

The search for self and confronting societal restrictions in the novel "The Black Boy": a critical study

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Abstract

Since the mid-1920s, American writers have largely concentrated on investigating issues of truth, deceit, and the search for social identity. The fight for racial equality has been an uphill battle for African Americans in the US, especially since independence. While some areas have made great strides in the last few decades, the problem of ethnic conflict has not. This piece showed how the South's illogical fanaticism hurts people and communities. Racial prejudice is the root cause of many of the problems that Wright and his family face. In the face of the injustices he faces, the novel's protagonist shows tenacity and a strong will to resist. Despite obstacles, he fights relentlessly for his rights and humanity in a culture that seeks to degrade him. The book delves at racism as a complicated problem embedded in society's basic structure as well as a vicious ideology maintained by evildoers. Among the most pressing societal concerns raised by this study are the novel's depictions of racism, injustice, and acts of violence. Using Richard Wright's autobiography *Black Boy* as a lens, this study seeks to shed light on the pervasiveness of racism and injustice in American society. The ideas and social issues explored in "Black Boy" are deeply related to critical race theory. According to critical race theory, which is a body of thought, racism and racial oppression shape people's lives in complex ways that include other forms of oppression like class and gender. **Keywords:** Critical Race Theory, Violence, Racism, Oppression, Self-Definition

البحث عن الذات ومواجه القيود المجتمعية في رواية الولد الاسود دراسة نقدية

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الملخص :

منذ منتصف عشرينيات القرن الماضي، ركّز الكتاب الأمريكيون بشكل كبير على التحقيق في قضايا الحقيقة والخداع والبحث عن الهوية الاجتماعية. كان النضال من أجل المساواة العرقية معركة شاقة للأمريكيين الأفارقة في الولايات المتحدة، وخاصة منذ الاستقلال. وبينما أحرزت بعض المناطق تقدماً كبيراً في العقود القليلة الماضية، لم تشهد مشكلة الصراع العرقي أي تقدم يُذكر. أظهر هذا البحث آثار التعصب غير المنطقي في جنوب الولايات المتحدة. يُعدّ التحيز العنصري السبب الجذري للعديد من المشاكل التي يواجهها كاتب الرواية رايت وعائلته والظلم الذي يواجهه، وكيف يُظهر بطل الرواية إصراره وإرادةً قويةً للمقاومة ضد قيود المجتمع. ورغم العقبات، يُناضل بلا هوادة من أجل حقوقه وإنسانيته في ثقافة تسعى إلى إهانته. تتناول هذه الرواية العنصرية كمسألة مُعقدة متأصلة في البنية الأساسية للمجتمع، بالإضافة إلى كونها أيديولوجيةً شريرةً يُحافظ عليها الأشرار. ومن بين أكثر الشواغل المجتمعية إلحاحاً التي تُثيرها هذه الدراسة تصوير الرواية للعنصرية والظلم وأعمال العنف. خلال سيرة ريتشارد رايت الذاتية في روايته "الفتى الأسود"، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على انتشار العنصرية والظلم في المجتمع الأمريكي. حيث ترتبط الأفكار والقضايا الاجتماعية التي يستكشفها رواية "الفتى الأسود" ارتباطاً وثيقاً بنظرية العرق النقدية. ووفقاً لهذه النظرية، وهي منهج فكري، تُشكل العنصرية والقمع العنصري حياة الناس بطرق معقدة تشمل أشكالاً أخرى من القمع، مثل الطبقة الاجتماعية والجنس

الكلمات المفتاحية: نظرية العرق النقدية، العنف، العنصرية، القمع، تعريف الذات

1. Introduction

On September 4th, 1908, Richard Nathaniel Wright was born in a one-room shack in Roxie, Mississippi. Being born to a black family in a rural town in the post Reconstruction South meant he was a target for discrimination. He belonged to a family that was both poor and uneducated. His father deserted the family when Richard was very young. His mother was a school teacher at a

black school, a job that was difficult to find in the South but little more than a pittance. She struggled for years to keep Richard and his brother but lost her job when Richard was eight years old. That eventually led to an unending chain of hardships. In the face of extreme poverty, hunger, oppression, and death, Richard struggled to survive and obtain an education in a world that was doing its best to deny him these basic rights. This 'Black Boy' is a true autobiography that tells the true history of Richard Wright's life from the time he was born to sixteen, such as his family life, psychological development, emotions, and aspirations (S. Sasa and K. BenLahcene, 2011). The slave narrative, the predominant black literary prose genre in the United States, contributed to the formation of an African-American identity while consistently influencing black narrative techniques and subjects throughout the 20th century. Afro-American literature delineates the traumatic events, suffering, and degradation that Black individuals have faced throughout their history. Racism, convention, culture, enslavement, and freedom are prevalent topics in literature. Black Literature is a contemporary subgenre of American literature that has developed in recent years. Black Americans have utilized novel writing to articulate their suffering caused by racism to a global audience. The historical context of the denial of equal treatment in society fostered disillusionment and unhappiness among the black population. Wright's struggle was against the subjugation of Black individuals by White individuals and the inequitable American society. His purpose was to seek a resolution to racial issues while promoting the concept of democracy, as he claimed to have been a victim of White tyranny and oppression, akin to other Black individuals. Richard Wright was one of the most prominent African-American novelists of the 20th century, addressing sensitive racial topics during a challenging age. He attained prominence by his artistic expression linked to the social consequences in the United States and the realities faced by African-Americans as an oppressed minority. He addressed the shortcomings of African Americans in American society in his writings, indicating the emergence of the cultural renaissance

of African-American literature. It facilitated the emergence of new theories by garnering support for the Harlem Renaissance, which advanced the interests of black intellectuals to foster artistic development and implement successful social changes. Richard Wright's literature is distinguished and artistic, yet it also contests societal standards. The conventions of the White population, repudiated by the Black community via their estrangement from the established order, are shown in Wright's works. Following the Harlem Renaissance, approximately in the 1930s, the era of Richard Wright commenced and persisted until the late 1950s. Richard Wright's novels and writings illuminated the experiences of black individuals, significantly altering American culture. Wright's novels asserted that history might serve as a form of punishment. Richard advocated that literature by Black authors should expose the social disenfranchisement of Black individuals and strive for the attainment of social equality. Stoneberg supports this by stating,

Wright, as an African-American writer, frustrated by the lack of social gains of the 1920s and 1930s and also influenced by Marxism, falls into this category of adopting naturalism in his novel *Native Son*, to reveal the social structures that disadvantages black people (Stoneberg Michael Richard, 2010: pp. 2-3).

