

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Michael Richard Stoneberg for the degree of Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in English presented on June 14, 2010. Title: *Killing the Father and the Father Lives On: The Literary Influence of Richard Wright on James Baldwin*.

Abstract approved:

---

Kerry Ahearn

This thesis discusses the African American authors Richard Wright and James Baldwin, and their views regarding how literature should be written. These views are examined as laid out in a selection of each author's essays, as well as through an analysis of the characters Bigger Thomas and Rufus Scott in the respective novels *Native Son* by Wright and *Another Country* by Baldwin. Through this examination of both non-fiction and fiction, the closeness of the relationship between these two authors can be seen. Despite the authors' differences in opinion about literature, Wright set up a foundation with *Native Son* which Baldwin then built on in *Another Country*, using similar methods of characterization but ultimately diverging from the sociological focus of Wright.

Key Words: Richard Wright, James Baldwin, *Native Son*, *Another Country*

Corresponding e-mail address: [mike.stoneberg@gmail.com](mailto:mike.stoneberg@gmail.com)

©Copyright by Michael Richard Stoneberg  
June 14, 2010  
All Rights Reserved

Killing the Father and the Father Lives On:  
The Literary Influence of Richard Wright on James Baldwin

by

Michael Richard Stoneberg

A PROJECT

submitted to

Oregon State University

University Honors College

in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the  
degree of

Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in English (Honors Associate)

Presented June 14, 2010  
Commencement June 2011

Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in English project of Michael Richard Stoneberg presented on June 14, 2010.

APPROVED:

---

Mentor, representing English

---

Committee Member, representing English

---

Committee Member, representing English

---

Chair, Department of English

---

Dean, University Honors College

I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University, University Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

---

Michael Richard Stoneberg, Author

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION.....	1
PART I .....	6
PART II .....	16
CONCLUSION .....	32
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	34

# Killing the Father and the Father Lives On: The Literary Influence of Richard Wright on James Baldwin

## Introduction

Richard Wright (born 1908) came into prominence as an African American writer following the cultural advent of black creative expression, referred to as the Harlem Renaissance, which is associated with the decade of the 1920s into the mid 1930s. In fact, much of what Wright wrote is a reaction against what he saw as certain inadequacies of that movement, such as the elitism of the “petty bourgeoisie” he criticizes in his essay “Blueprint for Negro Writing,” published in 1938 (37-38). In this essay Wright describes the writers of the Harlem Renaissance as too often pandering to the liberal, educated white population. Wright’s criticism of these writers’ reliance on white patronage is also inherent in the way he presents the white liberal characters in perhaps his most famous novel, *Native Son*, published in 1940, as Amy E. Correiro states in her essay “Ghosts of the Harlem Renaissance: ‘Negrotarians’ in Richard Wright’s *Native Son*.” James Baldwin (born 1924), another prominent African American writer, followed soon after Wright, publishing his first novel, *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, in 1953 and a collection of essays, *Notes of a Native Son*, in 1955. Baldwin, like Wright, was also, to a certain degree, reacting against those writers who had come before him, including Wright himself.

Wright, in his fiction, was primarily concerned with presenting the complex social realities of the United States, especially the social reality of African Americans as an oppressed minority. This was due in part to Wright’s historical and literary context.

Correio describes Wright's position, following the Harlem Renaissance as he did, in the aforementioned essay, saying, "The 1920s represented a decade of cultural explosion embodied in the Harlem Renaissance with few significant gains in the area of civil rights... Thus, with the decline of the Harlem Renaissance, the interests of many black intellectuals shifted from financial and aesthetic patronage of the arts to economic and social reform" (248). This more direct focus, of which Wright was a part, on social and economic issues in literature, and in literature by African Americans especially, also stems from the effects of the Great Depression, during which the inequality between the races became more evident, as Correio goes on to say (248). Wright felt that literature by black authors should reveal the social disenfranchisement of black people and be tied to the goal of social equality.

