URBANIZING THE BLACK SPACE AND THE COLONIALITY OF POWER IN RICHARD WRIGHT'S *NATIVE SON*

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Abstract
Coloniality of power structures racial and spatial hierarchy that characterize modern American urban spaces. This paper examines how Richard Wright's *Native Son* depicts Chicago's Black urban space as a representation of coloniality of power and Black experience from trans-Atlantic slavery. The paper employs Aníbal Quijano's postcolonial-psychoanalytic theory to examine how racial segregation in the city does not only controls Black people but also fractures Black minds. Focusing on three research objectives, the paper aims to examine: the ghetto as a colonial enclave, how coloniality structures racial and spatial hierarchies, and how Bigger Thomas's psychic experiences reflect the mental cost of urban coloniality. The findings show that Wright portrays the city as a system that keeps colonial power alive through space, economy, and knowledge, while Bigger's violence and resistance expose the deep psychological damage it causes. The article, however, brings a new insight to the reading of *Native Son* by linking slavery and structural oppression with mental trauma, while the text still speaks to racial struggles today.
Keywords: Trans-Atlantic slavery, Black urban space, Postcolonial-Psychoanalysis, Racial Segregation, Trauma and Richard Wright.

Introduction

Urbanizing the Black space refers to the processes through which cities expand, and restructure areas inhabited by Black communities. The change frequently, would result in overcrowding, segregation and socioeconomic disadvantage of the Blacks. This transformation is deeply rooted in historical shifts like the Great Migration, during which African Americans relocated from the rural South to Northern urban centers in pursuit of opportunity, only to encounter new forms of exclusion and hardship. In literature, such urbanization illustrates how physical environments influence personal development, behavior, and social relationships within black populations. Rowley Hazel in "The Power of Place: Richard Wright's *Native Son*'" argues that "the urban environment in *Native Son* acts as a character itself, shaping the Black experience through its mix of modern isolation and rural echoes" (380). This perspective connects directly to *Native Son* by showing how Chicago's South Side functions as an active force in alienating Black characters, blending lingering rural memories with the harsh realities of city life, such as poverty and restricted mobility. It links to coloniality of power because the city's structure enforces racial control through spatial confinement, much like historical colonial divisions.

Rotella Carlo in "Black Chicago: Richard Wright's South Side" contends that "Wright draws on sociological ideas to show the ghetto as a product of urban policies that isolate and oppress Black communities" (271). In the context of *Native Son*, this highlights how urban planning and housing policies create Black neighborhoods as zones of containment, reflecting coloniality's use of space to maintain racial hierarchies. Bigger Thomas experiences this when he reflects on the invisible barriers around him, noting, "he felt that they ruled him, even when they were far away" (115), underscoring how urban design perpetuates a sense of surveillance and domination.

Patil Sangeeta in "Urban Experience in Afro-American Literature: Depictions of City Life" observes that "the city is both a promise and a peril for African Americans, offering opportunities but also imposing harsh realities through segregation and poverty" (893). This duality is evident in *Native Son*, where the urban landscape represents potential advancement yet delivers despair through inadequate housing and racial obstacles, linking to colonial power structures that use spatial inequality to sustain control. For instance, Bigger articulates this frustration early on: "We live here and they live there. We black and they white" (20), illustrating the city's role in enforcing racial separation akin to colonial partitions.

The coloniality of power describes the persistent mechanisms of domination originating from colonial histories, which continue to function through racial classifications long after formal colonialism has ended. It encompasses the ways in which race organizes global and local inequalities, influencing economic systems, knowledge production, and social interactions. This framework demonstrates that colonial legacies endure in contemporary societies, affecting marginalized groups in profound and ongoing ways. Quijano Aníbal in "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America" defines it as "a model of power that is globally

hegemonic today presupposes an element of coloniality," where race serves as the foundation for classifying and subordinating populations (533). Applied to *Native Son*, this explains how racial hierarchies in America mirror colonial dynamics, with urban spaces acting as instruments of this enduring control. Bigger's internalized awareness of this system emerges when he thinks, "He was black and had done wrong; white men were looking at something with which they would soon accuse him" (219), revealing the psychological weight of racialized power in the city.

Fanon Frantz in Black Skin, White Masks explains that "the black man has two dimensions: one with his fellows, the other with the white man" (90). This psychological division is central to *Native Son*, where urban White dominance fragments Bigger's identity, aligning with postcolonial psychoanalytic theory on internalized oppression. The novel captures this split during Bigger's interaction with Jan, marked by "an awful moment of hate and shame" (Wright 87), demonstrating how city life amplifies the colonial gaze.

