

**Horror Of Mob Lynching Through The Eyes Of Protagonist In Big Boy Leaves Home****Prof. V. M. Deshmukh**

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**B**oth exposition and protest, “The Ethics of Living Crow” reveals some of the reason why the young Wright felt trapped in the South and Why he thus should fly to North. The South described in Black Boy and in “The Ethics of Living Jim Crow,” provides the setting for the short stories published by Wright in the 1930<sup>s</sup>. Written while he lived in Chicago, they focus upon many of the same Southern racial issues and conflicts that later were to dominate Black Boy.

Undoubtedly Native Son was remarkable literary achievement of Richard Wright, but he came to the attention of general reading public with the appearance of a collection of five of his short stories about life in the rural South. His Southern stories are perhaps his best artistic achievement. Here in these stories reader may witness each of his protagonist rises to strike out violently at white oppressors who would deny him humanity.

Uncle Tom, the traditional subservient image of the Negro Popularized by Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin is supplanted in Wright’s fictional world with the characters that are determined to challenge the system even by violent and aggressive means. Wright himself heralded the birth of Uncle Tom’s Children rebels not only in the stories of Uncle Tom’s Children but all his fictional works. When he wrote epigraph to Uncle Tom’s Children that “ The image of the Negro cringing type who knew his place before white folk (Uncle Tom) has given way to a new word from another generation which say Uncle Tom is dead”. (Wright 225)

Bigger Thomas in Native Son, Jack Jackson in Lawd Today, Cross Demon in the Outsider is temperamentally rebels who try to assert their identity even through violence. They are victims as well as rebels and their rebellion springs out of their

desire to survive. Evelyn Gross Avery’s observation that,

“The black rebel, driven to assert himself, often, violently has replaced the acquiescent victim in recent black fiction and the image of Uncle Tom and Sambo has disappeared.” [Avery 4]

It is true that the characters of Richard Wright who assume the archetypal role of the rebel in black American fiction.

Uncle Tom’s Children a collection of novellas and prefaced by an autobiographical sketch entitled “The Ethics of Living Jim Crow” a record of his experience as a child adult in a racist society. In the autobiographical sketch he delineates his own Jim Crow education in the course of various jobs as well hall boy, in a hotel, worker in the optical company in Memphis and porter in a clothing store. The experiences gathered from the places provide an excellent background for the thematic concern in the stories which depict the debilitating effect of Jim Crow’s laws on the psyche of blacks. As Rideout points out. :

“The dehumanizing and deracinating effect of racism and manifestation in the form of Jim crow laws in the South is brilliantly explored in the stories included in Uncle Tom’s Children. The stories in the collection have attained such a unity of theme and tone that many have classified as novel.” [ Rideout 260 ]

Wright’s protagonist rebels out of an innate, repressed longing for freedom – or – sometimes merely as an instinctive means of self-survival. Often the act of violence carries along with it a sudden revelatory sense of self –awareness- an immediate knowledge that the world in which the protagonist dwells is chaotic, meaningless, purposeless, and that he as a Negro is “Outsider” this world and must therefore discover, his life by his lonely individual thoughts and acts.

Like the other stories in Uncle Tom's children, "Big Boy Leaves Home" concerned the terrorized life of blacks in rural Mississippi. This paper attempts to throw light upon the horror of mob lynching. The reader witnesses the lynching from Big Boy's peculiar vantage point and as it was through his eyes. It's focus is mainly within the consciousness of its protagonist here an adolescent named Big Boy Morrison finally it is similar to the other stories in it's emphasis on physical and psychological violence in Black-White relation.

The story "Big Boy Leaves Home," the crowing achievement of Wright in Uncle Tom's Children revolves round four self – indulgent Negro Boys in Mississippi. As "Big Boy Leaves Home" opens, the title character and three friends, having an excursion in the countryside. They divert themselves with ribald songs, scuffling and high spirited horseplay. After recalling the hot tempered nature of Mr. Harvey, the white owner of the property, the boy hesitate to go swimming in a nearby creek, but finally decides to do so. Stripping, they enter the water, and splash about happily, They tire and soon return to the bank to dry in the sun before dressing again.