Wright was also heavily influenced by the literary movement of naturalism, championed by French writer Émile Zola, and also apparent in the works of American authors such as Theodore Dreiser and Jack London (Kershner 48). In fact, Wright advocates drawing from London's work in literature by African Americans in "Blueprint for Negro Writing" (45). In *The Twentieth-Century Novel: An Introduction*, R.B. Kershner describes naturalism as "an objective, 'scientific' treatment of humanity in literature: people, generally of the lower class...were presented unsentimentally, at the mercy of their instincts" (48). Kershner goes on to say that later authors "adopted the naturalistic technique of objectively presenting details of 'low' experience usually left out of fiction without necessarily subscribing to the naturalist belief that human life is completely subject to 'natural' laws" (48). Wright, as an African American writer frustrated by the lack of social gains of the 1920s and 30s and influenced also by

Marxism, falls into this category, adapting naturalism in his novel *Native Son* to reveal the social structures that disadvantaged black people.

Baldwin, on the other hand, in his essays “Everybody’s Protest Novel” and “Many Thousands Gone,” reacts against Wright’s sociological approach to literature, criticizing aspects of *Native Son*. In Baldwin’s view, literature should be more clearly divorced from social science and social issues, and should focus primarily on the artistic nature of fiction and the particular individuality of the characters. In this way, Baldwin’s approach to literature is similar to that of some authors during the Harlem Renaissance. In his introduction to *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, David Levering Lewis describes the writing of the Harlem Renaissance after 1926 as “above all literary and self-consciously an enterprise of high culture” (xvi). Baldwin represents this concern for the primacy of “literary” qualities in fiction, which separates it more clearly from social science and social issues. This does not mean Baldwin is not concerned with social realities in fiction, but rather that he believes in a less explicit revelation of these realities than Wright.

However, despite the many differences Wright and Baldwin had, as seen in both their fiction and their non-fiction, their creative works and views of what fiction should be are also closely tied together. Baldwin was heavily influenced by Wright. In fact, in his essay following the death of Richard Wright, “Alas, Poor Richard,” Baldwin writes, “he had been my idol since high school, and I, as the fledgling Negro writer, was very shortly in the position of his protégé” (191). Baldwin’s book *Notes of a Native Son* reveals the influence Wright had on Baldwin in both the title of that work (a reference to Wright’s novel) and in the essays “Everybody’s Protest Novel” and “Many Thousands



Gone,” in which Baldwin criticizes *Native Son*. A copy of *Native Son* even makes an appearance on the bedside table of a character in Baldwin’s 1962 novel, *Another Country*. Again in “Alas, Poor Richard,” Baldwin recognizes Wright’s influence: “His work was an immense liberation and revelation for me. He became my ally and my witness, and alas! my father” (191).

*Native Son* was such a hugely influential book in part because it was the first novel by an African American author to reach the best-seller list (Reilly 35). As such, it reached a wider audience than many sociological studies of race and class issues. In fact, Irving Howe wrote in his 1963 rebuttal of some of Baldwin’s arguments against Wright, “Black Boys and Native Sons,” that “If such younger novelists as Baldwin and Ralph Ellison were to move beyond Wright’s harsh naturalism and toward more supple modes of fiction, that was possible only because Wright had been there first, courageous enough to release the full weight of his anger” (63-64). *Native Son*, in its description of the sociological realities of race relations in the United States and due to its wide audience, is a novel that in some ways needed to be written (and read) before the more individualized emotions and relationships of characters could be drawn in later novels by African American writers like Baldwin. But, using Baldwin’s own metaphor, as children often feel the need to distance themselves from the shadow of their parents, so, too, Baldwin strove to become his own writer, metaphorically slaying his literary “father” in his essays.

Through a study of Wright’s and Baldwin’s essays and the novels *Native Son* and *Another Country*, the complexity of the relationship between these two authors will become apparent. While Wright and Baldwin disagree on how closely literature should

be tied to social science and social movements, they both see the need for literature to express a fundamental honesty, and part of this honesty is the accurate portrayal of the social forces that affect their characters. Both authors also describe literature as, above all, an art form and therefore separate from social science. The similarities and differences between the social position of the characters Bigger Thomas in *Native Son* and Rufus Scott in *Another Country* and their reactions to this social position further reveal the influence Wright had on Baldwin, as well as the ways in which Baldwin moves beyond that influence to focus more on the individual humanity of his characters.

