

AP Literature and Composition

Native Son: Book 1 “Fear”

Language and ingenious subtlety are the essence of any great piece of literature. In book one of Native Son, Richard Wright takes the reader into the tormented life of Bigger. This exercise will ask you to develop an enriched meaning of the character and his relationships. Your response should demonstrate a sense of Wright's style, structure, and literary devices he employs.

1. *He hated his family because he knew that they were suffering and that he was powerless to help them.* (13) How does this paradoxical statement develop a sense Bigger's character? Make a claim about him and develop it briefly.
2. After reading Job 23:2, find two other instances of biblical allusion from book one and discuss how they develop a vivid understanding of the author's intent? Your discussion may discuss characters or thematic ideas.

3. Richard Wright's repetition of white and black is not only purposeful but significant the meaning of the first book (and the book as a whole). Discuss two examples of this how these contrasting colors possess an enriched symbolic meaning. Further, choose another motif that you see within the first book and examine its significance. It may be explicit or implicit. **DO NOT BE AFRAID TO BE WRONG!**
4. Examine the interaction that each of the following characters has with Bigger: Mrs. Dalton , Mary, and Jan. How does Wright construct a shift in the tone of the piece during each of these instances. Explain your reasoning; use your tone sheets.

5. * Why did Wright incorporate communism into the storyline? What dynamic does that bring to the development of the storyline. Era and setting can often act as a catalyst for character and conflict development. (Yes, Wright was a communist! That isn't the answer.)

6. Examine the savage nature of the crime. Why would the author create such a scene? What is the allegorical significance?