Kumar Ashok in "Identity Crisis and Cerebral Oppression in Richard" asserts that "white supremacy imposes values that trap black characters in fear and self-Wright's *Native Son* destruction" (3). In the urban context of *Native Son*, this imposition manifests as a form of mental colonization, where Black spaces become sites of cerebral control, perpetuating coloniality through everyday exploitation and fear. Bigger reflects on his schooling, "He attended school, where he was taught what every white child was taught; but the moment he went through the door of the school into life he knew that the white boy went one way and he went another" (15), highlighting education as a tool of urban racial power.

These two concepts interact as urbanization in Black communities often extends colonial power by employing spatial segregation to uphold racial dominance and economic disparity. In *Native Son*, the overcrowded kitchenettes and impoverished neighborhoods function as colonial-like enclosures, where White authority maintains control through limited access and opportunities. While urbanizing the Black space and coloniality of power converge in their emphasis on domination via environment and race, they diverge in scope: the former centers on modern urban development and migration patterns, whereas the latter traces its origins to historical imperial systems. Within *Native Son*, however, they are intricately linked, as the urban ghetto serves as a vehicle for sustaining colonial power, restricting Bigger Thomas's agency and embodying Wright's critique of entrenched racial structures in American cities.

Many studies on *Native Son* have focused on themes such as racial injustice, psychological conflict, and social protest. Researchers often examine Bigger Thomas's rage or the novel's critique of American racism. However, fewer works address the specific intersection of urbanization and colonial power in Black spaces. While scholars discuss the novel's urban setting or postcolonial elements separately, there is limited exploration of how city growth in areas like Chicago's South Side functions as a continuation of colonial control, turning Black neighborhoods into zones of entrapment. Also, the absence of an integrated postcolonial-psychoanalytic framework obscures how urban coloniality in *Native Son* induces specific mental pathologies, such as abjection, hybrid ambivalence, and subaltern silence, rooted in Quijano's racial hierarchies. Without this synthesis, analyses fail to fully capture the novel's portrayal of the city as a site where colonial structures infiltrate the psyche, perpetuating trauma across generations. This study addresses the gap by combining Quijano's structural insights with postcolonial-psychoanalytic theory, offering a holistic examination of urban coloniality's dual impact on space and self in Wright's text.

The aim of our paper is to investigate how the urbanization of Black spaces in *Native Son* sustains structures of colonial power, by examining the representation of urban Black spaces in the novel and their impact on character development and demonstrating the links between urbanization and colonial power in influencing Black identity and social dynamics.

This article holds value for African American literature by offering fresh insights into Wright's work, showing its relevance to current issues like urban inequality. It contributes to postcolonial discourse by applying theories from Quijano and Fanon to U.S. racial dynamics, treating Black experiences as a form of internal colonialism. In urban studies, it highlights how cities reinforce power imbalances, aiding discussions on race and space. Overall, it provides useful perspectives for scholars and students interested in literature, history, and social justice.

Postcolonial Psychoanalysis: Theories and methodology

Richard Wright's *Native Son* demands a theoretical approach that captures both the rigid structures confining Black life in urban America and the turbulent inner worlds those structures produce. This section establishes such an approach by pairing Aníbal Quijano's coloniality of power with postcolonial-psychoanalytic theory. Quijano's coloniality of power provides the macro-structural framework, while postcolonial-psychoanalytic theory explores micro-psychic effects of racial domination. The result is a layered reading capable of tracing how Chicago's segregated geography enforces colonial hierarchies and how those hierarchies, in turn, fracture the minds of characters like Bigger Thomas. The methodology, therefore, translates this framework into a critical lens of textual analysis, ensuring the study remains focused, interrogative and conclusive.

The world of modern critical thinking draws a lot to two key perspectives: psychoanalysis and postcolonialism. They come from different places but sometimes overlap in interesting ways. In this section, we ll break down where each one started on its own, looking at the history, main influences, and basic ideas, before bringing them together later. By keeping them separate at first, we can see how psychoanalysis grew out of the personal worries in late 1800s Europe, while postcolonialism came from the big changes of decolonial hunger in the mid-1900s. Each has key figures who helped build and spread these ideas, showing how they've changed over time. This split approach helps highlight what makes each unique, and it leads nicely into how they can work together, like using psychoanalytic ideas about the hidden mind to understand the emotional scars left by colonialism.