## I.

In the essays “Blueprint for Negro Writing,” published in 1938, and “How ‘Bigger’ Was Born,” published in 1940, Richard Wright lays out his ideas on how literature should be written and what role it should play in society. Over ten years later, Baldwin discusses his own conception of literature and its purpose, partly in response to Wright’s novel *Native Son*, in the essay “Everybody’s Protest Novel,” first published in 1949. Baldwin would further revise and clarify his views on literature and *Native Son* in the subsequent essay “Many Thousands Gone,” published in his collection of essays *Notes of a Native Son* in 1955. These essays reveal some basic similarities in the authors’ conceptions of literature: both authors view fiction as a means to approach the issue of race and believe that literature as an art form must move beyond the empirical nature of social science and should approach racial issues from a fundamental honesty about black experience in the United States. However, their essays also show some important differences in how the authors define authorial honesty and the relationship between literature and social science. In general, Wright believes that literature about African American experience should be grounded in social science, revealing the socially disadvantaged position of the black masses in the United States. Through this sort of sociological honesty, Wright feels that Negro literature can have a positive effect on race relations by revealing the reasons behind the social reality. This focus on the social implications of literature also led Wright to present the protagonist of *Native Son*, Bigger Thomas, in a representational capacity, in order to show the reality which the majority of disadvantaged African Americans face. Baldwin, on the other hand, while also invested

in the social forces that shape black experience, believes in a more individualized presentation of emotionally rich and complex characters. For Baldwin, the social reality in which his characters are set should be revealed in a less explicit manner, preserving the artistic autonomy of literature. The distinction between the views of literature Wright and Baldwin describe in their essays is not always as clear-cut as this general description suggests, however, as a closer examination of these essays will show.

Wright's view of Negro literature and the role it should play is heavily influenced by his interest in the field of sociology. In his introduction to the sociological study of Chicago's South Side, *Black Metropolis*, Wright states, "It was from the scientific findings of men like the late Robert E. Park, Robert Redfield, and Louis Wirth that I drew the meaning... for my novel *Native Son*" (xviii). In his literature, and in *Native Son* specifically, Wright focuses on the sociological reality in which his characters are set, revealing the social pressures which affect black people in the United States.

In order to depict these social forces in his fiction, Wright draws from the literary tradition of naturalism, which itself deals with the sociological effects of environment on characters, but which also presents these themes and characters in a fictional context. Roderick A. Ferguson better explains the naturalistic novel in his essay, "The Parvenu Baldwin and the Other Side of Redemption: Modernity, Race, Sexuality, and the Cold War," saying, "Such an abridgement [between the novel and the scientific] elides the boundaries between science and fiction, rendering the naturalistic fiction of the protest novel into textual evidence of a reality that exists outside the text. Rather than fiction being the proper and presumed obligation of the novel, the novel now strains toward a truth established in the academy" (248). Naturalistic literature, then, is a fictional

portrayal of social reality, concerned with sociological accuracy more than a purely artistic motive. Therefore, Wright, in drawing from naturalism and sociology, portrays in his literature, and specifically through *Bigger Thomas*, a broader sociological truth. Wright's "truth" is less about the individual and more about the wider social milieu.

Wright reveals this belief in the social role of fiction when he states in "Blueprint for Negro Writing" that "the Negro writer must realize within the area of his [sic] own personal experience those impulses which, when prefigured in terms of broad social movements, constitute the stuff of nationalism" ("Blueprint" 43). Wright advocates writing in terms not only of personal experience (common to all creative writers) but also in terms of the broader shared experience of black people and "nationalism." Wright clarifies his definition of nationalism in this context as a "unified sense of a common life and a common fate" ("Blueprint" 41). In effect, Wright is arguing that literature about African American life is a means to address the "race problem" in the United States, and, as such, literature must present a sociologically accurate portrayal of that life.

For Wright, "a simple literary realism which seeks to depict the lives of these people devoid of wider social connotations, devoid of revolutionary significance of these nationalist tendencies, must of necessity do a rank injustice to the Negro people... in the struggle for freedom" ("Blueprint" 43). Here, Wright links literature with the "struggle for freedom," which implies that literature as an art form can further the cause of racial and social equality, what Wright calls a "nationalist tendency." Therefore, in Negro writing there must be the recognition of the social context and the inequality faced by black people in the United States, as well as a higher ambition to help better the lot of black men and women.

Wright believes that literature, when honestly addressing the social inequalities of American society, especially regarding the working class, has the power to further the goal of social equality by “moulding the lives and consciousness of those masses toward new goals” (“Blueprint” 40). Wright clarifies the role of literature in the context of social movements in his essay “How ‘Bigger’ Was Born,” saying that “creating with words a scheme of images and symbols... could enlist the sympathies, loyalties, and yearnings of the millions of Bigger Thomases” (446). This view of literature claims that fiction can function as a way to unify the masses of socially disadvantaged people by revealing a common experience, and can even “enlist” them in the cause for social equality through this revelation.

