Chapter VI

*Savage Holiday: A Server or Sewer?*
Savage Holiday, a novel which portrays the psychosexual aspects, is essentially a connecting link between Richard Wright's earlier and later fiction. In general, Wright's hardships, unpleasantness, and tragic circumstances form the basis of his ideas that become the central themes of his works. But in this novel, he seems to concern himself with the modern psychology and psychoanalysis. Published in 1954, the novel may be construed as the reflection of Wright's own personality. He dedicated this novel to Clinton Brewer, a New York criminal.

Brewer may have been the model for the character Fowler, as Robert Nixon in Chicago had been the model for the character Bigger Thomas. Wright was never the sole subject of his composite criminal characters, but his own mind and emotions, nevertheless, bear upon theirs with close similarity simply because he was their creator.¹

It seems that the writer is in search of a medium to assuage his terribly wounded, young psyche and he finds the same through this novel.

Erskine Fowler is as memorable as Bigger Thomas in Native Son, Fishbelly in The Long Dream, Jake Jackson in Lawd
Today, Cross Damon in *The Outsider*, and Richard Wright in *Black Boy*. All these characters exist in the nightmarish world of Wright’s fiction. The violence, accidental and deliberate murder, nudity and other sexual forms of exhibitionism, frightened and desperate people caught in extreme situation, and existential hells appear in all Wright’s novels and stories. In his autobiography, *Black Boy*, Wright writes that the image of his father became associated with the pangs of hunger and whenever he felt hungry, he thought of his father with a deep biological bitterness.

Part I of the novel, “Anxiety,” opens with the grand farewell hosted by the Longevity Life Insurance Company, Inc., in honour of Erskine Fowler, on his completion of thirty years of exemplary service and devotion. The company has more than five thousand personnel and it is all praise for Fowler: “Well Done, thou Faithful Steward of our Trust!”(14) Fowler is 43 but he looks thirty-five or thirty-six. Richard Wright’s description of Fowler is vivid:

A six foot, hulking, heavy, muscular man with a Lincoln-like, quiet, solid face, deep-set brown eyes, a jutting lower lip, a shock of jet-black, bushy hair, rose nervously, ran his left hand tensely inside of his
coat (as though touching something), brushed his right hand across his chin, then let his fingers, which trembled slightly, rest upon the table in front of him. His facial features seemed hewn firm and whole from some endurable substance; his eyes were steady; he was the kind of man to whom one intuitively and readily rendered a certain degree of instant deference. . . .(13-14)

“Touching something inside his coat” has great significance and runs all through the novel, as the physical means to grapple with the psychological neurosis. Fowler keeps doing this whenever he feels nervous. Fowler is known as A-I executive in the insurance world and as a cracker Jack who always delivers goods. The party is hosted at the Jefferson Banquet Salon of one of New York’s largest and most luxurious mid-town hotels. The party is attended by wealthy executives, characterized by their fleshy faces, massive bodies, grey and bald heads. Mr. Warren, the President, is the first speaker in praise of Fowler:

Ah, I remember him years ago—though it seems to my mind’s eye that it was but yesterday!—running errands, learning the ropes, figuring the angles,
growing up with a growing company, becoming a Mason, a Rotarian, a Sunday School Superintendent, a man of parts . . . What a miracle life is! What a tremendous boon we have been to this man, and what a godsend he has been to us! What a collaboration! What a fulfillment of promise . . . !

(12)

The Board of Directors votes unanimously to honour Fowler with a special medal of gold on this occasion. The orchestra underscores the full-bodied strains:

For he's a jolly good fellow
For he's a jolly good fellow
For he is a jolly good fellow.
Which nobody can deny . . . (15)

Fowler, upset by emotional outburst, bursts into tears. He makes a speech on demand amid the expressions of his limitations as a speaker. He swallows, blinks, and touches something in his inner coat pocket and gears up for the melancholy business of leave taking. He continues,

Yet I possesses no small degree of pride for, no matter how humble my capacities really were, I did lend a
willing hand in building up this our common monument of business. But what we achieved was merely not all business. As our great president has so often pointed out, and I heartily agree with him, millions of people depend upon us for their welfare, come to us in their bereavement, and seek us out in their hope . . . That's not business; that's faith! (17-18)

Fowler, after his retirement, is allowed to retain the capacity of a consulting advisor as per the decision of the Board of Directors. Mr. Edward proposes that the honourable proceedings along with the photos need to be published in the next issue of Longevity Life and the motion is carried unanimously. The party begins and the couples move in a rhythmic dance. Unable to keep a grip upon himself, feeling lost and abandoned, Fowler leaves the banquet, breaking his promise to Warren that he will remain all through the party:

Yes; Erskine had fled. He had taken himself out of their sight, had broken his promise to remain until the end of he banquet. A sudden sense of outrage had made him decide that he would no longer be a party to his own defeat. . . . As he made his way down
the corridor toward the stairway, anger burned in him so hot and hard that his vision blurred. When he had declared to that array of upturned faces that "leave-taking is always such a melancholy business," he had not been speaking at random or rhetorically. (20)

His hand instantly goes to touch something in his inner pocket of his coat:

Whenever he was distraught or filled with anxiety, he invariably made this very same compulsive gesture which he had developed in some obscure and forgotten crisis in his past; his touching those pencils always somehow reassured him, for they seemed to symbolize an inexplicable need to keep contact with some emotional resolution whose meaning and content he did not know . . . . (21)

Moreover, Fowler's running away from the banquet has got another deeper meaning and significance. His fleeing from the banquet place is an attempt to flee from himself. He is filled with a sense of feeling that he has been discarded, scrapped, and outdated. He is no longer needed by the company that he built
over the years. He recollects how he knew Longevity Life from A to Z, better than he knows himself. He feels that the bye-law that compels the retirement of an employee who has thirty or more years of service is especially claus ed for him. Further, when he learns from his secretary that Warner wants to accommodate his son, Robert Warren, who has just turned twenty-three, he feels outraged. The outrage that stings his ego most is evident in his feeling:

So it was not only because they thought him inefficient, not because he wasn’t liked and respected by everybody, that he was being dumped; it was to make a place for his son that Warren was giving him the air! Robert Warren was going to be married and old man Warren was making Robert the district manager of Manhattan as a wedding present! (23)

Fowler recalls his confrontation with Warner and Ricky about the issue of Robert. He is accused of being outdated and they want live wires with gray matter upstairs (26).

Humiliation chokes Fowler when Ricky threatens him that he will be fired and kicked out if he cannot go through. Fowler realizes that both Warren and Ricky, whom he worshipped for
twenty years, hate him now. There is an urge in Fowler to smash
the face of Warren but he is incapacitated by their power. To
overcome this crisis, again he touches the pencils inside his
coat. He feels that insurance is something one just cannot learn
from books, no matter how thick and profound they are. He
leaves the place and while plodding through the crowd he reveals
his dilemma:

He knew, however that his bitter tirades against his
former colleagues were but a crude camouflage
covering his real dilemma. What was fundamentally
fretting him was that –now that he’d retired and was
free-he didn’t know what to do with himself. His
hated freedom was simply suspending him in a void
of anxious ignorance that was riveting his
consciousness with self-protective nostalgia upon the
familiar atmosphere of the Longevity Life Insurance
Company. (31)

Fowler is afraid of the everlasting freedom that he is
destined to enjoy. All these days he imprisoned himself in a
prison-cage of toil and moil that facilitated him to forget his
dreadful past. The work-culture was an escape for him from the
memories of what he was in the past and what crimes he did and what he feared doing:

He was trapped in freedom. How could he again make a foolproof prison of himself for all of his remaining days? What invisible walls could he now erect about his threatening feelings, desires? How could he become his absolute jailer and keep the peace within the warring precincts of his heart? (33)

He walks brooding and reaches home in the tenth floor of Elmira apartments, located in the upper Seventies of Manhattan. His bedroom has never been dishonoured by the presence of a stray woman of pleasure. His love for Tony, a five year old boy of Mrs. Blake, a brunette war-widow living the next door, and his role as the big father, quite often giving gifts are very significant with regard to the thematic concern of the novel. Fowler is angry with Mrs. Mabel Blake for leaving her child alone all night when she goes out to work. Like Tony, Fowler too had uncared childhood and this provokes in him a sense of sympathy and love for the boy.

