) who yearns to read and write. His hunger for knowledge makes him to confront the Jim-Crowism and fight against it. He had an unstable childhood clubbed with malnourishment and hunger.

Hunger stole upon me so slowly that at first I was not aware of what hunger really meant. Hunger had always been more or less at my elbow when I played, but now I began to wake up at night to find hunger standing at my bedside, starting at me gauntly. The hunger I had known before this had been no grim, hostile stranger; it had been a normal hunger that had made me beg constantly for bread, and when I ate a crust or two I was satisfied. But this new hunger baffled me, scared me, made me angry and insistent. Whenever I begged for food now my mother would pour me a cup of tea which would still the clamor in my stomach for a moment or two; but a little later I would feel hunger nudging my ribs, twisting my empty guts until they ached. I would grow dizzy and my vision would
dim, I became less active in my play, and for the first time in my life I had to pause and think of what was happening to me. (BB, 15, 16)

He depicts hunger with a phenomenal stress to create an impact of how it had affected Richard who quotes, “Hunger was with us always” (BB, 28). *Black Boy* gives a full account of his tumultuous life, where he has to move from place to place, finally leaving Mississippi to settle down at Chicago. The protagonist misses his mother’s love because of her illness and deeply moved by her pain. Even though he has few clashes with his aunt Addie, he gets along well with Maggie, the other aunt, who does not interfere in his independency. Her husband, Uncle Hoskins, a successful businessman, antagonizes the whites and falls in their bad books, is eventually killed. The violent death of Hoskins shows the brutality of racism to Richard. After the cruel murder of Uncle Hoskins by the whites, who were averse of his prosperity, the family of Richard moved to West Helena for a living. Here, he happens to come across the blacks bound in chains. He innocently thinks of them as elephants since they are tied in chains and make the dangling noise,

The strange elephants were a few feet from me now and I saw that their faces were like the faces of men! I stared, my mind trying to adjust memory to reality … I saw that the legs of the black animals were held together by irons and that their arms were linked with heavy chains that clanked softly . . . The black creatures were digging a shallow ditch on each side of the road, working silently, grunting as they lifted spades of earth and flung them into the middle of the roadway. (BB, 56)

He calls his mother to show her the black creatures (the elephant) that has come close to the house. Richard chooses carefully the experiences in his narratives, though some of them seem to be invented, but he crafts a right impact he wants. He projects the stifling pain forced
upon the blacks as plainly as possible. His conversations sometimes, kindle the readers to ascertain the living condition of the blacks and he also succeeds in making the reader to feel the environment.

“Mama”! I yelled.

“What?” she answered from the kitchen

“There are elephants in the street!”

“Elephants?” she asked. … “Those are not elephants,” she said.

“What are they?”

“That’s a chain gang.”

“What’s a chain gang.” … “Why are there so many black men wearing stripes?”

“It’s because . . . Well, they’re harder on black people.” (BB, 56,57)

Richard selects the incidents and builds a structure of his autobiography gradually and shows the progress of journey to self-awareness from a very miserable living condition. He overcomes the short fall and escapes the limited environment. *Black Boy* portrays the deprivation he faces during his childhood as well as his adolescence. He pictures in detail the poverty, emotional conflict, hunger and the constant abuse he quotes, “I had been suddenly thrown emotionally upon my own.” (BB, 82)

*Black Boy* is not a theme of an isolated black youth. It is the condition of the suppressed black community who are lonely and desolate. For this cultural bleakness, he blames on racism. He describes with awful honesty the woe of racism on blacks. “. . . that nigger-being-a-good-
natured-boy-in-the-presence-of-a-white-man pattern” (BB, 223), is a poetic airing of Richard’s expression of what every black is expected to pretend and at the same time what every black hates to pretend. “I was learning rapidly how to watch white people, to observe their every move, every fleeting expression, how to interpret what was said and what left unsaid” (BB, 174).

It was an irony that the reactions of the blacks relied on White’s expressions. This was the devastating consequence of slavery. In the name of social judgment, life of a rebellious black in the Jim Crow society was considered evil and irrepressible.