Psychoanalysis started as a bold new way to look at the psyche in the late 1800s, right in the middle of Vienna, Austria's busy cultural and scientific scene. It kicked off in the 1890s when Sigmund Freud, a doctor specializing in nerves, started moving away from the usual physical explanations for mental problems. He got inspired by the hypnosis work of Jean-Martin Charcot in Paris and the talking therapy he tried with his friend Josef Breuer. Freud realized that things like hysteria weren't from body damage but from buried painful memories; things stuck in the unconscious that showed up as physical symptoms until taken care of during therapy. Their book Studies on Hysteria, really nailed this down, calling it the "talking cure." Freud was pulling from the big ideas of his time: Charles Darwin's thoughts on human instincts from our animal past, reports from explorers about "primitive" cultures that he used later to make his ideas seem universal, and brain science from his teacher Theodor Meynert, which helped him picture the mind like layers of machinery.

Around 1900, Freud pulled it all into a full system of understanding the mind, especially in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Here, he talked about the unconscious as a storage spot for secret wishes, run by the drive for pleasure but blocked by things like repression. His book is often seen as the starting point for psychoanalysis. It came from Freud working through his own feelings after the death of his father in 1896, which led him to the Oedipus complex, a common family drama pattern in everyone's head. It wasn't a straight path; Freud changed course, like dropping his early idea that hysteria came from real childhood abuse and going with made-up fantasies instead. This put more weight on inner mental battles than outside forces. In 1902, he started the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society to make it official, drawing in followers who agreed and argued with him. But it was all tied to the bigger picture: the mix of cultures in the old Austrian Empire, growing prejudice against Jews (Freud was one), and the modern world's clash between reason and wild emotions from factories and city crowds. Spreading the word wasn't easy. By the 1910s, Freud's ideas were catching on in Europe, like after his 1909 talks in the U.S. But World War I messed things up, making him think about group pain in pieces like Mourning and Melancholia. After the war, it grew into looking at art and society, influencing writers and anthropologists, though it stayed pretty focused on European middle-class folks at first. That narrow view, based on city patients from Vienna, would get called out later for ignoring other cultures and carrying some old imperial biases. Basically, psychoanalysis began as a way to fix and explain personal mental struggles, turning the old split between mind and body on its head by seeing the mind as a fight club for urges, blocks, and wants; a fresh take that put personal feelings first.

Three main people show how psychoanalysis grew and branched out from Freud: Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, and Jacques Lacan. Freud, laid out the basics like id (raw urges), ego (reality checker), and superego (inner rule-keeper) in The Ego and the Id. He saw behavior as a tug-of-war between basic needs and society's rules. His map of the mind; conscious, half-aware, and deep unconscious, helps explain why people get stuck in patterns, and he came up with tools like free talking and dream breaking to fix it. Carl Gustav Jung started as Freud's top student and helped launch the International Psychoanalytical Association in 1910 but split off in the mid 1910s to create analytical psychology. He focused on a shared unconscious full of ancient patterns called archetypes. In Psychological Types, he pushed back on Freud's sex-obsessed view, saying energy in the mind covers spirit and myths too, based on his dives into old chemistry, Asian ideas, and patient drawings. This made psychoanalysis feel more connected to the world, though it caused a big split. Jung's idea of becoming whole; blending your dark side with your public face, felt like a fuller fix than Freud's narrower take. Jacques Lacan, a French doctor who blended psychoanalysis with language and big thinkers, brought it back strong in the 1950s with his "return to Freud" talks. He broke it into three parts: Imaginary (self-image stuff), Symbolic (language rules), and Real (what's beyond words), saying people feel empty because of how words trap us, and wants come from that gap. His book Écrits, mixed in ideas from linguists like Saussure, claiming the unconscious works like grammar. This linked it to newer thinking styles. Lacan still shapes talks on women and queer issues by questioning male-centered views and how therapists hold power in training. Together, these guys turned psychoanalysis from just therapy into a way to read books, art, and life, but their differences: Freud's body focus, Jung's spiritual side, Lacan's word games, show the built-in push and pull. This variety gives our study flexible tools to handle different angles of the mind.