Fowler goes to bed. In his dream, he sees that he is walking through a thick forest, full of towering trees and he is making
mental calculations regarding the profit he will get if he sells all the trees. Meanwhile, he finds a criminal looking man, chopping one of the trees and yelling at him to run quickly as the tree would fall on him. He is shocked and in no time the tree falls, crushing his head:

... but he couldn't move his feet and when he looked up this time the tree was crashing down upon him and he managed to move at last trying to keep his eyes on the falling tree and he tripped on something and fell headlong and when he looked back to see where the falling tree was it was too late for the tree was upon him and he could feel the leaves and branches swishing and stinging his face and eyes and ears and then the crushing weight of the tree trunk smashed against his head... (36)

Truly, this dream is a forecast of the coming events in Fowler's life. Disturbed by the drumbeating sounds of Tony, Fowler wakes up. Thinking of Tony, he catches many images of his mother and his bitter childhood days:

He had no memory of his father who had died when he was three years old; it was his mother whom he
remembered or, rather, the images of the many men who always surrounded her laughing face—men who came and went, some indulgent toward him, some indifferent. Gradually, as he’d come to understand what was happening, he’d grown afraid, ashamed. They’d lived down in Atlanta then and the boys in the vacant lots and on the school grounds had flung cold, scornful words at him, and he’d been furious with his mother. Even now he winced with a dull, inner pain as he recalled his dreadful dilemma in trying to decide who deserved more to be killed for having behaved so that the boys on the playground could taunt him; ought the men be killed, or ought his mother be killed . . . ? (38)

Fowler recollects an emotional scene from his childhood. Once when he was ill in bed, his mother was going out with a man. He begged and wept in order to make her remain at home but it was of no avail. Burning with fever, he went to the window and kept yelling until he fell down. Since then, he had remained a quiet child, keeping to himself and ignoring the world. That wounded his sense of pride in what he loved most, his mother. Later, she was considered a public nuisance and arrested, and
after her release she died. Fowler never came to know what his mother's offence was, but understood he was filled with hatred for her. Fowler's association with his mother is nothing but a dark, shameful episode of his childhood:

He'd not wept; he'd just been stunned, surprised, and relieved. He knew that he'd been long waiting to hear that she was no more and, when he heard it, he'd felt so guilty that he'd been ill in bed for a week... From that time on he felt that he had something to live down, to overcome. (40)

Coming out of his bitter childhood memories, lifting himself up naked from bed, Fowler wants to collect his Sunday paper in the hallway by springing forward. But as bad luck would have it, the door behind him is shut and locked in no time. He remembers that it was only last month that he had the lock installed with a new system of steel bolts as a precautionary measure to protect himself from robberies. He is frightened by his nudity in the hallway. He enters the elevator to hide himself and keeps moving up and down to avoid the possible boarders. He wants to enter his room through the window of the bathroom. While doing so, he slips on the concrete and falls against the top railing encircling the balcony. Tony, who is on his electric hobby-
horse, is so frightened by his naked body and his brutal rushing towards the balcony that he loses his balance and falls off the railing to the ground.

It is a great fall and Tony gets crushed. Fowler, with his "naked feet dangling in the air," enters his room and begins to think of his role in the death of little Tony:

Yes; everything hinged upon a dead Tony that would leave him free to invent any story he liked, or remain silent, whichever course suited him more. In his tortured cogitations, Erskine felt that it was imperative to separate two distinct sets of facts: his running half-crazed and naked upon that balcony was one thing; his seeing Tony fall and his inability to save him was another thing. And his consciousness protested violently the putting of the two of them in any way together for, when associated in his feelings, these compounded events swamped him with a sense of guilt that was deeper than that contained in the accident which his panic had brought about. (60)

Fowler is haunted by a sense of guilt that he cannot express. Though he is not directly responsible for the death of
Tony, the very thought of the boy’s death makes him feel guilty, lonely, and abandoned. All through “Anxiety,” Fowler’s anxious moments are conspicuous.

Later, in “Ambush,” Fowler is badly ambushed by Mrs. Mabel Blake. The epigraph to this part of the book from Nietzsche’s *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, “. . . one thing is the thought, another thing is the deed, and another thing is the idea of the deed” (77) is quite relevant. Fowler broods over the deed that caused the concatenation of events. He curses his foolishness in failing to flick the lever on his lock, Mrs. Blake for her unconcern for Tony, and the two young girls waiting at the elevator. He is bothered by one aspect of the accident:

Why had little Tony been so frightened of him as to lose his balance when he’d come running nude onto the balcony? Tony knew him, admired him; then, why had he gone into such a panic . . . ? It’s true that he’d been naked, and, when naked, Erskine knew that he was not a pleasant or poetic sight. (80)

Fowler fails to guess why the sudden sight of him sent Tony reeling. He decides to go to Sunday School and for the first time in ten years, he is late by fifteen minutes to School. There
also, he is obsessed with the thoughts of Tony. From there he goes to Central Park but his recollections of Tony, an emotionally deprived and violated child, continue to haunt him. He is aware of Tony’s fear of his mother and the people who come to sleep with her. This once again reminds him of his own unhappy childhood and his mother:

Brooding, the memory of his own long dead mother returned to him. Yes; he understood Tony. He too recalled watching strange men tramping in and out the house in his childhood, and he felt a surging sense of terror, old, buried, trying to recapture him. He cut the distasteful recollection short by doubling his fists, rising and glaring about, oblivious of his surroundings. He muttered out loud: Women oughtn’t to do things like that . . .” (104-105)

Further, Mrs. Westerman worsens the feelings of Fowler by telling him that Mrs. Blake has seen the “naked feet dangling up in the air, naked feet going up” (108). However, she dismisses it with due attribution to the insensibility and the loose virtue of Mrs. Blake. Her comment smacks of racial discrimination and ill-treatment of the blacks:
I told to her face that I doubted if she saw anything or anybody on the balcony but Tony. . . . Listen, Mr. Fowler, she’s just like all these women: they’re a dime a dozen. . . . When somebody catches ’em with a man, they start yelling: ‘Rape!’ it’s wonder she didn’t say it was a nigger she saw. You understand?” (109)

Though Mrs. Westerman asserts that Mrs. Mabel Blake is hysterical in her drink, he is fully convinced that he is seen by Mabel but she is silenced and confused by Mrs. Westerman. Later, he receives a phone call that she saw what happened. In a bid to befriend Mabel, setting aside the possibility of his being seen by her, he goes to her to console the loss of Tony. When she sobs, he feels that she is trying to lure him to disclose what he knows by playing the role of an emotional agent. For a while, he feels fascinated by her exposed leg and nudity. He curses her for living so loosely and shabbily and giving herself so easily:

Her words rang again in his mind: *He was always talking of your being his father*. . . . His feelings played with the notion; he struggled against it, but found himself wondering how it would have been if he’d tried being Tony’s father. . . . It would’ve meant being married to a *fallen* woman like this! Inwardly he
flinched, feeling his feelings realizing the idea of being with her. Damn this woman! Her mere presence exuded evil... (121)

Meanwhile, Mrs. Blake goes to put the clothes on the crumpled copy of the New York Times and finds it stained with blood. Fowler’s heart sinks with the recollection of what happened in the hallway. He has been holding the newspapers in his right hand. But after returning from the balcony, without his knowledge, he takes them into his wounded left hand. He exchanges Mabel’s papers for his without realizing that his bleeding left palm has left a splotch of blood. Now, it is very hard for him to explain the blood. Anybody who has a glance of his wounded left hand and the stained paper may reconstruct the whole affair. To wash his hands off the bloody affair, he decides to ask Mabel to marry him, an executive’s clean cut and practical decision.

Fowler is ambushed in his attempt to ambush her. He is tossed up between his desire for Mabel and his instant rejection of her because of her loose, vile conduct. One minute he loves her, and hates her the next. He feels enraged when he finds her talking to men on phone. He feels that he is unnecessarily entrusted with the job of making arrangements for Tony’s
funeral. He feels nauseated at the thought of her men and their calls.

Richard Wright’s negative treatment of women and their portrayal in all meanness is most vivid in *Savage Holiday*. This is evident in the following passages. Fowler considers Mabel a degraded cheap woman:

“She’s unnatural,” he muttered to himself. Why were all those men calling her? Evidently, they’d been hoping to come and see her. What’s she doing? He felt nauseated. He should be attending to his own affairs and not meddling with this cheap woman. She wasn’t worth it . . . (147)

How could she think of hair and nails when her son lay dead on a metal table under a blue neon light? Or had she gone to meet some man and had lied to Minnie? He didn’t know which of these two possibilities he could have hated more . . . (151)

Mabel reveals the reason for her hatred for Tony: “Because it’s not in my nature to be a mother” (193), she tells him with stark simplicity. Branding her a prostitute, when Fowler asks her how many men she is in touch with right now, Mabel
screams: "So what? Suppose I sleep with every man in this block! What it to you, hunh? What's it to anybody on this damned earth? It's my body, isn't it?" (159). This stirs his feelings of pain and he implores her to forgive him, once again reposing utmost trust in her. Ironically, there is a reversal of his resolution when he hears Mabel speaking on phone again.