Further clarifying the social motivation behind *Native Son*, critic John M. Reilly, in his essay “Giving Bigger a Voice: The Politics of Narrative in *Native Son*,” states, “Since the problem was political”—Reilly writes earlier that “fiction concerning a group denominated a ‘minority’ is above all political” (41)—“its solution lay in adoption of narrative techniques that would recreate the literary form of the social novel as a black text” (41). In essence, Wright and Reilly are arguing that Negro writing is inherently tied to the cause of social equality due to the minority status of African Americans in the United States, and, therefore, it must espouse the wider connotations of this social movement in the text.

Baldwin, however, disagrees with the legitimacy of sacrificing so much of the artistic nature of literature for the representation of sociological reality. In “Everybody’s Protest Novel,” Baldwin claims *Native Son* fits the general model of a “protest novel.” Using the example of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, Baldwin explains

the failing of the protest novel is in its “sentimentality... [which] is the mark of dishonesty, the inability to feel” (“Protest” 14). Thus, “[Stowe’s] book was not intended to do anything more than prove that slavery was wrong,” which is primarily a social message (Baldwin, “Protest” 14). In sacrificing the artistic autonomy of the novel for a message driven by sociological factors, then, Stowe and, by extension, Wright (due to Baldwin’s comparison of the two) are to some degree dishonest in the motives behind their novels.

However, as a novel, *Native Son* is not only based in the accurate portrayal of social forces but also presents this reality in an artistic fashion, a fact which Baldwin neglects in his critique. The critic James Nagel affirms the literary merit of *Native Son* in his essay “Images of ‘Vision’ in *Native Son*,” discussing the thematic element of the novel’s depiction of vision and blindness. In this essay, Nagel writes, “[Wright’s] book is not only a social study but a ‘novel,’ a work of art which transcends the limitations of sociological prose. In this work, as in all good fiction, the ‘art’ of the novel supports the theme, and no reading of the book is complete until it has given careful attention to the relationship between ‘method’ and ‘meaning’” (86). While Baldwin may not see the literary merit of *Native Son* as enough to outweigh the drawback of such a reliance on social issues, he also does not acknowledge these artistic themes in the novel.

Another aspect of Wright’s conception of literature in the context of *Native Son*, given his view of fiction as politically motivated and socially aware, is the representative nature of Bigger as a character. In the essay “How ‘Bigger’ Was Born,” Wright calls Bigger “a breathing symbol draped out in the guise of the only form of life my native land had allowed me to know intimately, that is, the ghetto life of the American Negro”

(450). In order to reveal the sociological reality of black America and promote social change, Bigger's character must necessarily represent the wider population of disempowered black people. Bigger, in the context of his representational function, is the "textual evidence of a reality that exists outside the text" that Ferguson describes in naturalistic fiction. Reilly also affirms the necessity for a representative voice in *Native Son* in his essay, saying, "If individuality is secondary to racial designation, one is necessarily spokesperson for the collective" (42). However, by calling Bigger a "breathing symbol" Wright reveals the nature of Bigger to be two-fold. On the one hand, Bigger must be a symbol for the masses, but Wright also affirms the necessity for Bigger to be "breathing," to have a life of his own and be an individual.

Wright describes the "dual aspect of Bigger's social consciousness" in "How 'Bigger' Was Born" (451), saying, "First, there was his personal and private life... that individual data of consciousness which in every man and woman is like that of no other. I had to deal with Bigger's dreams, his fleeting, momentary sensations, his yearning, visions, his deep emotional responses. Then I was confronted with... that part of him which is so much a part of *all* Negroes" (450). Bigger's symbolic nature is only one aspect of his character, but since *Native Son* is a novel and not a sociological work, he must also be an individual with his own particular personality.