Shifting gears, postcolonial theory offers a wider lens on global histories. It doesn't ignore the personal like psychoanalysis does but zooms out to the big forces of empire and resistance. Unlike psychoanalysis's look into the psyche, postcolonial theory came from the outside shake-ups as empires fell apart, really taking shape in

the 1960s with countries in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean breaking free. It started right after World War II, when thinkers from those places started questioning what was left after independence, not just politics, but the deep cultural and knowledge control from Europe. Frantz Fanon's books *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* set the stage using left-wing ideas to break down how colonialism messed with people's minds, like splitting the world into good settlers and bad locals. Fanon, working as a shrink in Algeria's fight for freedom, said movements like négritude weren't enough and pushed for a real emotional clean break, maybe even through tough action, pulling from Sartre's life philosophy and poetry vibes. It got more structured in the 1970s with Edward Said's Orientalism, which showed how Western writing made the East seem mysterious and lesser to keep power going. Using tools from Foucault on how knowledge works, Said dug into history like French invasions and adventure stories. This fit with world events: the 1955 Bandung meeting for new countries teaming up, Algeria's messy war from 1954 to 1962, and economic ideas about how poor places stayed hooked on rich ones, like from André Gunder Frank. So, postcolonialism started as a mix of history, book analysis, and deep thinking to knock down Europe's claim to the only true way of seeing things. By the 1980s, with money-focused global changes, it tackled new forms of control, like foreign aid traps and TV spreading culture, and added work from India's subaltern group, which looked back at farmer fights against British rule. It borrowed from Marx on classes, Gramsci on soft power, and Fanon's raw take on people, all shaped by real pains like India's split in 1947, South Africa's race laws, and U.S. meddling in South America. Different from psychoanalysis's personal therapy, this was more about action, coming from ex-colonies and schools, calling out the Enlightenment's "progress" story as cover for race divides. That start gave it a flexible feel, always watching how power shifts

What keeps postcolonial theory alive are its many voices, and three stand out: Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, for turning raw fight-back into smart, layered analysis. Fanon, from Martinique and a mind doctor, picked apart race in *Black Skin, White Masks*, showing how black people get split inside by white stares, kind of like early Lacan ideas. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, he backed shaking off chains through strong moves, stressing how race gets carved into skin as a lasting mark from empire. Edward Said, Palestinian-American professor, kicked it off big with Orientalism, tracking how words make others seem strange, and kept going in *Culture and Imperialism* by rereading classics like Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* side by side with colony views. His everyday human focus hit at Western superiority and simple "back home" myths, pushing for teaming up across borders instead of blood ties. This contrapuntal reading, playing texts against each other, is perfect for analyzing mixed stories in research. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Indian thinker and women's rights voice, questioned who gets heard in Can the Subaltern Speak?, using breakdown tools to show how top talks bury the overlooked, especially women in old records. Her "smart grouping"; using labels short-term for real help, handles the tricky spots of postcolonial life, and in A Critique of Postcolonial Reason, she mixes Kant, Marx, and Derrida to uncover how empires hurt through ideas. From their spread-out lives, these folks made postcolonialism a worldwide tool for spotting unfairness, giving this paper a global edge.

Now that their origins have been covered separately, putting psychoanalysis and postcolonialism together shows their tricky but useful mix, especially for spotting how colonialism hides in people's deep feelings. Fanon used Freud stuff like taking in bad ideas and body maps of race to say black folks' low self-view comes from an inner boss forced by whites, keeping them from being themselves. Said's idea of the exotic East is like Lacan's mirror moment, where Europe builds itself up by dreaming up a fantasy other. Spivak takes Freud's delayed pain idea to colony histories that push trauma aside. This combo, called postcolonial psychoanalysis, calls out Freud's "everyone's the same" view as too European, his "wild" people sound like old empire stories, but flips the tools to free the mind. In the end, blending them reveals empire's ghost effects, creating a way to think that's freeing.