In Part 3 of the book, "Attack," Fowler resolves to forget Mabel's past life and wants to be strict with her. He decides to make his mind known to her at dinner at eight. Stretching upon his bed, Fowler falls asleep and dreams. He finds himself alone in a huge and empty church. He sees a coffin of a dead woman who is lovely and young. A man comes from his left and seeks his permission to open the coffin. There lies the lower half of the woman's body which is nude. Later, by a strange power, the woman's body begins to rot and turn into ashes, melting and finally turning into tar with a stench of disintegration.

He wakes up and recalls his promise of giving a treat to Mabel at eight. He dashes to her apartment only to find a note left for him. She declines his invitation as she is very busy with other friends. However, Fowler fetches her back from Mike's Tavern. He feels uneasy in the company of her friends as they make him the subject of laughter. After his return, he writes a
letter to Mabel, putting an end to the mistaken idea. He expresses his wish to remain just a friend but not her life partner. He is happy that he has taken a wise decision of not running after that "plain tart" (186).

Fowler is haunted by three mysterious things: Mabel's story of "naked feet dangling in the air," the blood-stained newspaper, and the woman calling him on the phone. He is nonplussed when Mabel enters his apartment and accuses him of irrational behaviour. She finds fault with Fowler for coming to her and offering help unaskedly. He has branded her a whore, bitch, and what not. He has come to her with his love and ultimate marriage proposal. Now he says that it is a mistake and he wants to retreat. All this happens within ten hours. She demands to know why he has behaved like that. Her attack is frontal:

So what? I'm all upset about Tony and you come to me talking about love, love, love . . . It was Tony I was responsible for, not you . . . I don't know what happened to Tony. I've been pounding my brains to find out what to do about it, and you start pressing me about loving me . . . Do you call that responsibility? (189)
Fowler confesses that he is jealous in his love and Mabel accuses him of some other motive for his love for her. It must be about Tony's death. Fowler comes to know that Mabel is the woman on the phone. He declares that Tony was already killed by Mabel even before his literal death:

YOU KILLED TONY! How? Like this. . . You had let Tony see you naked many times, naked and making love to men, many men. . . Tony told me so! . . . But Tony thought the men were fighting you. . . It was just a picture of violence, violence for no reason that he could accept or understand. . . Your son was terrified of naked people, naked men in particular. . . You made him feel that if he ever saw a naked man, he had to run for his life . . . for he did not want that violence, that fighting to happen to him. . . Tony told me that he didn't even want to grow up to be a man, because he felt that he'd have to fight-he called it fighting!-women like his mother . . . Mabel, you crushed that child; you killed him even before he fell from that balcony. . . .(199-200)

Their mutual confiding in each other leads to a resolve that their love will be a monument to Tony. But it does not last long
as its foundation stands on the jealousy of Fowler. He keeps pester ing her about her men and their calls. Mabel hysterically shrieks,

    I'll never marry a man like you . . . You'd drive me out of my mind! What's the matter with you?" . . . Listen, I sleep with whom I damn please. I'm a woman; I'm free . . . What the hell's the matter with you? Why do you keep on prying into me? Your mind works in a strange way ... (213)

She says that she will report against him. Fowler becomes furious and attacks Mabel. This leads to Mabel's death and Fowler's surrender:

    With machinelike motion, Erskine lifted the butcher knife and plunged it into her stomach again and again. Each time the long blade sank into her, her knees doubled up by reflex action. He continued to hack into her midriff and, from the two-inch slits which appeared in the flesh of her abdomen, blood began to run and spurt. Her breathing was heavy, as though she was trying to catch her breath. Huge drops of sweat popped out upon Erskine's face; his
lips were flexed. He stabbed her over and over and he did not cease until his arm grew so tired that it began to ache. Her knees no longer jumped now; her legs had stretched out and hung downward from the table, swinging a little. Her lips moved wordlessly, as though trying to form pleas for which there was not enough air in her lungs to give sound . . . Her house slippers had fallen off her feet and lay on the white-tiled floor. Her blood was running from her body to the table top, and drops began to splash on the shining tiles. (215)

Fowler wants to give an account of the real story that he tried to get his paper and that his door slammed shut and he was trapped in the hallway and was dodging naked and terrorized through the building and finally rushed to the balcony, but he thinks that he may be considered queer. And this reminds him of the complexes that people often talk about:

Yes; these days everybody was talking about “complexes” and the “unconscious”; and a man called Freud (which always reminded him of fraud!) was making people believe that the most fantastic things could happen to people’s feelings. Why, they’d say
that he'd gone *deliberately* on to that balcony like that, nude. . . . (61)

Fowler, a strong man, never was a prey to his emotions in the past. In fact, he has the feeling that he has no emotions at all. But he is ambushed in "Ambush":