Wright's sensitivity to African-American existence is profoundly influenced by his background in the southern United States. In *Black Boy*, he articulates his perspectives on African American life in the United States.

Whenever I thought of the essential bleakness of black life in America, I knew the Negroes had never been allowed to catch the whole spirit of Western Civilization that they lived somehow in it but not of it. When I thought about the lack of culture in black life, I wondered if clean, positive tenderness, love, honor, loyalty, and the ability to remember were things that came naturally to all men, not just black people. (*Black Boy*, p.35).

This paper analyzes the important of social problems and self-definition with reference of *Black Boy* novel. Our objective is to demonstrate that Racism and oppression are essential themes in

Black Boy, especially given that the book was published during the Jim Crow era.

2. Literature Review

The problem of black identity and the resistance to it in a culture that is predominately white in the United States was the subject of a study that was conducted by Diwakar Tiwari (2017). African Americans are the offspring of a past that was not without its share of challenges and difficulties. Their worry is with their identity. Dreams and nightmares are something that they experience. In the 1920s and 1930s, a period of time known as the Black or Harlem Renaissance began, which resulted in the birth of a large number of writers who championed Black culture. A writer named Richard Wright is responsible for leaving a long-lasting impression on readers with his depictions of African Americans who are in a difficult situation. In light of this, a new generation of African American writers has been given the opportunity to investigate information that was previously unknown regarding discrimination against persons of African descent.

Furthermore, another study by Febrian Ramadhani Setiaji (2019) examined This study aims to clarify the depiction of American hunger in Richard Wright's novel *Black Boy*. This study is a qualitative analysis that relies on the effectiveness of verbal or explanatory reasoning. The data was obtained by reading, identifying, classifying, and analyzing through the use of structuralism theories in this study. Binary operations were utilized to analyze the differences between black and white societies. The study demonstrated a distinct division between black and white individuals regarding treatment, authority, and dominance, finally indicating that black individuals experience differential treatment and are deprived of freedom. The novel illustrates American Hunger via episodes of confrontation between black and white folks. The friction between them stemmed from the unequal treatment, oppression, discrimination, superiority, and deprivation faced by black and white individuals or society. The dominance and power of white

folks have adversely affected black individuals in various aspects of their lives. The work portrayed American Hunger as the yearning of Black individuals while cohabiting with white individuals in America. When discrimination, segregation, and oppression target black individuals, they confront their American hunger by opposing racial subjugation, fortifying their resistance, and combating injustice.

According to research by Rajendra Prasad Bhatt (2022), *Black Boy* by Richard Wright depicts African American life. It delves into the ways in which Black Americans feel oppressed and how societal and cultural issues play a role in this. The novel "Black Boy" is primarily a criticism of the racist white society in the South; it depicts extreme poverty and the author's personal encounters with racial violence against Black people. Black American experience, with an emphasis on sexism and racism, is the subject of this narrative inquiry study. The persecution of Black people by dominating whites, the internal strife and bloodshed inside Black communities, and the struggle between Black and white communities are recurring themes in Wright's writings. In order to counteract Black community pride and self-identity, this dissertation contends that Black American literature combats racism and injustice. Various factors from the past and present, as well as individual and cultural viewpoints, impact the continual process of seeking one's identity.

3. Overview of the Genre's historical context

Since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, African-Americans in the United States have battled for racial equality. It has not been an easy journey. The country has made significant progress in eradicating racial disparity in recent decades, but no one believes the problem has been fixed. *Black Boy* is one of the most captivating records about an artist's struggle to discover his or her individuality and achieve success in the American music industry. Between 1908 and 1927, when Wright was growing up in the South, *Black Boy* unquestionably aimed the systemic Racism that pervaded society. Racism

played a significant role in many of Wright's family's difficulties, both directly and indirectly. Wright discovers prejudice to be ubiquitous and unbearable once he enters the world of employment. In this way, Wright's autobiography comes to a close with his flight to the South and the discriminatory conditions he is forced to face there. Anthropological notions that have already been disproved have given rise to the concept of a "racial group". This school of thought originated predominantly in Western Europe in the 19th century and early 20th centuries, asserting that humans could be separated into racial groups based on physical and behavioral features related to ethnicity, nationality, and associated conceptions such as a shared language. The present use of the terms "race" and "racial" emerged due to these false conceptions of Racial discrimination is growing ingrained in society's attitudes and behaviors, particularly in Western nations. These views penetrate all aspects of Scottish culture, from social attitudes to organizational structure, disadvantages experienced by Black and minority ethnic people are perpetuated over generations. 'Race' is inextricably tied to skin colour. White populations worldwide have not been 'racialized' in the same manner that non-white people have been. Their process of racialization resulted in more benefits than problems. As a result, while there may be prejudice and discrimination against white minority ethnic groups in Scotland, we would classify this as xenophobic prejudice rather than racist. One of the most common ways to describe oppression is as a malevolent or unjust use of power. In the context of discrimination, oppression occurs when a wrong is committed against a specific group of people rather than the general public at large. There is currently no widely accepted paradigm or terminology for explaining oppression in its whole, although some academics have found sign of numerous varieties of tyranny, including social oppression, institutional oppression, and economic oppression, among others. When one person forces their will on another, this is called oppression. However, the concept, popularized by

Marx and Engels in their 1848 Communist Manifesto, is frequently invoked to justify governmental repression.

However, the Latin word *oppressus* is the past participle of *opprimere*, which means to make someone feel bad or ("to press against", "to squeeze", "to suffocate"). In other words, when governments use tyranny to make people subservient, they want their citizens to feel that "pressing down," and to live in fear that if they displease the government, "squeezed" and "suffocated," for example, they'll be put in a dank, dark, state prison or killed. Such governments use restraint, control, terror, hopelessness, and despair to make people feel hopeless and helpless (American Heritage Dictionary, 2016). Taylor (2016) described (social) oppression as a more insidious kind of manipulation and control:

Oppression is a form of injustice that occurs when one social group is subordinated while another is privileged. Oppression is maintained by a variety of different mechanisms, including social norms, stereotypes and institutional rules. ... [Oppression] occurs when a particular social group is unjustly subordinated, and where that subordination is not necessarily deliberate but instead results from a complex network of social restrictions, ranging from laws and institutions to implicit biases and stereotypes. (Taylor, Elanor, 2016).