Methodologically, this study adopts qualitative textual analysis, a method ideally suited to literary inquiry because it privileges depth, nuance, and interpretive rigor over statistical generalization. Close reading remains the core technique: sustained engagement with language, symbolism, and narrative structure to uncover how Wright encodes coloniality and psychic fracture. Primary material consists of the 1940 Harper edition of *Native Son*; secondary sources include theoretical texts by Quijano, Fanon, Bhabha, Said, Spivak, Kristeva, and Spillers, plus historical studies of Chicago segregation accessed via JSTOR, and libraries. Reliability is enhanced by cross-referencing textual evidence with multiple theoretical angles; for instance, reading the furnace scene through both Quijano's labor axis and Kristeva's corpse-abjection. Ethical considerations are central. The novel's graphic violence and racial stereotypes are handled with care, recognizing Wright's deliberate provocation aimed at dismantling systemic injustice rather than reinforcing harm. Representations of Black pathology are always contextualized as products of coloniality, never innate. Triangulation and direct quotation ensure transparency and respect for Wright's intent. Limitations include the interpretive subjectivity inherent in close reading and the focus on a single novel, which restricts broader claims about Wright's oeuvre or African American literature generally. These are mitigated by grounding every assertion in textual and theoretical evidence, and by acknowledging alternative readings where relevant. This methodology transforms the theoretical framework into a workable research practice, delivering original insights into how Native Son exposes the colonial underpinnings of urban America and the psychic toll exacted on those trapped within them.

Ghetto and Colonial Enclave in Wright's *Native Son*

Wright's opening scene in the Thomas family's one-room kitchenette immediately establishes the South Side as a colonial enclave, a racially demarcated zone designed to contain and degrade. The sudden appearance of the rat triggers chaos: "The rat's belly swelled and its skin burst and its eyes jumped out of their sockets" (7). Bigger's brutal killing of the creature, smashing it repeatedly with a skillet until its body bursts, is not incidental violence but a symbolic enactment of the ghetto's daily brutality. The rat functions as Kristeva's abject object: "the corpse... seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection" (4), embodying the revulsion White society projects onto Black residents, who are treated as vermin to be exterminated or contained. This abjection is structural: Quijano's coloniality of power operates through spatial classification, where redlining and restrictive covenants confine Black families to overcrowded, dilapidated buildings while White neighborhoods remain spacious and pristine (536). The Daltons' ownership of the Thomases' building exemplifies this: they extract profit from Black suffering while maintaining philanthropic distance, a classic colonial mechanism of exploitation masked as benevolence.

The psychic toll of this enclave becomes evident when Bigger crosses into White space. The Dalton mansion, with its "big white house" and "green lawn," stands in stark opposition to the "dark and crowded" South Side (44). This spatial binary induces Fanon's epidermal schema, where race is inscribed on the body as a permanent mark of inferiority, making Bigger feel "his blackness" acutely in White presence (111). The city's geography enforces othering; Said's process whereby the colonized is constructed as fundamentally different to justify domination (12), turning Bigger's mere presence in White areas into a transgression. Even the weather participates in this colonial order; the blinding snow during the manhunt erases visibility while illuminating Bigger under searchlights, transforming the urban grid into a panopticon that polices Black movement (263). White philanthropy, education, and media further entrench coloniality of knowledge: the Daltons donate ping-pong tables to Black youth yet profit from their housing crisis, while newspapers later portray Bigger as a "jungle beast," naturalizing racial fear (279). This multi-layered control: spatial, economic, epistemic, ensures the ghetto remains a self-perpetuating enclave, where Black life is simultaneously hypervisible as threat and invisible as human. Gender compounds this enclosure for characters like Bessie Mears. As a domestic worker in White homes, Bessie navigates the same colonial borders as Bigger but with added vulnerability. Spivak's subalternity illuminates her position: her labor is extracted, her voice silenced, her body disposable (271). The ghetto offers no refuge; it is where Bigger ultimately turns his rage, reenacting colonial violence on the most subaltern figure. Wright thus exposes the enclave's intersectional cruelty, where coloniality fractures not only racial but gendered psyches.

Displacement and psychic implications in Wright's *Native Son*

The colonial enclave does not merely contain Black bodies; it displaces the psyche, producing violence as the colonized mind's desperate response to unbelievable conditions. Bigger's accidental smothering of Mary Dalton crystallizes this displacement: alone in her room with a White woman, his terror of discovery overrides reason, and he presses the pillow "harder, harder" until she is silent (85). This is not premeditated murder but the epidermal schema in action; Fanon's term for how racism is "injected beneath the skin," making the Black body a site of perpetual danger in White proximity (95). The act reveals the psyche's colonization: Bigger's fear is not personal but historical, inherited from centuries of lynching for perceived racial transgression. The furnace scene intensifies this psychic horror; cutting off Mary's head to fit the body and watching it burn, Bigger confronts Kristeva's abject corpse: "death infecting life" (4), as the ultimate symbol of forbidden contact. The flames do not purify; they expose the rot at coloniality's core, where Black touch on White flesh demands annihilation.