Later in Black Boy, Richard narrates his school experience where he was forced to abandon his speech prepared by him and instead read the Principal’s message praising the whites. To be in the good books of whites, though the Principal himself a black, exploits the situation of Wright’s poverty and curbs his creativity. For Richard, the Principal becomes ‘not a right example’ as he cannot challenge the oppression of blacks. The conversation between the two reveals the real nature of the Headmaster.

“Well, Richard Wright, here’s your speech,” …

“What speech?” I asked as I picked up the papers

“The speech you’re to say the night of graduation,” he said.

“But, professor, I’ve written my speech already,” I said.

He laughed confidently, indulgently.

“Listen, boy, you’re going to speak to both white and colored people that night. What can you alone think of saying to them? You have no experience . . .”
I burned... “Professor, I’m going to say my own speech that night,” I said. He grew angry.

... I went home, hunt but determined. I had been talking to a “bought” man and he had tried to “buy” me. I felt that I had been dealing with something unclean. (BB, 167, 168, 169)

Young Wright’s entry into the working world makes him realize the impious hands of racism and how it squeezes the blacks. “I held a series of petty jobs for short periods, quitting some to work elsewhere, being driven off others because of my attitude, my speech, my look in the eyes” (BB, 175). His eagerness to learn the trade, in an optical shop at Jackson ends-up in physical violence. The two white men, who already work there, refuse to teach him for fear that, Richard being a sharp learner, may become a competitor and prosper. They harass and threaten him so that he leaves the job. Although he tries to stick to the job, the physical abuse and the mental agony forced by the other two employees make Richard to quit the job. Racism had injected the poison of hatred among humans to the extent of no return. The words of Richard carry the heavy burden of slavery. “When you’re in front of white people, think before you act, think before you speak. Your way of doing things is all right among our people, but not for white people. They won’t stand for it.” (BB, 177)

Again his job hunting starts and Richard gets a job as a porter in a clothing store selling cheap goods to Negroes in credit. The boss and his son’s manners were very rude towards Blacks. He feels agitated by the slavish treatment at the same the passive acceptance of such attitudes by the blacks. Annoyed by this he remarks, “The boss, his son, and the clerk treated the Negroes with open contempt, pushing, kicking, or slapping them.” (BB, 172)

Under one pretext or the other, whites did not hesitate to take advantage over the blacks. The miseries of the blacks were multifold because of their poverty. One day, Richard happened
to witness a scene, in which the white boss and his son brought a woman into the shop and dragged her to the rear room of the shop and manhandled her until she was bleeding.

One morning, while I was polishing brass out front, the boss and his son drove up in their car. A frightened woman sat between them. They got out and half dragged and half kicked the woman into the store…” I heard shrill screams coming from the rear room of the store; later the woman stumbled out; bleeding; crying, holding her stomach, her clothing torn. When she reached the sidewalk, the police man met her, grabbed her, accused her of being drunk, called a patrol wagon and carted her away.

(BB, 172)

The incident makes him terrified and feels ashamed of his helplessness. Treating a black woman in such an uncivilized manner goes unquestioned and nobody seems to be bothered about it. While this disturbs Richard to an extent what follows next makes even more frustrated towards the apathy. To see what had taken place, he goes around the store and notices the boss and his son washing their hands and look at him laughingly. Richard finds it hard to react to what he had seen and watching his gestures, Richard says, “My face must have reflected my shock, for the boss slapped me reassuringly on the back. “Boy, that’s what we do to niggers when they don’t pay their bills.” he said” (BB, 172)

Any sarcastic answers and answers with one word were taken as insult and they were shown the other world of life as a retaliatory act of blacks. Richard had to run errands and he had to deliver the products by using the owner’s bicycle. One day while returning, his bicycle was punctured. He walked along the road, sweating and panting. Though the incident is of a trivial nature, Richard gives the emphasis on the attitude of the whites and how they are provoked with simple and innocent remarks. Some white men, who traveled by the car, happened to pass him
and gave a lift to him and asked him to hop on the running board. As the car proceeds the white men offered him a drink. “Wanna drink, boy?” One asked. Oh? No! I said.” (BB, 173)