From puberty onwards he had firmly clamped his emotions under the steel lid of work and had fastened and tightened that lid with the inviolate bolts of religious devotion. Now he felt ambushed, anchored in a sea of anxiety, because he was tremulously conscious of all his buried demons stirring and striving for the light of day. What did one do in situations like this? He then felt guilty of feeling guilty . . . . (80)

Washing his hands off the blood, Fowler recalls how his mother used to ask him to look in the mirror to find out how bad he was. He observes that his face remains the same as it was. Still, there are strong imprints of the past on his mind:

Yesterday he had been playing with the little girl next door-Gladys was her name-and he had taken her little doll and had "killed" it and had told
Gladys that the doll was his mother and he had “killed” her because all the boys had said that his mother was bad.

He had taken a dirty brick bat and had beaten the doll’s head in, had crushed it and had told Gladys: “There’s my mama... I killed her; ’cause she’s a bad woman...” (216)

He goes to a police station and surrenders himself, displaying the courage that is characteristic of Wright’s heroes. The officer asks him whether he knows anything about the son of the woman who was killed accidentally. Fowler replies that he can not say anything. When the officer demands an explanation, suspecting that he is playing a game, Fowler’s hand automatically reaches inside his coat and touches the tip ends of the four coloured pencils. Staring into the space, he recollects the battered doll that was the memory of a daydream:

He’d never “killed” the doll, really! That memory was but the recalling of a shameful daydream of revenge which he had pushed out of his mind! It was what he had angrily daydreamed one day when he’d been playing games with Gladys and her dolls; they’d been
coloring paper with colored pencils and he'd drawn
the image of a dead, broken doll and he had imagined
Gladys telling on him and his mother branding him
as bad . . . He'd pictured vividly to himself what he'd
wanted to do to his mother for having gone off and
left that night when he'd been ill . . . He now
understood the four pencils! (220)

Margaret Walker observes,

*Savage Holiday* is the most damaging evidence of the
psycho-sexual in Wright's fiction and perhaps the
greatest exposure of Wright's own personality. As he
relentlessly probes the psyche of Erskine Fowler, he
opens wide the door into his inner self. He parades
before us an embarrassment of conflicts, complexes,
and complicated cycles of what we gradually
recognize are Dostoevskian depths in the criminal
mind. Wright is able, however, to write in a positive
and healthy fashion about the anger, hostility,
aggression, and anxiety that obviously plagued his
psyche. He does not need to commit the crimes of
rape and murder he creates on paper. There is no
question but that Savage Holiday is the result of a daemonic or driven mentality. ³

_Savage Holiday_, did not receive the kind of attention it deserves. It was rejected by both his agent and his publisher before it was picked up by a paperback house. The American press, which deemed it a minor potboiler and quite atypical of Wright's work, declined to review it. ⁴ Robert Bone is of the view that the novel was written for pulp market and we should not consider it serious literature. Though other critics feel that the publication of the novel deterred the prosperity of Richard Wright as a successful writer, the novel cannot be dismissed as a minor work.

This novel seems to serve as the wish-fulfillment factor for Richard Wright. Wright's desire to be white is fulfilled through Erskine Fowler, a white. More than the mere characterization, there is a realistic portrayal of the psychosexual aspects. The psychology of Fowler is a study in human psychology. How a hardcore bachelor with an exceedingly religious inclination is trapped by tragic circumstances and how he makes up his mind to marry a "cheap" woman form the basis for a subtle exploration of Fowler's mind. The numerous incidents, involving love-lorn Tony, Fowler identifying himself with Tony, how Fowler,
as a child, longed for maternal care, and how his hatred is compounded by the lewd behaviour of women in general and his mother in particular are really appealing.

What Margaret Walker finds very interesting and revealing are the quotations from Wright's reading sources that appear in the novel *Savage Holiday*:

Oscar Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol*; the books of the Bible—Job, Exodus, and Paul's First Letter to Corinthians; Sandor Ferenczi's *Sunday Neuroses*; Freud's *Totem and Taboo*; Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*; Theodor Reik's *The Unknown Murderer*, both Goethe's *Faust* and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Euripides' Greek Tragedy *Orestes*. As revealed through these quotations from world literature, Wright's pathological and psychological dilemmas seem to transcend the question of race. They underline and emphasize the themes of *Savage Holiday*—human guilt and the problem of evil, and how they torment and tear apart the suffering human heart. 5
REFERENCES


2. Margaret Walker, 245.


5. Margaret Walker, 248.