In particular in Western countries, racial differences are becoming ingrained in society's views and behaviors. As a result, persons in positions of relative power can treat and exploit a group of individuals in a socially acceptable manner. Social group oppression can be founded on a variety of ideas, such as the opinion that people are oppressed based on their socioeconomic status or the conviction that people are oppressed based on their ethnicity. the concept of racial oppression or discrimination is defined by the term "race":

"...burdening a specific race with unjust or cruel restraints or impositions. Racial oppression may be social, systematic, institutionalized, or internalized. Social forms of racial oppression include exploitation and mistreatment that is socially supported." (Wikipedia, 2021).

4.Critical Race Theory

It is commonly believed that Derrick Bell is the person who established Critical Race Theory. The creation of Critical Race Theory was significantly influenced by Derrick Bell, a pioneering legal scholar and civil rights activist who played a crucial role in the process. His work posed a challenge to conventional legal frameworks and placed an emphasis on the part that race plays in the formation of US laws and institutions. With his contributions to Critical Race Theory, such as his concept of interest convergence and his use of storytelling as a vehicle for social critique, Bell has left an indelible mark on the field, and his ideas continue to have an impact on academics and activists who are working on issues pertaining to race and social justice. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that originated in legal studies in the late 20th century and has been utilized in several fields like as sociology, education, and cultural studies. Critical Race Theory aims to analyze and question how race and racism interact with systems of power, institutions, and cultural standards. Here are some essential aspects of Critical Race Theory: Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that originated in legal studies in the late 20th century and has been utilized in several fields like as sociology, education, and cultural studies. Critical Race Theory aims to analyze and question how race and racism interact with systems of power, institutions, and cultural standards. Here are some essential aspects of Critical Race Theory: 1. Origin : Critical Race Theory emerged in the legal sector throughout the 1970s and 1980s, mostly among scholars of color who questioned conventional legal methods regarding race and discrimination. Key figures in the advancement of Critical Race Theory (CRT) are Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, and Patricia Williams. 2- Critical Race Theory highlights the interconnectedness of race with other social categories like gender, class, sexuality, and nationality. This approach acknowledges that individuals might face various types of oppression and privilege at the same time. 3- Critique of Colorblindness: Critical Race Theory questions the concept

of colorblindness, asserting that disregarding race does not eradicate racism but instead sustains systemic disparities. CRT supports recognizing and dealing with racial inequalities and prejudice. 4. Interest Convergence: Derrick Bell proposed the idea that racial advancement is most probable when it coincides with the interests of those in authority. This theory emphasizes the strategic factors that impact social change. 5- Counterstorytelling is employed in Critical Race Theory to confront prevailing narratives around race and racism. Critical Race Theory aims to challenge dominant power systems and elevate different viewpoints by focusing on the voices and experiences of oppressed people. 6. Structural Inequality: Critical Race Theory analyzes the presence of racism within societal frameworks, organizations, and regulations. It emphasizes how power structures sustain racial inequalities by favoring some groups while putting others at a disadvantage. 7. Critical Race Theory is frequently linked with action and advocacy for social justice. Those involved in Critical Race Theory want to utilize their research and analysis to advance racial fairness, confront institutional racism, and support legislative reforms that tackle racial inequality. Critical Race Theory offers a critical perspective for examining and comprehending the intricacies of race relations, power structures, and socioeconomic disparities. It has had a significant impact on shaping conversations around race, law, education, and social policy, leading to crucial talks about structural racism and the necessity for radical change.

5.Critical Analysis of The Black Boy

5.1.An Introduction to Black Boy (1945)

Richard Wright's *Black Boy* (1945) illustrates the protagonist's self-education, highlighting his experiences of suffering due to racism. It depicts the image of his impoverished family in Natchez, Mississippi. It illustrates his futile journey to overcome poverty and evade racial oppression. The story chronicles his existence as a vagabond and examines the resilience of urban life. Wright was astonished by the alienation caused by

technological progress. Wright, in *Black Boy*, illustrates the lethal impoverishment perpetrated by Whites as a systemic means of subjugating Blacks. *Black Boy* illustrated the disruption produced by racism, whether on an individual or collective scale, as a reality in the South. The story elucidated the mundane and inscrutable conditions of living in the South. It revealed the brutal conditions of blacks, illustrating famine as a pervasive affliction inside society during the Great Depression. Both white and black cultures are portrayed as elaborately constructed narratives of racial virtue that thrived on the denigration and vilification of black masculine figures in the works of Richard Wright. The legitimacy of White culture, which asserts its superiority over Black culture, is highlighted by the disparity between its harsh realities of abuse and deprivation and its rhetoric of justice, opportunity, progress, order, and rationality; consequently, the Black population remains marginalized. The purpose of this exposure is to reveal the mismatch between the ideologies of White culture and its practices concerning Black individuals. It further challenges the specific epistemological and theoretical foundations of Whiteness, serving as evidence grounded in both an essentialist and affirmative view of the self and the other. According to Wright's depiction, black manliness is an identity in crisis, since it fundamentally contradicts the humanistic paradigms of power and knowledge that underpin White frameworks of social normativity and racial cohesion. The White civilization and its implicit enlightenment assumptions are scrutinized and contested through Wright's fiction, which illustrates how the black male surpasses the typical white individual. The belief that Whiteness cannot withstand scrutiny in revealing its epistemological assumptions and that facts are not inherent but constructed and convoluted exemplifies its exploitation of fractured Black masculinity. Abdul Jan Mohamed (1995) delineates a prevalent method of identification, wherein the rupture and distortion of the black subject become a locus for examining White culture's differentiation in the construction of knowledge and values.

Wright's main scholarly distraction of comprehending his own particular arrangement as a black subject by White as well as black cultures is also contended by Abdul Jan Mohamed:

All groups define their identities through some form of binary opposition to other groups [and] the very process of suturing the (relative) 'homogeneity' that is crucial to the definition of that group's 'identity' . . . also simultaneously constitutes the process of rupturing various subjects on its borders the border subject becomes the site on and through which a group defines its identity. (Mudimbe-Boyi, 2012: pp.231-32).

While the roots of racial identity are linked to American history and social practices, Wright transcends this focus, employing it as a metaphor that displaces both White and Black identities from essentialist interpretations of reality, situating them within the historical context of a racial struggle for meaning and power. In a distinct context, he interrogates White identity, asserting that, akin to the Negro, it is a "construct" and a product of societal developments. He explains how African-Asian pioneers in the postcolonial time see Whiteness:

The 'White man' is a distinct image in Asian-African minds. This image has nothing to do with biology, for, from a biological point of view, what a 'White man' is not interesting. Scientifically speaking the leaders of Asia and Africa know that there is no such a thing as race. It is, therefore, only from a historical or sociological point of view that the image of 'White man' means anything (McKenna, 2015: p.239).