Having uttered a single word, the white men get annoyed that the ‘boy’ (Richard) did not give them the due respect that every white demands and Richard continues the consequence of such utterance and the languishing moments,

The words were barely out of my mouth before I felt something hard and cold smash me between the eyes. . . . my feet becoming entangled in the steep spokes of the bicycle. The car stopped and the white men piled out and stood over me. “Nigger, ain’t you learned no better sense’s that yet?” asked the man who hit me. “Ain’t you learned to say Sir to a white man yet?” Dazed, I pulled to my feet my elbows and legs were bleeding . . .

“Aw, “Nigger, you sure ought to be glad it was us you talked to that way. You’re a lucky bastard, ‘cause if you’d said that to some other white man, you might’ve been a dead nigger now. (BB, 174)

While, blacks consider whites as race prejudiced hostiles, whites treat blacks as bad, evil and the negative product of the society, with a racially prejudiced view because of their complexion. Both blacks and whites failed to recognize each other as human beings or individuals because they both were under the pressure of racism. Unfortunately, their minds are clouded by negative images which form the core of their heart. Richard Wright presents how the superiority of whites forced blacks to indulge in negative attitudes physically, mentally and psychologically, with the help of the protagonists and the incidents.

In Native Son, Bigger Thomas lives with his mother, sister and younger brother in a one room apartment. In the first scene, Bigger tries to kill a black rat, which symbolizes how they were tortured, harassed, trapped within a narrow area and finally die a miserable death. Bigger
Thomas was economically deprived. He wanted to be comfortable, like whites but the harsh reality prevailed in the society prevented him from enjoying a free, wealthy and fearless life. In many situations, Bigger Thomas expresses his disappointments and decisive acts of the white world.

“They got things and we did not. They do things and we cannot. 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 kind of hole in the fence.

“They white boys sure can fly,” Gus said.

“Yeah,” Bigger said, wistfully. “They get a chance to do everything.” (NS, 409)

He feels as if he is put in a cage by the whites, and was outside the world. The subjugated, ensnared condition of blacks was beautifully explained by the gist of these words by Bigger Thomas. He doesn’t feel any belongingness towards the white world. He notions that this whole world is for the whites; the education, military, politics, profit rendering businesses, schools, airways, railways everything was created for the sole enjoyment of whites. Bigger Thomas once wanted to become an aviator. But, he gets the job as a dish washer in the same Military. He wanted to get education from the white’s school. But he was allowed to take only the back door, and a less standard education than the whites. At a later part of the story, while pleading for mercy towards Bigger, Max, the lawyer, argues in the Court room, pleads to the Judge to prove Bigger Thomas is insane and innocent. He argues the crime of Bigger Thomases, is the outcome of the oppression which they were fed throughout their life for centuries and generations together at the hands of the dominant whites. The hate and fear are deep rooted in his mind and soul; the blood and the nerves, act as the culprit and instigate them to do unfair acts to the white society. The author accounts their pathetic condition;
He has murdered many times. But there are no corpses. Let me explain.

This Negro boy’s entire attitude towards life is a crime! The hate and fear which we have inspired in him, woven by our civilization into the very structure of his consciousness into his blood and bones, into the hourly functioning of his personality, has become the justification of his existence. (NS, 821)

This life condition moves him towards the ideologies of Communism, which is shared when Max puts forth his points to prove that Bigger is the victim of social-apathy but innocent and the motive which instigated him to indulge in this act is not just a vengeance against a particular individual. He cites racism as the culprit and Max hits the nail onto the social consciousness of the society. He directly blames the society for the consequences, since it concealed and deserted a particular race of people vehemently, for generations together.

The boy’s crime was not an act of retaliation by an injured man against a person who he thought he had injured him. If it were, then this case would be simple indeed. This is the case of a man’s mistaking a whole race of men as a part of the natural structure of the universe and of his acting toward them accordingly. (NS, 817)

The court room drama is a lesson to the superlative ego of the whites. Richard simultaneously justifies the actions of Bigger and condemns the behavior of the whites and he sees this as their ignorance to accept the reality which is an outcome of their own making.