Baldwin clarifies later in "Everybody's Protest Novel" that his criticism of *Native Son* stems primarily from Wright's portrayal of Bigger as a representative character. In the context of *Native Son* as an example of protest literature, Baldwin argues that "The failure of the protest novel lies in its rejection of life, the human being, the denial of his [sic] beauty, dread, power, in its insistence that it is his categorization alone which is real



and which cannot be transcended” (23). Baldwin describes a similar sentiment when he discusses *Native Son* further in “Many Thousands Gone.” In this essay, he states that “the reality of man [sic] as a social being is not his only reality and that artist is strangled who is forced to deal with human beings solely in social terms; and who has, moreover, as Wright had, the necessity thrust on him of being the representative of some thirteen million people. It is a false responsibility (since writers are not congressmen) and impossible, by its nature, of fulfillment” (33). Baldwin, then, feels that not only does Bigger’s depiction as a representative of an entire racial and social population undermine his complexity as an individual, but also that Wright’s desire to represent that entire population itself is a “false responsibility.” For Baldwin, the direct address of political and social issues are the stuff of non-fiction and congress people, and the attempt to explicitly merge these issues into fiction necessarily does an injustice to literature as an art form.

Baldwin’s criticism of Bigger’s representative function stems from a fundamentally different conception of truth in literature. Earlier in “Everybody’s Protest Novel,” Baldwin clarifies his own definition: “truth, as used here, is meant to imply a devotion to the human being, his [sic] freedom and fulfillment... [this] is not to be confused with a devotion to Humanity which is too easily equated with a devotion to a Cause; and Causes, as we know, are notoriously blood thirsty” (“Protest” 15). Rather than the sociological conception of truth held by Wright, Baldwin is concerned with the individualized truth of complex human beings. For Baldwin, fiction is not the proper medium for the sweeping and didactic purpose Wright’s view of literature represents.

However, Baldwin's arguments fail to recognize the dual nature of Bigger's character which Wright describes in "How 'Bigger' Was Born." Bill Lyne writes in his essay that Baldwin "Ignore[s] the nuances of his targets and flatten[s] *Native Son* in precisely the way that, he claims, Richard Wright flattens Bigger Thomas" (18). Similarly, Donald B. Gibson in his article "Wright's Invisible Native Son" also recognizes Bigger as a more complex character than Baldwin would seem to admit and adds, "*Native Son* resolves the tension between the two alternatives, the one seeing the salvation of individuals through social change, the other seeing the salvation of individuals through their own efforts" (82). Besides the dual nature of Bigger himself, Gibson describes the novel as a whole as not limited to a representation of social motivations, but also of an individual change. While Baldwin's criticism of *Native Son* is founded, given Wright's description of his view of literature as a means to illuminate social reality and elicit reform, he also does not discuss the aspects of Wright's novel that deviate from the "social terms" he criticizes. In fact, Gibson asserts a little later in his essay that, as a novel, *Native Son* serves as a bridge between the sociologically driven form of naturalism and the more individually focused literature that Baldwin represents: "*Native Son*, as I have described it in this essay, looks forward rather than backward. It is a prototype of the modern existentialist novel and a link between the fiction of the 1930s and a good deal of more modern fiction" ("Invisible" 83). Gibson recognizes *Native Son* as a more progressive novel than Baldwin's critique suggests and also describes it as a "prototype" for the fiction that followed.

This distinction reveals the importance of the temporal difference between Wright and Baldwin: the disagreement between them was not that of two contemporary writers.

*Native Son* was written over 10 years before “Everybody’s Protest Novel” and 22 years before Baldwin’s novel *Another Country*, and therefore was created under different circumstances. Wright was influenced by the literary form of naturalism of his day, whereas Baldwin was writing during a time when the “modern existentialist novel” was coming into prominence. In “Many Thousands Gone,” Baldwin also recognizes the difference in social and artistic setting between Wright and himself: “We cannot... divorce [*Native Son*] from the specific social climate of that time: it was one of the last of those angry productions, encountered in the late twenties and all through the thirties, dealing with the inequalities of the social structure of America” (32). Thus, Wright’s novel and his views on literature are partially a product of his time.

Wright also states in “Blueprint for Negro Writing,” that there was very little fiction from black authors directed to a black audience that discussed openly and honestly (in his opinion) the experience of black people in this country. Wright begins that essay by asserting that Negro writing until this point had been a means of personal achievement or had been directed to white America as a plea for justice (“Blueprint” 37). “Rarely,” Wright says, “was the best of this writing addressed to the Negro himself [sic], his needs, his sufferings, his aspirations” (“Blueprint” 38). Wright was working in an apparent vacuum for the type of novel he wished to write. However, Baldwin, writing over a decade later, had the benefit of being able to build on Wright’s work, to take it as a model and work off of it, refining his own distinct view of what literature should be. This is a relationship Baldwin recognizes in “Alas, Poor Richard.” Speaking of Wright, he says, “He saw clearly enough, far more clearly than I had dared allow myself to see, what I had done: I had used his work as a kind of springboard into my own” (197). Baldwin saw

Wright, as Lyne says in his essay, “as a formidable father who must, in one way or another, be slain by the younger writers” (19).

