

The native son: flight

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Psychological Circumvention of the Blacks As Portrayed In Native Son Native Son by Arthur Wright revolves around the power play of the whites and the meekness of the blacks. This book, written in three parts, is reflective of the anger of the blacks and their helpless feelings. The point however is: are they truly helpless or are these feelings deliberate? The book two is a continuation of the first book and focuses on the madness of the protagonist, Bigger. After he cannot control the urge to kiss Jane, he cannot control the urge to place the blame on the whites and so he commits a series of crimes. First he accidentally suffocates Mary to death; afterwards he blames Jan for everything. This madness and carelessness on his part leads to the psychological circumvention. When he is angry about his life, he wants to escape that place not only in his life but also in his mind. When he enters the life of comfort, that is when he lives with the Daltons and is given facilities like his own big room, he is not comfortable even there. When Mary and Jan try to get affable towards him, he still feels weird and leaves every time they start to have fun. This shows that he does not make any effort to move forward in his life. He generalizes the whites and remains stiff around them. Moreover, Bigger's mother is also an alcoholic which is a concrete proof of her escapist attitude. Bigger wants to leave the place he lives in and wants to forget about it. Moreover, Ma's stoic disposition clearly indicates that she has grown indifferent to the dominance of the whites and she no longer cares about it. This shows that she also has set on the road to psychological circumvention, albeit it is subconscious.

Throughout the book Bigger embarks on different ways which all lead to escapism. He sends Mr. Dalton a ransom note, then he escapes with Bessie

and later kills her, robbing the whites to give them their (blacks) piece of mind but inwardly subjugating themselves; everything depicts that they are miserable but are not strong enough to do something about it. They find ways to get satisfaction temporarily but are doing nothing for the long haul. According to Wright, the actions of Bigger are a reaction to the poverty and dirt which he has seen in his life. Wright says that all the actions of Bigger, are in reality, a burden for him. But it should be noticed that instead of opting for the braver way he always goes for the cowardly one and starts to play the blame game.

“ The shame and fear and hate which Mary and Jan and Mr. Dalton and that huge house had made rise so high and hard now softened ... what his knife and gun had once meant to him, his knowledge of having secretly murdering Mary now meant.. the feeling of being always enclosed in the stifling embrace of an invisible force had gone from him.” (Wright, 150)

Bigger feels trapped not only in his mind but also in the place where he initially lived. The first murder, that is of Mary is unintentional but the way he throws her corpse in the first book is intentional and a proof of his trapped violence. That violence is set free when he abuses Gus, then later rapes Bessie and kills her. Thus, from these events, it can be gathered that the actions of Bigger and other black characters is to quite an extent intentional. Although they are not strong enough to fight the hegemony of the whites, there seems to be little or no drive to do something about it. Instead, they have become their own victim.

Works Cited

Wright, Richard. *Native Son*. New York: Harper, 1940. Print.