Max now blames the whole society for all these crimes committed by blacks. He states that the white society has planned for the murders and violence through their injustice act of oppression and enslavement. The whites have watered the plants of hatred and violence. Now, it
is time for them not only to reap the harvest but also to realize the mistakes and atrocities in order to stop the occurrences and consequences of such crimes.

Max compares racism as a beast, he quotes this with imagination that, there is a beast in the city, and he argues, ‘but the beast is within us’ (NS, 813). In keeping with the mission of the true prophet, Max tries to awaken the people to their responsibility for the evil they are suffering. The continual oppression of the Negroes has placed a corpse in our midst, Max says:

... it has made itself a home in the wild forest of our great cities, amid the rank and choking vegetation of our slums! It has forgotten our language. In order to live it has sharpened its claws! It had grown hard and calloused! It has developed a capacity to hate and fury which we cannot understand! By night it creeps from its lair and steals toward the settlements of civilization. And at the sight of the kind face it does not lie-down upon its back and kicks up its heels playfully to be tickled and stroked. No; it leaps to kill. (NS, 813)

Charles Scruggs, supports the argument of Max, who quotes, “Max presents an apocalyptic vision to the jury: the city will die if its citizen’s donor acts to remove the evil. They themselves have created. If Max seems to be a tragic figure at the end of Native son, so does America.” (Scruggs, Charles .W, 45)

Racism, the intolerable humiliation ornamented by the whites, on blacks spoils the innocent minds of common people. It corrupts the minds of those who are the victims like rust corrodes the iron in parts slowly. It will take its own time to spoil the whole thing but it will complete the vicious task. The evil act infused on a particular society will be turned against the whole society. It will make the roots of the tree to get rotten. It will spoil the ethics of the civilization to turn barbarous. It kills the fetus in the mother’s womb and makes the whole stream of the people poisonous by infecting the whole race with polluting minds.
It is Max; the communist lawyer argues that the restrictions which they imposed on blacks, especially on the taproot of the entire black civilization in America, and curtailing the education of blacks, shackled their morality. It tempted them to take a wrong path to attain their fair necessities in an unfair society. It was obvious that education acts as the main source of generating a good culture, civilization, and a decent lifestyle which was absent in the blacks’ lifestyle. The rental agencies had told him that there were not enough houses for Negroes (blacks) to live in; that the city was condemning houses in which Negroes (blacks) lived as being too old and too dangerous for habitation. And he remembered the time when the police had come and driven him, his mother, brother and sister out of a flat in a building which had collapsed two days after they had moved. It was a retaliation of the whites. For a crime committed a single black, white’s see to it that the entire family and the society bears the burn. Bigger explodes their suffering and states, “They keep us bottled up here like wild animals., he thought he knew that black people could not go outside of the Black Belt to rent a flat; they had to live on their side of the line.” (NS, 678)

It is evident that Blacks don’t get equal status in education, job opportunities and there is no use in voting, because it doesn’t bring any big difference in a black’s life. Their economical condition is not going to improve, they are not going to get any job which can fulfill all basic needs and their life will move like they get a ‘pause’. There is no ‘play’, no liveliness in their life, and no upliftment in their status, they run the life with same rhythm and without any miracles or sweet surprises. Instead they have to face a downtrodden life and live at the lowest level, as the underprivileged, since there is no other way to survive. Inevitably it was an unwritten law for a black to lead a wretched life. The fate, destiny, and lifestyle, of a black were decided by the whites who were taken black’s lives at their prerogative. With a submissive look and mind, with an unfulfilled wishes filled in his eyes, a black had to hide his disappointments with a smile on his lips, and by projecting himself with a posture of humility. The wretchedness
of their life makes them to stoop to any level and endures any humiliation. Connectively, when Max reasons out why Bigger killed Mary Dalton, “Didn’t you know that the penalty for killing that white woman would be death?” “Yeah; I knew it. But I felt like she was killing me, so I didn’t care.” (NS, 778)

The very look of the white people made Bigger to feel himself as a worm or a degraded species and he had to engulf the insults meted out by the white to his race. Even though Mary did not harm him, Mary wanted to treat him and his people equal in status. He considered Mary as a symbol of the collective insult and humiliation springs out from his soul due to his inferiority complex. Not only that a negative figure about white men was registered in every black man but also it was difficult for him to erase the horrible structure of white men. They put all the white men in the same basket. This remains one of the reasons for Bigger to kill Mary and he does not repent for it.