'Black Boy' is the autobiography of Richard Wright. It illustrates life in the southern and northern regions of the United States. As an African American residing in the Jim Crow South, this is the experience. The tale commences with the father's presence in the household and the protagonist's reflections about him. He stated that his mother was a devout black woman who harbored significant apprehension towards the white individuals in her vicinity. The protagonist's father deserts the family, rendering them susceptible to the ramifications of poverty. This exerts a significant strain on Richard's mother, who, unable to endure the burden, falls ill. The protagonist's harrowing existence,

oscillating between households for sustenance while nurturing a passion for literature, is elucidated. The significance and nature of the schooling prescribed by Whites for Blacks is effectively depicted in the narrative. Richard, unable to endure the circumstances in the South, ventures to the North in hopes of discovering improved living conditions and fortune. Upon arriving in the North, he comprehends the harshness of reality when he discovers the prevalence of White supremacy, employment discrimination, and racial segregation in the ostensibly liberal North. The autobiographies of his contemporaries, Zora Neale Hurston, Maya Angelou, and James Baldwin, illustrate their life experiences, detailing the expressions of what life presented to them and the diverse circumstances they encountered. Richard Wright labels his piece *Black Boy* primarily to emphasize the word black. This narrative chronicles Wright's adolescence, while the color of his skin perpetually occupies his thoughts. He is maturing in America as an individual of African descent. Due to his skin tone, white individuals in the story consistently treat Richard unjustly in most encounters. Subtle racism was of greater significance to Richard Wright as it hindered his ability to frequently connect with Whites who saw him similarly (for example, the Hoffmans or Mr. Crane) or with other Blacks. Wright's research on racism in America includes an examination of the black community, which, particularly the black societal group, was reluctant to provide him with adequate education. The brutality of fictitious characters in contemporary American literature reflected his own dissatisfaction upon realizing the creative potential of literature "I vowed that as soon as I was old enough, I would buy all the novels there were and read them to feed that thirst for violence that was in me, for intrigue, for plotting, for secrecy, for bloody murders" (Rowley, 2008: p.10).

5.2. Themes of Identity and Self-Discovery

There are several major themes in Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, a memoir detailing his early life in the oppressive

environment of the Jim Crow South. One of the most prominent is identity, especially the searching for one's own identity against the societal forces that try to dictate existence. Many people are relegated to a smaller existence as part of a greater whole, morally and materially limited by a society that denies them freedom to be themselves or to aspire to all that they might hope to be. Wright's childhood is spent trying desperately to exist as an individual in a world that fears him as an individual, a world that only wants him to live as a part of a collective having neither thoughts nor desires beyond what is deemed acceptable. In the novel, this searching for identity transcends the plotlines that dictate its events, grounding them with meaning and energy larger than their limited concerns. Perhaps the best illustration of the theme of identity comes during the scene where Wright agrees to take part in a boxing match against another black boy for the amusement of a white audience (Hudson, 2008). Now that the predominant audience in Wright's world is black, he can afford to perform in the role of the individual, taking upon himself the challenge of thinking and acting out a creative and exalted vision of the world outside the confines of White society. The amateur boxer that Wright plays is given the freedom of existence, able to express feelings of power and greatness. To the extent that he does rise above the restrictions that had formerly bound him, he has triumphed in his struggle for identity. In the sight of the audience, Wright is a boxer, a host of indeterminate possibilities and energies, whose intentions extend beyond the righteous anger to strike that bubbled with the death of Granny and detonated publicly at the thought of stepping on a dog's tail. Wright eventually wins the match, much to the confusion of the black audience and to the delight of the whites (S. Sasa and K. BenLahcene, 2011). For Wright, a sense of self endowed with firm opinions about the world outside the accommodating South made itself unavoidably necessary. His first hurried sprint from the beatings of school led to the realization that he could live only if he wrote, whether or not anybody ever read what he wrote. Whereas Wright had referred to the feverish shame over

Granny's proxy kneeling in the place of a black church, now a volley of energies and insights pounded in his mind against the quiet deliberations of the black community, and dreams of whisking them out of himself to return heavy with the products of a fresh understanding took shape around the hope of more worldly and bitter years in the North.

5.3. Societal Restrictions and Their Impact

Unlike Meursault, Richard is subjected to innumerable restrictions imposed on his individuality and his quest for self. What Richard regards as 'fighting' appears to be an unending job of disconnection, self-examination, detachment or bracketing, much like scientific scrutiny, from which he can only escape through conformity or camouflage. The success of his camouflage during childhood gives no satisfaction; his victory over the predicaments of his life is meaningless (S. Sasa and K. BenLahcene, 2011). Richard is forbidden to dabble in writing. He is ridiculed and highly despised for being different, an ancient difficulty with originality. Richard gets a slight relief when he finds his childhood confidants, his writings. They offer him a rare material beauty and lift him above the sordidness of his hard life as well as his future. In the course of fighting, he learns for the first time about death and its cause. He learns how men cause each other's death and unmask the terrible cruelty of man, even his young ones. But the success of the fight offers him no pleasure. What is great about such a venture but that it is wanton? by the same token, Richard is bewildered by his mother's determination to make him happy on Christmas day with a revolver. Richard realizes that such is the nature of adult happiness. Richard learns the arbitrary relation of his body to his fate. That Richard does not understand what reverberates so profoundly in his heart is particularly telling. Richard's feeling is unformed and indeterminate before he sees this terrifying phenomenon but the meaning of this perception is utterly lost. Richard understands that education is wearing and guidance 'an ineffably complex matter.' Though his perspective has been transformed radically and 'life in its light was fearful,' he is lost

and the world is more intractable than ever. Physically bruised, psychologically disrupted, and cognitively disoriented, Richard is as far away from life as in the beginning. It is as if Wright experienced a radical alteration of the natural thesis, for which a remembering of life, self, and society should be anew (Hudson, 2008). In theory, remembrance would require a continuing procedure of disconnection or bracketing. But the rich lives of Wright's family and community make it improbable that the remembered lives were examined and excavated individually. On the contrary, it seems that such an outpouring went like scientific scrutiny. This is singular as it purports to be the showcase of social vignettes carefully arranged. Wright is forced to perform the role expected of him by the democratic white audience.