Although Wright and Baldwin have fundamental differences in opinion about the role of literature in society and what constitutes the “truth” that an author should portray in his or her fiction, these differences are complicated by a careful examination of their essays. While Wright believes in a more explicit representation of the social forces that shape his characters, creating a sort of accessible sociological study through fiction, this is not his sole focus. He, like Baldwin, is also concerned with literature as a form of artistic expression and attempts to present both a particular and representative view of the setting, character, and social context. Baldwin, on the other hand, views literature and the explicit depiction of social context as incompatible and feels literature should focus more on the complexity and interrelationships of individuals. However, both Wright and Baldwin agree that it is only from a lens of honesty, as each sees it, that good fiction can be written. The generalized views of each author are quite different from the other, but it is also important to note that what an author writes about fiction and the actual fiction they produce can be very different, and so I will also examine two novels to further explore the relationship between these authors: *Native Son* by Richard Wright and *Another Country* by James Baldwin.

## II.

The ways in which Baldwin builds on the foundation Wright left with *Native Son* and the relationship between these authors' goals in fiction are better elucidated through a study of *Native Son* and Baldwin's own novel, *Another Country*, which itself bears an especially strong connection to Wright's novel. Mainly, this connection is revealed through the relationship between the characters Bigger Thomas from *Native Son* and Rufus Scott from *Another Country* and the ways in which they are portrayed. In many ways, Rufus is a descendant of Bigger, much as Bigger is a descendant of Uncle Tom—a connection Baldwin draws in "Everybody's Protest Novel" (22). A closer look at these characters will further show the complexity of the relationship between the literature of Wright and Baldwin, as well as highlight concrete examples of the difference in their conceptions of literature described in their essays. While Wright focuses primarily on the social context which shapes Bigger and Baldwin is concerned with the emotional and relational complexity of Rufus, this delineation is not always so straight forward in the text. As suggested earlier in Wright's discussion of the dual nature of Bigger, Wright's novel shows the beginnings of some of the nuance we see in Baldwin's work. Also, like Wright, Baldwin relies on sociologically determined characterization in parts of *Another Country*. Thus, these two novels establish the closeness of the relationship between Wright and Baldwin and reveal the depth of the influence Wright had on Baldwin.

One of the most striking similarities between *Native Son* and *Another Country* is that each novel depicts a black character who falls victim to the harsh reality of his social context and ends up losing his life, although *Another Country* continues well after Rufus

commits suicide and examines that act's effects on those he leaves behind and their continuing relationships (which is in itself a sort of extrapolation of the basic design of *Native Son*). Beyond this similarity in the narrative, both novels deal explicitly with issues of race and their effects on Bigger and Rufus, including segregation, interracial relationships, and the social inequalities faced by African Americans in mid-twentieth century America.

There is also a significant difference between these two characters. In *Native Son*, Bigger is a young, uneducated, impoverished, working class black man with very little connection to the white world around him and who has few or no cultural outlets. *Another Country*, on the other hand, depicts more intimate relationships between both black and white characters, also impoverished, but who are mainly artists. Rufus is a jazz drummer, his sister becomes a jazz singer, and his best friend, Vivaldo (who is white), is a writer. This distinction is important because it directly affects the difference between Wright's sociologically influenced presentation of Bigger as a more representative character and Baldwin's presentation of Rufus' individual humanity. James A. Dievler writes in "Sexual Exiles: James Baldwin and *Another Country*," "The characters in *Another Country* are almost all artists, and as such, their success or failure is tied to their ability to 'read or write' stories—their own and those of others" (Dievler 164). As an artist, Rufus has more of a connection to those around him and is more aware of himself than Bigger; Rufus "reads" and "writes" (or "plays" in his case) others and himself. Generally speaking, artists are more individualized than non-artists, so Rufus is necessarily less of a representational character than Bigger.