Mentioning about his earlier stay with his family, when Richard’s brother and mother moved from Arkansas to West Helena, the condition of the house which they rented was as worst as Bigger’s one tenement dingy apartment. The condition of the house is pictured by Richard,

We rented one half of a double corner house in front of which ran a stagnant ditch carrying sewage. The neighborhood swarmed with rats, cats, dogs, fortune tellers, cripples, blind men, whores salesmen, rent collectors, and children . . . There was an eternal hissing of stream, the deep grunting of steep engineers, and the tolling of bells, smoke obscured the vision and cinders drifted into the house, into our beds, into our kitchen, into our food, and a tar like smell was always in the air. (BB, 57, 58)
Here it is apparent that, it is the whites, who exploit them and lure them to steal and indulge in illegal activities. They also seem to enjoy this way of living by a black. By exploiting them they commit the sin of corrupting the blacks. It is whites to be blamed for exploiting and tempting them to indulge in crimes. Blacks are the victims at the hands of the whites. It is because of white’s treatment and state of blacks they turn into murderers, thieves, rapists, and kidnappers. The inter-relations of white and black is pen-pictured as follows;

I knew that the black girls who worked in white homes stole food daily to supplement their scanty wages. And I knew that the very nature of black and white relations bred this constant thievery. No Negroes in my environment ever thought of organizing, no matter in how orderly a fashion, and petitioning their white employers for higher wages. The very thought would have been terrifying to them, and they knew that the whites would have retaliated with swift brutality. So, pretending to confirm to the laws of the whites, grinning, bowing, they let their fingers stick to what they could touch. And whites seemed to like it. (BB, 191)

After he left the job from brick yard and became jobless again, under the scorching sun, he spent his mornings in searching jobs. On the way of job hunting, Richard met his classmate Ned Greenley. He was so dull and gloomy that Richard enquired him about that. Ned lost his brother Bob. He started weeping and talking amidst whispers.

“**They killed him.**”

“**They white folks?”** I asked on a whisper, guessing.

”**Th-ey t-took him in a c-car . . . out on a c-ountry road . . .Th – they shot h-im.**” Ned whimpered.”
“Th-they said he was fooling with a white prostitute there in the hotel.”;

Ned said (BB, 164)

Whites, knowing well about their inhibition on blacks would lead to unwanted consequences, when the blacks indulge in sexual relations with white women. Punishing the black’s audacity for moving around with white prostitutes is one of the ways of suppressing them and it shows their vigorous oppressive tendency. White’s fear, of losing their white women at the hands of blacks, make them to punish the blacks with death sentence even for a slightest provocation against white women. It is believed by the blacks that an ‘unwanted noise’ by a white woman in a public place against a black will bring death knell to the blacks even if he is innocent. Moreover, white men exploit black women on several occasions hence this tendency of whites make them think that black men are ready to pounce on the white women if she happens to be alone. This racist fear psychosis of whites hangs above every black man’s head in the South. The fear psychosis of black men, throughout their life, towards the white women is presented by Richard in several incidents in several novels.

In one of the short stories of Uncle Tom’s Children, in “Big Boy Leaves Home” when the four boys take bath in the white man’s swimming pool, the white woman’s ‘yelling’ makes them to run for their lives and finally, except Big Boy, all the others lost their lives. In Eight Men, “The Men Who Killed a Shadow,” the protagonist Saul Sander kills the lady librarian when she starts screaming. The fear of death drives him to stop her from shouting and finally leads to the murder of the lady librarian.