5.4. Racial Dynamics in the Narrative

Richard displays both his desires and aspirations for the future and a reason for his oppression in the narrative. From the time he is made aware that he is black, he is abandoned to the racial hatred of the South and forced to internalise hatred towards his blackness, which would “bug” him for the remainder of the narrative (Hudson, 2008). Despite the youth's realisation of dreams fulfilled through education and the desire to be privy to the musings of writers, he attempts to flee precisely this potential arising from his identity. For doing this, he would be forced to wrestle with himself and the desire to be free, since this entails damaging beige fantasies: the notion that the Southern black youth can escape this colour. However, Richard's acceptance of his blackness, precisely this wish to be free and strive for his aspirations is incommensurable with both Southern white society and their view of race. For this is the very essence of that view, that Richard cannot have this, and society may beat him down and destroy him “so long as the height of the concern built on his skin prevails”. Further underlying this unease is truth: wounding colour, that for the time that racism persists no heterosexual black man is free. The narrative states that speaking black is not a choice on his part

but an inevitable result of forced education, and his aspirations of painter and musician have come under scrutiny since these would not be 'honest' professions. Richard, now fully aware, attempts to mitigate this essence of being black: as though no longer seeing it as the prize fought for at length. Though Richard accepts the truth of his colour and takes positions on issues, being black does not travel unquestioned into this new future; nor are the tenets of Southern racism interrogated. For initially, Richard embeds his blackness within a Southern semiotics untouched by wider forms of prejudice and exploration of the stature of the colourline. Yet the need to play and win boxing matches for white audiences recalls the grotesque, a trope used to explore difference since it is made strange through portrayal as 'other' and is invoked to express frustration and fury in otherness. Richard's blackness is questioned first on account of its changeable fairness and purity, movements of the grotesque which deal with otherness. Yet, as the semiotics of struggles around being black shifts to embodying difference, all that is written serves as reinforcement for only black narrative. Richard's blackness returns to its Southern questioning, but now embodied in more intimate selfhood and interactions with the brutality of black life, unrecognisably as pre-existing styles of the grotesque.

5.5. The Role of Family in Self-Perception

Richard Wright's narrative of struggle and survival in his autobiographical work 'Black Boy' deals with a formative stage of his life, lasting from about the age of four until he was seventeen, in which he lived in the South. The book illustrates a world where one individual is essentially an alien in a traditional society and a protagonist isolated by his quest for the meaning of life. Society controls humanity. Black Boy is a life story and an exploration of the quest for self that unfolds in a societal milieu that imposes restrictions. Through content as well as style, self and society cannot be mediated. Wright employs denotation, literary allusion and premonition. His style is devoid of a mature self that could render obliquely his childhood, as it

is quintessence. In the beginning a boy observes situations and the role of the adults. Society imposes rigid rules. A man of action, able to instill terror in others, fascinated Richard, submerging the black naïve boy into a world of adult men. Then terror struck back, confirming the foreboding and foreshadowing the intensity of moral conflict. The next period of life, the blacks' invisibility from the white world, waves of fear, anxiety, and sincere but naïve questioning. Again, perception of divergent levels: How different clothes and money could give one equality. The inquiry nervously danced on the edge of consciousness. It gradually recedes from the childhood perceptions of nature as abiding, adhering to consciousness as a sum of parked memories. Society becomes synonymous with an oppressive white world. The capture of adulthood, urban experience, and the choice of art was sketched through moral choices, probing each side of a scaling moral dilemma. As the white world came into prominence, the life of Richard Wright's formlessness on an alien self—a black boy from the South turned into a local pariah in Harlem, periphery of periphery, seeking a self in the dark of the subway even in the self-aware state.

5.6. Impact of Environment on Identity Formation

In his autobiography, *Black Boy*, Richard Wright depicts the oppressive environment of the South and its results on black men. Richard's recollections of his childhood enter the consciousness of the reader through a gradual awakening to his race and the hatred associated with it. *Black Boy* is not only an autobiography: it is an examination of the effect of a racially oppressive environment on the identity of a black individual. Richard's societal conditioning is due not only to the general oppression that all black people endured but also to his particular upbringing. Moody, a racist teacher, attempts to change Richard's default methods of survival through a series of cruel punishments for being black and resisting white authority. Divorced from the concept of colour till this point, Richard must endure the scorn of a society that privileges by birthright. By

expertly painting the destructive power of racism, Wright exposes how Richard achieves a conscious identity in spite of it by purchasing his authenticity through blistering suffering. Black Boy begins with child-like naivety in a spatially confined South. Over the course of Richard's recollections of his childhood, he undergoes a long maturation process resigning in total voluntary exile from the South. The novel ends with Richard bursting out, 'I was really free. I was me'.

Richard's internal conflict under his oppressive environment seething with hatred leads him on a path of self-discovery by searching for an undefined self. With a sense of alienation from his world and dissatisfaction with his social role, Richard strives to construct a conscious subjectivity to overcome it. In doing so, he must leave home and sever emotional ties with those holding him back by sacrificing his childish innocence and obtaining knowledge of sex and of society as the cruel white-man's world. He must collect aesthetic memories to preserve the child's world while constructing his own. It is this continual good-bad dance between worlds that creates Richard's struggle.

5.7. Character Analysis: Protagonist's Journey

The protagonist of the autobiographic novel sets a journey: to find a place where he can be free or where he can become himself in the full sense of the word. He finds himself surrounded by a family that makes him feel unknown and unrecognized. The grandmother is one of the symbols of restrictions in the novel. The description of her reveals the claustrophobic nature of her religion. She is portrayed as a woman who tears her heart, physically and emotionally touches her god with intense feelings. Thus, she is an extraordinary fanatic believer who believes in rapture and spiritual ecstasy. The firm grip with which she holds her religion does not only stem from naivety, ignorance, and compliance. Rather, it originates from a shame that grows inside and around her violent existence. She had deadly sins; she is black and poor in a powerful and racist society. A place of god and prayers – the only hope – provides a compensative world where mundane and

profane practices are vanished to a less visible state. But it is obvious that prayers can hardly fill up this inner emptiness. The fanaticism stirs the fears born with trauma up to a terrifying state, which controls her every time, and thus becomes, in a sense, stress relief or the evocation of inner horror. Eventually, the protections offered by the religion transform into restrictions that determine one's identity deeply. The invalidation of her self, desires, memory, the world's secret and truth bring complaints that either reveal the fragility of her existence or fuel the anger towards black people who live as animals. The submission and hatred are projected towards her family with a perverted compassion. Ironically, this blindness enables the blacks to bear the violence and traumas from others.