Baldwin's focus on the individual humanity of Rufus by no means signifies that he does not also reveal the social forces with which Rufus contends. Both Bigger and Rufus have strikingly similar perceptions of and reactions to these forces. In a conversation with Vivaldo, Rufus says: "How I hate them—all those white sons of bitches out there. They're trying to kill me... They got the world on a string, man, the miserable white cock suckers, and they tying that string around my neck, they killing *me*" (Baldwin, *Another* 67). Rufus' explanation of his hate includes a recognition of the social structure that gives white people all the power, the same social structure that causes Bigger to exclaim, "[The white folks] won't let us do *nothing*" (Wright, *Native* 19) and to say of Mary Dalton, despite her attempts at kindness toward him, "But for all that, she was white and he hated her" (Wright, *Native* 82). Both Bigger and Rufus feel a generalized hatred for white society, in part at least because of their own feelings of disempowerment.

The hierarchical urban social structure which disadvantages black people and leads to this feeling of disempowerment in both characters is portrayed in the opening scenes of both novels. Bigger's poverty is conveyed as *Native Son* opens with a view of Bigger and his family in a cramped, one-room apartment and as they are terrorized by a rat. As Reilly, in his essay "Giving Bigger a Voice: The Politics of Narrative in *Native Son*," points out, "At the same time that the episode of Bigger's killing of the rat foreshadows later violence, it also has the intrinsic significance of an abstract ghetto life where health, comfort, convenience, and security are impossible because the relief system will not provide the means" (38). Through Wright's portrayal of Bigger's disadvantaged

position, this opening scene carries with it social commentary on the conditions in Chicago's South Side and grounds the novel in a socially determined reality.

Also in this scene, we get a view of Bigger's personality and his relationship to his family. After killing the rat, Bigger thinks, "He hated his family because he knew they were suffering and that he was powerless to help them. He knew that the moment he allowed himself to feel to its fullness how they lived, the shame and misery of their lives, he would be swept out of himself with fear and despair. So he held toward them an attitude of iron reserve" (Wright, *Native* 10). Bigger is emotionally distant from the people he is physically closest to, and Wright explains this distance by placing Bigger's attitude toward his family in the context of their underprivileged social position. Bigger's emotional life is presented in general terms and relies heavily on abstractions ("suffering," "shame," "misery," etc.) which increases the perception of Bigger as a symbol of the minority status he shares with other lower class African Americans.

In a similar manner, *Another Country* begins with a more general view of Rufus' social position. Baldwin reveals that he is homeless and broke (*Another* 3), and as he is walking the streets, we are told, "Beneath [the buildings] Rufus walked, one of the fallen—for the weight of this city was murderous—one of those who had been crushed on the day, which was every day, these towers fell. Entirely alone, and dying of it, he was part of an unprecedented multitude" (*Another* 4). Like Bigger, Rufus is placed within his social context, and through this context he is associated with the wider populace of similarly socially disadvantaged people, which shows Baldwin's concern with the sociological forces that shape Rufus. Both novels begin with a general view of



the social landscape, revealing a closer relationship between the way Wright and Baldwin portray their characters than their essays suggest.

However, in the opening scene of *Another Country*, Rufus is also shown to have at least one deeper connection to another person, as opposed to Bigger's distance. Rufus thinks of going to Vivaldo's apartment, and Vivaldo is described as "the only friend [Rufus] had left in the city, or maybe in the world" (Baldwin, *Another* 3). While Rufus feels hatred toward the general idea of white society, he also is able to feel friendship with a particular member of that society. This reveals a departure in the way *Another Country* begins from that of *Native Son*. Through Rufus' friendship with Vivaldo, Baldwin portrays a closer and more complicated relationship between the individual members of black and white society than Wright.

Shortly thereafter, we also get a much more particular view of Rufus' life and his relationships than those of Bigger. As he continues walking he reflects on a previous girlfriend, Leona, and thinks,

For to remember Leona was also—somehow—to remember the eyes of his mother, the rage of his father, the beauty of his sister. It was to remember the streets of Harlem, the boys on the stoops, the girls behind the stairs and on the roofs, the white policeman who taught him how to hate, the stickball games in the streets, the women leaning out of the windows and the numbers they played daily, hoping for the hit his father never made (Baldwin, *Another* 6).