This displacement turns inward with devastating consequences for Bessie. Exhausted from domestic labor, "I'm tired, Bigger... I'm tired" (232), she becomes the scapegoat for rage the city denies Bigger against White authority. The rape and murder sequence is wrenching in its brutality, yet Wright forces readers to see it as displaced colonial violence: unable to strike the Daltons or the police, Bigger enacts the pornotroping Spivak and hooks describe, where Black women are rendered "flesh" rather than subject, their bodies sites for enacting colonial scripts of violation (271; 61). Bessie's subaltern silence: her pleas ignored, her death unmourned, exposes how coloniality's psychic toll is gendered, fracturing Black community from within when external resistance is impossible.

Coloniality of knowledge ensures this displacement remains invisible to perpetrators. White education teaches Bigger nothing of his worth; movies glorify White heroism while reducing Black people to servants. This epistemic violence, Quijano argues, is central to coloniality's persistence, determining what counts as legitimate knowledge (541). Bigger's dreams of flying planes collapse against the reality of chauffeur uniforms, installing a colonial superego that polices his ambitions. The resulting psychic void fills with paranoia and rage, manifesting in violence that the White world then uses to justify further control. Wright thus illustrates how the colonial enclave produces not just poverty but a specific form of mental colonization, where violence becomes the only language left for the displaced psyche.

Ambivalence and the Quest for Agency in Wright's *Native Son*

Amidst this psychic devastation, Wright stages moments of ambivalent agency, where the colonized psyche, through Bhabha's hybridity, momentarily disrupts colonial authority even as it risks self-destruction. Bigger's ransom note, signed with the communist symbol, is a masterclass in hybrid subversion: appropriating White radical rhetoric to terrorize the Daltons, he experiences a surge of power; "He had done this. He had brought all this about. In all of his life these two murders were the most meaningful things that had ever happened to him" (239). Bhabha describes hybridity as producing "the effect of uncertainty that afflicts the discourse of power," and Bigger's forgery exploits the Daltons' liberal guilt, turning their own symbols against them (66). This is not coherent rebellion but a hybrid gesture: part mimicry, part menace, that exposes coloniality's fragility. The rooftop flight during the manhunt offers another instance of this ambivalent quest. As police cars and searchlights below, Bigger moves across roofs in the snow, momentarily escaping the city's grid: "He ran over the snow, feeling the wind hard in his face" (263). This movement through liminal space evokes Bhabha's third space, where colonial binaries break down, allowing the subaltern to reimagine mobility. Yet the ambivalence is cruel; the flight is toward capture, the snow both liberator and trap. Bigger's body, usually policed and punished, briefly claims the city's heights, but the fall is inevitable. This moment captures the tragic nature of agency under coloniality: resistance exists, but it is always already contained.

Bessie's brief refusal to flee: "I ain't going to no jail for you" (232), represents a quieter but equally powerful ambivalence. Her exhaustion is not passivity but subaltern knowledge of the system's inevitability. Spivak's framework illuminates this as the subaltern's impossible speech: Bessie knows resistance is futile for her, yet her refusal denies Bigger complete control (271). Hooks' oppositional gaze adds depth; Bessie's weary eyes have seen through White Philanthropy and Black male desperation alike, offering a gendered critique of coloniality's divisive effects (116). Her death, though horrific, is her final act of agency: she will not be complicit in the script written for her. These instances of ambivalence reveal Wright's nuanced understanding of resistance: it is hybrid, contradictory, often self-destructive, yet it is the only way the colonized psyche can assert "I am" against coloniality's "you are nothing."

Conclusion

Richard Wright's *Native Son* is more than a story about one angry young man. It is a loud warning about how cities can keep colonial power alive long after the old empires are gone. The South Side ghetto, the White neighborhoods, the newspapers, the schools, all of them work together to keep Black people in their place and make them feel small inside their heads too. Bigger's fear, his anger, his small moments of fighting back, all come from living in a city that was built to break him. Using Quijano's coloniality and postcolonial-psychoanalytic theory, this study has shown how the urban Black space is a colony, how it creates psychic pain, and how resistance is possible but hard. The book ends with Bigger in a cell, waiting to die, but still saying "What I killed for, I am!" (429). That line is Wright telling us that even when the city wins the body, the mind can still say no. It is not a happy ending, but it is honest. Cities all over the world, even here in Nigeria, still have these walls; some you can see and some you only feel. Wright's story pushes us to see them and start pulling them down, one brick at a time, so people can live and think free

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