The other figure limiting his freedom is the father. He is a shadowy presence that does not appear frequently but has a strong impact on the son. His violent actions and disappearances torment him a lot. The uncertainty of being attacked or abandoned creates extreme anxiety reflected in many hallucinations of being hunted and threatened by family members. His physical strength functions as an interest for those who emotionally and physically abuse other blacks. Thus, he embodies the deep-seated fear of being oppressed or mishandled by the other. He awakens an unrelenting hatred towards men who embody oppression. The father's invisibility cruelly disproves the possibility and hope of being independent and freed.

5.8. Gender Roles and Their Implications

Society defines gender roles and tends to impose them rigidly, leading to stereotyped behaviors expected from universally accepted male and female identities. Gender role or sexuality is a social and cultural phenomenon, focusing on the roles, positions, and expected patterns of behavior of individuals based on their gender or sex. Gender-based stereotypes show how society expects males to behave "masculinely" and females to behave "femininely." All societies encourage certain appropriate behaviors and activities along gender lines, emphasizing sexual

dimorphism. Gender roles define the different roles men and women are expected to play in society in terms of emotion, behavior, interest, and ability. Gender roles are socialized through families, schools, peers, mass media, and religious institutions. As a consequence of socialization, men are seen as assertive and dominant, while women are seen as passive and nurturing (Rodriguez, 2019). Boys have toughened hearts. Being a boy means being hardened against women and girls, even against love, affection, or emotion in general. A boy may hug his friend, but usually only in absence of touch unless it is perceived as playful and as teasing. The danger of figuring masculinity in aggression, danger, violence, and fighting raises fear in the hearts of mothers. Having a boy means feeling fear in sending him out in the world and much more at the prospect of him growing up. Boys regard crying, softness, gentleness, fear, and affection as shameful things. Ironically, by turning away from softness, they tend to act cruel to the softer members of the society – women, children, and weaker boys. They avoid playing dolls, rock-paper-scissors, or anything that involves gentleness at all. Subtle, caveman-like versions of “Kick!” and “Throw that!” take over every game. Violence starts to feel normal (Hudson, 2008). The world in general, and adulthood in particular, seems to be much more dangerous for a girl than for a boy. Moments of helplessness, fright, sadness, reliance, and weakness turn into a thought form “Am I weak?” At playground, streets, and roads, girls learn to be harder on little under-tens, embracing such masculine traits as aggressiveness and toughness. It seems to become impossible to cry the tears of weakness, instead forming cold anger, silence, or indifference. Emotional expression becomes more complex, and any moment of anger seems to put everything and everyone, even the dearest ones, at a stake.

5.9. Race and Color

Among African American authors, Richard Wright gained prominence for works that dealt with the economic and social intricacies of America and the oppression of Black Americans.

In his writings, Wright addressed the problems that Black Americans faced in modern America. An African-American man's fight for self-discovery and liberation from societal constraints is a central theme in Richard Wright's writings. In his writings, Wright addressed the problems that Black Americans faced in modern America. An African-American man's fight for self-discovery and liberation from societal constraints is a central theme in Richard Wright's writings. Furthermore, the novel *Black Boy* focuses on the lives of Wright and his encounters with whites, his neighbors, and his own family during the Jim Crow era. Several such instances of *Black Boys* responding to abuse by calling their abusers names unbecoming of a civilized society have occurred. It is clear that the work was written during the time period when the Jim Crow Laws were in effect. Because of the establishment of Jim Crow Laws, the black community suffered greatly as a result. When young Richard was out running errands for his mother, he was in a very different environment where violence would recur in his life. It was commendable how Richard Wright depicted the terrible violence he witnessed as a child. He was one of the first writers to focus only on the horrors of the Jim Crow Laws and Racism in the South, which led to the commencement of the American Civil War without his knowledge or consent. He built a reputation for himself and was a trailblazer in the fight to end all types of violence and racial discrimination perpetrated against the black people in America, including police brutality and segregation. As Jan Mohamed concludes his essay :

Black Boy is remarkable not so much for its rebellion as for the control that Wright had to exercise and the internal struggle that he had to wage against being engulfed by the racist sovereignty. (Rampersad, 1995, pg. 118).

The color of the skin does not affect or correct the minds, but makes the victims of hatred more open or violent, is precisely reflected in the novels taken from Racism and the persecution of black subject, among these novels *Black Boy*. It is exactly what the stories of Racism and black oppression are inculcated. These include novel *Black Boy*, which highlights on racial

discrimination which based on color and race. The novel is giving a voice and support to the formerly voiceless black youths of the South. Richard Wright's autobiography examines the manner in which the South's racial landscape shaped its inhabitants. Individuals found it exceedingly difficult, in an oppressive society, to free themselves from the shackles placed on them by the community and rise above it. Richard, on the other hand, prevailed despite his ferocious will. Interestingly, Wright himself stated that he wished to pass judgment on his surroundings: 'This judgment was this: the environment the South creates is too small to nourish human beings, especially Negro human beings.' (Andrews, 2003.pg 134). This is clear in his judgments of many black persons in his immediate environment. Wright does not feel completely at comfortable in either white or black society; yet, he does feel at peace in both, he is a man 'estranged from his own race by sensitivity and intellect, yet segregated from the white race by the colour of his skin.' (pg.140). He also attributes his predicament to his surroundings, the oppressive climate of the South: 'The shocks of southern living had rendered my personality tender and swollen, tense and volatile' (*Black Boy*, p.260). Wright was physically and verbally abused and threatened by his own family throughout his whole youth. When he was four years old and accidentally sparked a fire in the house, his mother beat him mercilessly. According to Yoshinobu Hakutani, 'It seems as though black adults, subjected to racism in white society, in turn felt compelled to rule their children at home.' (Bloom, 2006,pg.90). The majority of Wright's black population allows white supremacists to impede their quest for self-expression and identity development: "I began to marvel at how smoothly the *Black Boys* acted out the roles that the white race had mapped out for them" (Feagin,2014, p. 60). However, Richard was involved in some capacity in this before he realized his error. This story involves Richard agreeing to fight a black kid for the amusement of white people at one point. 'I suppose it's fun for white men to see niggers fight... To white men we're like dogs or cocks' (*Black Boy*, p. 239).

