

AP Literature and Composition
Review of Native Son – Book Two – Flight

Examine the following uses of language in Native Son. How was the author's use of rhetorical and literary devices used to create a complex character? Further, how does the language impact the theme/meaning of the novel? Discuss a unique theme for each moment in the novel.

1. *He had murdered and had created a new life for himself. It was something that was all his own and it was the first time in his life he had had anything that others could not take from him.(101)*

2. *Repetition of “blind” or “blindness”*

3. *Like a man reborn, he wanted to test and taste each thing now to see how it went; like a man risen up well from a long illness, he felt deep and wayward whims.(106)*

4. *Mary had served to set off his emotions, emotions conditioned by many Marys.*
(108-09)

5. What is the metaphoric significance of Bigger's rape of Bessy? How does this impact the theme of the story?

6. *Snow was falling again; the streets were long paths leading through a dense jungle, lit here and there with torches held high in invisible hands.*

7. *He was conscious of this quiet, warm, clean, rich house, this room with this bed so soft, the wealthy white people moving in luxury to all sides of him, whites living in a smugness, a security, a certainty that he had never known. (155)*

8. *He stood in the kitchen, wondering if he ought to eat, but afraid to do so. He rested his black fingers on the edge of the white table and a silent laugh burst from his parted lips as he saw himself for a split second in a lurid objective light: he had killed a rich white girl and had burned her body after cutting her head off and had lied to throw the blame on someone else... (175)*

9. *I'm slanting this to the primitive Negro who doesn't want to be disturbed by white civilization.*

10. *He committed rape every time he looked into a white face.*

11. *... deep down below was a sea of whit faces and he saw himself falling, spinning straight down into that ocean of boiling hate. (249)*

12. *Two men stretched his arms out, as though about to crucify him; they placed a foot on each of his wrists, making them sink deep down in the snow. His eyes closed, slowly, and he was swallowed in darkness.(253)*