At this moment a white women, betrothed to Harvey's son, appears suddenly on the creek bank, After a moment of startled confrontation, the women hardly more frightened than the boys, she backs away to the tree under which they have left their clothes. When the boys approach her timidly, to receive their clothes, she begins to scream and her fiancé arrives, with rifle. In the struggle that follows he kills two of the boys, but is himself shot fatally by Big Boy.

In a society where the image of the black male as a sexual dynamo is deeply ingrained, the innocent intension of black boys is difficult to be convinced. By hinting at the taboo attached to black male- white female relationship as a strong factor in these murders. Wright is indicating the sexualized racism implicit in the American Society which sees black man as a potential rapist. Calvin C Heruton has maintained that ;

"The American brand of sex and racism has distorted and vulgarized the perception of black men as sexual beings. The most blatant of the cultural stereo types about the (Black Male) is the myth of

(his) sexual virility.....Whites conceive of the (black) male predominantly in genital terms.... that is as a "bull" or as some kind of walking phallus,". [ Heruton 26]

After hurried and desperate consultation with Big Boy's family and three family friends, a plan of escape from the inevitable lynch mob is reached. Big Boy will hide in one of a number of kilns on a hill until morning, when he will meet a truck driver, the son of one of his father's friends, conveying cargo to Chicago. Big Boy quickly departs for the hill.

As Bobo is caught and the white burn and kill him, the Big Boy watches all this from his hiding place while the white women and children watch the festive occasion sacrificing a Negro who trespassed the code prescribed by the white community. The story, by portraying racial confrontation in the South in sexual terms, Fictionalized the Black-White relationship in the South, feeling of sexual inferiority generates in whites jealousy and it often end up in violence directed against the black. In the story, the lynching of Bobo is in fact, a symbolic rite of castration, the ultimate indignity that can be inflicted upon an individual."[Jackson 41]

Big Boy by his resistance to the Jim Crow Laws of the South foreshadowed Bigger Thomas in Native Son and the wider significance and ramifications of sexualized racism first trated in "Big Boy Leaves Home" became the central concern in The Long Dream.

For the third time in the story, Big Boy must struggle for survival of his life. In this most violent fight of the three, he manages finally to strangle the dog with his bare hands. Big Boy passes the night in the rain soaked pit with dog's body for company inside and his friends's charred corpse outside. In the morning he meets Will Sanders, the truck driver according to plan, and they drive northward toward Chicago, toward at least comparative freedom. Wright's aim is to show that in the South blacks and whites live side by side but do not consider one another as human beings. If for whites, blacks are inferior and limited beings, for blacks, whites are hideous and monstrous beasts. Sounders Redding Fully understood the role played by Big Boy in Wright's work as a whole when he wrote :

".....in Big Boy..... he has already created the prototype of all his heroes, who were ever to be

hungry, bitter, vengeful, violently hurting themselves against the walls that barred them from life that they know that was a better life than theirs.” [ Kinnamon 48]

Unlike Dave Saunders in “ The Man Who Was Almost a Man” the hero of “ Big Boy Leaves Home” knows that he has no choice, if he wants to live, he must leave the South right away. Violence and flight are closely linked here, these two elements death show narrowly Wright’s hero escapes a brutal death.

The theme of “ Big Boy Leaves Home” is a familiar one in American Literature”: The lineation of youth into violence and his escape from it. Big Boy, indeed, may be considered a kind of past pubescent black Hick Finn who must light out for the territory – ironically, in wright’s story, the urban “territory”- of Chicago – in order to achieve his freedom. The theme of initiation into violence and escape from it is one Wright was obsessed with. As Kenneth Kinnamon says :

“For Big Boy Morrison as for Richard Wright at the same age, the north star represents freedom and equality and at the end of the story Big Boy is travelling toward the dream just as he is fleeing from the southern lynch mob. This theme of flight and quest recurs frequently n Wright’s works.” [ Kinnomon 86]

### Conclusion :

The main object of the work is to show that it is very difficult for the American black to make the distinction between the real and the imaginary, because the life he is forced to lead often borders on the fantastic. In Big Boy Leaves Home critical movements are described relating to the lynching and mutilation of a Negro. The Negro, they discover, who submits to white oppression is much castrated psychologically as physically. Thus, for them the lynching became symbolic of the roles they are expected to play in life.

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