6.1. violence and Hunger

The violence in *Black Boy*, whether bodily or otherwise, is extremely vital, because it is what makes the authority have a tendency to depend on rather than argument. According to the beliefs of Wright, the succession of arguments has to be based on their own merits but not to violence or appeals to authority. A world that is quick to depend on force in order to meet the challenges can easily be determined by the reader of what Wright thinks. Wright is beaten so severely and for such a long time that he passes out, after the house was set on fire. His grandfather, Aunt Addie, grandmother, his mother, and other family frequently lash, slap, and beat him. He is also bullied at school. His uncle Hoskins, whose prosperous saloon business was envied by the Whites, was the target of their assassination. In order to protect himself from his aunt Addie, Wright pulls out a long bread knife on her and his Uncle Tom is also threatened with razor blades and he as well fights with other boys. These befitting examples are proof the theme of physical violence lies the threat of lynching and to say that violence is everywhere in *Black Boy*. Hunger is a prevalent motif in *Black Boy*, including the need for chance, education, love, life, and sustenance. The final third of the original book was released in 1977 under the title *American Hunger*. Wright's family lacked sufficient food, leaving him perpetually hungry in the most fundamental sense. Wright, born in 1908, had to consume excessive food in the late 1920s to attain the requisite weight for a postal position. He regarded his father as a rival for sustenance, which engendered his animosity against him. Wright could both smell and observe the food when he was brought to a kitchen where his mother prepared meals for a White household, although he was permitted to consume only infrequent leftovers. He had frequently weakened from famine, rendering him unable of fulfilling his responsibilities in the yard at the orphanage where he and his brother had been abandoned by their mother. At one point, he nearly sold his poodle to get food due to extreme hunger. To artistically demonstrate to his readers that racism is always felt in everything a Black man does, Wright endures

severe hunger and suffering. Wright's children are the children of African-Americans:

..... 'Mama, I'm hungry' I complained one afternoon.

'Jump and catch a kungry,... she said trying to make me laugh and forget.

'What's a kungry? It's what little boy eat when they get hungry She said.' I don't know 'then why do you tell me to catch one? I sensed that she was teasing me and it made me angry. But I am hungry, I want to eat' 'You will have to wait 'But I want to eat now' For god to send food' When is he going to send it? I don't know

But I'm hungry (*Black Boy*, p.13)

The reader is constantly reminded throughout the novel the situation in Richard Wright's family is not quite easy. One of the biggest problems was hunger. Richard (character) is taken to the cooking job by Richard's mother. When Richard's mother was preparing food, which could smell it and every now and then he and his brother managed to get some scraps:

We would watch her go from the stove to the sink, from the cabinet to the table. I always loved to stand in the White folks' kitchen when my mother cooked, for it meant that I got occasional scraps of bread and meat; but many times I regretted having come, for my nostrils would be assailed with the scent of food that did not belong to me and which I was forbidden to eat (*Black Boy*, p.17).

Following the father's departure, Richard's mother was compelled to assume responsibility for the family, despite lacking the funds to cover the rent. She successfully retained some funds from her mother; but, those funds have already been depleted, rendering her unable of purchasing food or adequately caring for little Richard and his sibling. In her quest for potential answers, his mother contemplated the problem for an extended while. Ultimately, she secured employment, tasked with cleaning dishes in the kitchen for Caucasians. The income she generated from this employment was insufficient to sustain herself and her two children. She ultimately had a difficult and convincing decision to leave her children at an orphanage

temporarily due to her circumstances. A two-story wooden structure situated in a spacious green field surrounded by trees was the orphanage where Wright's mother brought him and his brother one morning. They were introduced to Ms. Simon, a statuesque mulatto woman. She instantly developed an attraction to Wright, leaving him rendered speechless by dread. Upon seeing her, she experienced fear and trepidation that persisted for the duration of his residence in the orphanage. In this incident:

The house was overcrowded with youngsters, and there was constantly a lot of noise. The daily routine was hazy to me, and I never truly understood it. Hunger and dread were the most persistent emotions I experienced every day. The meals were little, and there were only two of them. Each night before bed, we were given a slice of molasses-smeared bread. The youngsters were silent, unfriendly, vengeful, and constantly moaning about hunger.

(Black Boy, p.27).

Richard Wright articulates his concerns throughout his upbringing at an orphanage. In addition to his inability to grasp the regulations he was required to adhere to, he was always famished and fearful of Miss Simon. He struggled to adapt and ultimately severed communication with his mother after Ella was notified by Miss Simon that her visits were deemed improper. Several months post-Ella's departure, Ms. Simon said that Richard experienced terrible homesickness. Upon learning that he could no longer visit his mother, Richard began to descend into sadness. Wright has an insatiable appetite for narratives and words, apart from the yearning he felt for his mother. He chooses to read or listen further, as he experiences elation at hearing the tale of 'Bluebeard and his Seven Wives' for the first time. To fulfill his want for social connection, he attended church during specific moods only to satiate this desire. He harbored an intense yearning for maternal attention, which he was never afforded. Wright's paramount desire was for life itself and the chance to comprehend it without the apprehension of rejection or violence. Wright's perspective on religion posits

that various interpretations of black Protestant Christianity serve as a mechanism of social control, which is identified as the third most significant thematic issue in *Black Boy*. Wright's slogan was "One World," signifying his belief in the existence of a singular planet in which we all reside. Consequently, he saw the concept of a 'other' universe as repugnant to his intellectual sense. Following the kitten's death, he was compelled to recite a prayer alongside his mother, during which he was instructed to beseech God for the preservation of his life, despite the fact that the kitten's life had not been spared. In *Black Boy*, religion is transformed into instruments of intimidation and aggression through various means. The immoral tenets of religion have profoundly influenced Wright, resulting in the most of chapter 4 being dedicated to this issue. While he acknowledges the emotional allure of religion, he asserts that he is enough rational to consult a physician should he encounter an angel. The application of religion in his grandmother's life, a Seventh-day Adventist who holds that Saturday is the designated day of worship and anticipates Christ's second coming and the imminent Last Judgment, was deemed unethical by Wright, who noted that his lack of faith was occasionally attributed to his mother's extended illness. Nonetheless, his comprehension of religion's role was to compensate for the deficiencies of reality, while concurrently maintaining a steadfast realism. In his view, religion constituted a distinct form of authority. He struggled to decline his mother's request due to her presentation; she asserted that he would join the church if he loved her. A fourth topic is race and racism. Wright repeatedly illustrates the total insanity of assessing one's "superiority" based on skin tone and the necessity of adopting an inferior demeanor to satisfy the social and emotional demands of lighter-skinned folks in his plays. As a kid, Wright recognized that race was a highly questionable term, particularly upon seeing that his grandmother was as White as any 'White' individual. The fundamental idea of White thought posits that an individual's worth is significantly determined by their racial affiliation, a theme prevalent throughout the novel. An illustrative example by Wright is that

it is futile to establish social divisions based on racism, despite the potentially intricate efforts to contest this reality. In his childhood, Wright absorbed the essence of written language by inscribing four-letter phrases on windows, which alarmed his mother but ultimately demonstrated to him that writing serves as a means to exert influence on the world. One day, as he was utterly fatigued in his chamber, he penned a narrative about a distressed Indian girl who took her own life by drowning.