In Black Boy Richard Wright’s friend, Bob was punished, since he flirted with a white prostitute. He had to face death sentence finally. A similar case took place in Long Dream, Richard’s the last novel. Fish, the protagonist was warned by his father to lead life securely by keeping away from them. When Fish was twelve years old, his father used to say,
“NEVER LOOK AT WHITE WOMEN You HEAR?”

When you in the presence of a white woman, remember she means death! The white folks hate us, fight us, kill us, make laws against us; but they use this damned business about white women to make what they do sound right… They hate you the moment you’s born and all your life they going to be looking for something to kill you for. (LD, 59, 60)

Apparently the white dominance curtailed the blacks at every point of time. When it became evident that the blacks started to pose as a threat to the actions of oppression, styled by the whites, they invented newer methods and were more forceful. Ku Klux Klan was one such organization of enforcing the myriad crimes against the blacks. Young Richard took up a job of delivering the pro-Ku Klux Klan literature not being aware of its contents and intents. As he came to know of the intentions of the newspaper, it pained him more with the kind of false information spread against the Negroes.

Did you see this? He asked, pointing from a lurid cartoon.

…I looked at the picture of a huge black man with a greasy, sweaty face, thick lips, in a swivel chair. Across the wall of the room in which the man sat was a bold sign-reading:

THE WHITE HOUSE.

Under the sign was a portrait of Abraham Lincoln, the features distorted to make the face look like that of a gangster. My eyes went to the top of the cartoon and I read:
The only dream of a nigger is to be president and to sleep with white women! Americans, do you want this in our fair land? Organize and save white womanhood! (BB, 125)

That was Ku Klux Klan’s newspaper clippings and Richard knew it well that they killed colored people; they prevented blacks from voting and getting good jobs. The paper advocated in an article, lynching was the solution for the problem of the Negro. It was an anti-negro problem. Ku Kluxers tried to oppress the blacks by spreading wrong notions and prejudice against blacks through the newspaper. The longingness of the Negros to acquire their basic rights was exaggerated by the Ku Klux Klan organizers, as black’s greediness to sit on the throne of Abraham Lincoln and to exploit the white women, which was a life threatening act for a black. It was undeniable that whites never let the blacks to have basic education and to enjoy the fruits of hard work. They also prevented them from voting in the election for the fear of choosing their own destiny and their own lives as they wish.

Suppression drives them to the corner of the life that, the characters suffer obsessions, tremors and traumas. The characters are isolated and freakish. They have driven into some extremity of despair due to suppression and exploitation of their superior white race. Feeling of inferiority and humiliation make the Blacks to sense themselves as bad and to treat their own race as inferior. Richard’s Native Son portrays the same and the protagonist, Bigger Thomas suffers inferior when he was treated as a human being by Mary Dalton.

Bigger Thomas naturally felt strange by the approach of Mary Dalton and her communist boy friend Jan Erlone who treated him as a human unlike other white people. They both took him to a restaurant where whites alone can enter into. They also asked him to sit along with them equally beside them. Bigger Thomas, surprised, and disbelieved, refused to take the seat. Mary was about to shed tears when Bigger Thomas refused to enter into the restaurant. “In his relations
with her he felt that he was riding a see-saw; never were they on a common level either she or he was up in the air.” (NS, 512)

When he answered their question with fear and respect with ‘yes sir’ and ‘no sir’ he was stopped by Jan Erlone, Mary’s communist friend saying “Bigger, Please, Don’t say ‘sir’ to me. I don’t like it. You’re a man just like I’m.” (NS, 511)

Bigger and his kind were aware that they could never meet the whites on the same line. It was for him like riding on a see-saw. The see-saw never be on a same line. Either the lower seat cannot expect the other side to come down to it or the higher seat never try to put themselves on their shoes. When one side is going down, the other side will rise up. So, ultimately the one which is high will never realize or understand the miseries of the other side. There will be an invisible veil which always prevents both the sides to get along with others and it acts as a blockade to cure the dangerous disease the ‘racism’.