6.2. Summary of Key Findings

Richard Wright's *Black Boy* exhibits an individualistic notion of self and societal restrictions typical of the Southern black experiences in the post-Civil War antebellum period. Written with autobiographical authenticity, *Black Boy* explores Richard's search for self and identity in a world of severe violence and terror. *Black Boy* depicts a search for selfhood through the notion of food and writing as a metaphor of free request and individuality. Besides Richard's grappling with himself and his effort to form an individualistic identity, he offers a thorough critique of the Southern society that imprisons and impoverishes its inhabitants – both the whites and the blacks. Wright offers a continuum of representative characters that are manifestations of negative societal power on the individual that culminates with Wright's mother's hopelessness and Richard as a boy and a youth. Richard's narrative closes the text with his escape from the South, a dilemma of self-selection between passage to self-confirmation and belonging to community, of which he had to leave all behind. A longing for substance and connectivity is missing. The independence has been sided with void, impotence, and alienation, a perception that captures him long after escaping. Wright expresses a desire to belong to a group and a society which could provide him with consolation to his anxious individualistic notions. This contradiction leads to an inability to consummate regarding any promise of both individuality and wholeness between Wright's diverging, oppositional desires. One is the wish of a self-full national identity and the other an urge for an individualistic

notion of self, liberated but isolated, where the individual is circumscribed in a sense of non-belonging and no-meaning. Although *Black Boy* suggests a total suppression of the racial cultural background and crystallization of a new white identity, Wright destroys the hope of any cultural salvage, and in terms of social class, he epitomizes a white-collar black intellectual torn away from the black populace, a black uncle tom not belonging in either race.

Conclusion

Grave tensions arise between self and societal restrictions in Richard Wright's *Black Boy*. He attempts to liberate himself from external forces. His struggle to uncover his own identity inevitably brings him to a confrontation with the restrictions and constrictions surrounding him. These external obstacles are most visibly manifested in racial prejudice and bigotry, which engender the social restriction and constriction of spiritual life. Other social obstacles include the Southern codes and restrictions imposed on blacks. Richard's attempts at self-identification seem futile at times as they incite more social discrimination and repercussions than self-fulfillment. However, such acts of self-birth are transformative as they continually abandon further restrictions and deeper constrictions. The oscillation between perception and self-recognition results in extensive transformation and ultimately the attainment of self-liberation. This indicates the gradual achievement of autonomy, adaptability, and the ability of self-supportedness as a self. Wright also adopts the structure of cyclical narratives to accentuate the interminable similar conditions of living. The tale of oppression did not cease to exist along with Richard's escape. On the contrary, social discrimination seems to radically transform itself. A severe sense of forfeiture prevails as the perception recognizes the gradual attachments to various covetous bondage. Nonetheless, it is precisely this awareness that breathes hope and reveals the prospect of progressiveness — where there exists a dialectical striving and a sense of bewilderment, there also exists a choice between acceptance and

resistance (Hudson, 2008). The title of *Black Boy* is not partially indicative of a literal Southern origin: Richard had already expelled himself from the South, but these etiquettes still brand the object of identification. The origin can thus be transformed into scorn, contempt, and antagonism. Wright not only expresses the central processes of identity formation but also cautions against an unqualified bias, disorientation, or xenophobia. Restraint and constriction govern experience and a sense of loss imbues perception. Wright employs simile to effectively foreshadow Richard's impending plight. Written texts cannot rival films in terms of expressiveness and effectiveness regarding the depiction of motion pictures. They can only relay the stream of thoughts through words whose arbitrariness hinders accurate perception. However, filmic depictions of motion frames remain inclusive of everything, even those marginless outside the depicted focus. In Richard's mind, the sense of becoming is potent but confounding as the occurrence is quickly rendered absolute and missed as soon as the mind grasps it. Richard finds no channel for expression and resorting to wordless cinematic streams exceeds limit. This only breeds hypersexed anxiety, as it introduces him to a phantasmagoric fast-paced perception and elongates the previous phenomenal frames. Wright's writings challenge the social duties and status that contemporary society has adopted. Furthermore, his works embraced several cultural norms and transitioned towards inclusion, rendering his society's issues appear as global dilemmas. Between 1908 and 1927, the Southern United States encountered bigotry, brutality, malnutrition, and hardship, among other adversities, as shown in the novel. Throughout his life in the Jim Crow South, Richard Wright seeks his identity. Although Richard's race leads others to make assumptions about him, he successfully challenged these perceptions and established a life in which he maintained complete control. Given the historical deprivation of rights experienced by African Americans, Richard Wright has diligently endeavored to authentically portray their struggles. Despite the black people achieving independence and the Statue of Liberty after decades

of struggle, they continued to endure persistent prejudice and inhumane bigotry. The researcher asserts that African American society encounters several challenges that cannot be resolved without governmental action through the enactment of legislation and constitutional provisions ensuring justice and equality for all societal groups. The enforcement of punitive legislation that holds individuals accountable for engaging in racism or demeaning others.

Recommendations

1. Promote Literary Analysis in Education: *Black Boy* should be included more widely in educational curricula to foster critical thinking about racism, identity, and social justice among students. 2. Encourage Cross-Cultural Dialogue: Discussions inspired by Wright's narrative can be used to bridge understanding between racial and cultural communities and to confront ongoing racial biases. 3. Support for Marginalized Voices: Scholars and institutions should continue to amplify voices like Wright's that speak truth to power and illuminate the long-standing effects of systemic discrimination. 4. Further Research: Academic researchers should explore parallels between the racial dynamics in *Black Boy* and those in contemporary society, examining how identity formation is still influenced by race and class. 5. Inclusion in Anti-Racism Initiatives: Excerpts from *Black Boy* can be used in diversity and sensitivity training to provide a personal, narrative-based perspective on the consequences of racism and exclusion.

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