Again, we see a glimpse of Rufus' social reality—the "white policeman who taught him how to hate." But even this is a particular policeman, presumably referring to a particular incident. Bigger's reflection on his family's conditions is much more general. Rufus' thoughts also point to an individual who is more aware of the life around him than Bigger is and who has more of a connection to the people and society. Images of stickball games are presented along with the gambling of his father and people like him, and so we see a

wider view of black society than in the opening pages of *Native Son*. It is Rufus' particular connection to Leona that sparks these memories, and the relationship he has to his family (Rufus recognizes his sister's beauty and his father's rage), though cursorily described, along with the memory of Leona, hint at deeper feelings toward these characters than Bigger's detachment. Through this description of Rufus' life and the relationships he has, Baldwin is building on and adding more human complication to Wright's model of a naturalistic novel.

As *Native Son* progresses and more of Bigger's life is revealed, we get a fuller sense of the detachment Bigger feels toward other people, especially white characters. When Bigger begins working for the Daltons, he realizes that Mary is different from other white people he has known. While driving her around, Bigger thinks, "She responded to him as if he were human, as if he lived in the same world as she. And he had never felt that before in a white person. But why? Was this some kind of game? The guarded feeling of freedom he had while listening to her was tangled with the hard fact that she was white and rich, a part of the world of people who told him what he could and could not do" (Wright, *Native* 65). Despite Mary's attempts to befriend Bigger, he is unable to connect to her because everything in his experience tells him that the social structure that separates them cannot be bridged. Although he does feel a sense of freedom with her, it is a "guarded" freedom. He cannot separate her from what he knows of other white people. Bigger's inexperience with white people and Mary's naïveté destine Mary's attempts at friendship to fail.

Bigger feels the same confusion and detachment with Mary's boyfriend, Jan. While shaking hands with him, Bigger thinks, "Jan and men like him had made it so that

he would be conscious of his black skin. Did not white people despise black skin? Then why was Jan doing this?" (Wright, *Native* 67). Finally, Bigger reverts to hatred: "At that moment he felt toward Mary and Jan a dumb, cold, and inarticulate hatred" (Wright, *Native* 67). For Bigger, Mary and Jan are representative characters of the white power structure, much like Bigger is a representative character for the lower-class black population. Thus, Wright again presents Bigger as unable to step outside of his social context and relate fully to the outside world.

Throughout *Native Son*, we also see the limitations of Bigger's emotional responses due to his inability to move beyond his social context. He reacts to the world primarily through the emotions of fear and hate. Walking to the Daltons' house to get a job, Bigger feels uncomfortable in the affluent, white neighborhood, and thinks, "It would be thought that he was trying to rob or rape somebody. He grew angry. Why had he come to take this goddamn job? He could have stayed among his own people and escaped feeling this fear and hate" (Wright, *Native* 44). It is his fear of being caught in a compromising position, alone with a drunken white woman in her room, that eventually leads to Mary's death (when Mrs. Dalton enters Mary's room, we are told "[Bigger] turned and a hysterical terror seized him" [Wright, *Native* 85]). Conspicuous in its absence is the feeling of love. Indeed, in Max's final speech in the courtroom, he asks, "Is love possible to the life of a man I've described to this Court?" and he goes on to answer, "the circumstances of his life and [his girlfriend, Bessie's] life would not allow it" (Wright, *Native* 401). Bigger's emotional life is stunted, according to Max, because of the effects of the institutionalized racism he faces.

In *Another Country*, on the other hand, love is central. George E. Kent, in his essay, “Baldwin and the Problem of Being,” claims, “The problem [presented in *Another Country*] is still that of arriving at a definition of one’s being which will be adequately sustaining in the face of the evils of life, and to support another’s complexity through love” (26). As seen earlier, hate is also present in *Another Country*; however, it is not nearly as pervasive as Bigger’s hatred in *Native Son*, and so Baldwin is able to add a wider emotional spectrum to the fabric of his novel.

We can see an example of the manifestation of love in Rufus’ friendship with Vivaldo. After a bar fight, instigated by Vivaldo’s girlfriend at the time, Jane, in which Rufus and Vivaldo fought side by side, Vivaldo says, “I love you, you shithead, I really do,” and Rufus responds, “I love you, too. Now, get on to that hospital, I don’t want you to drop dead in this phony white chick’s bathroom” (Baldwin, *Another* 35). In this exchange, the jocular tone—Vivaldo calling Rufus “shithead” and Rufus referring to Jane as a “phony white chick”—and Rufus’ concern for Vivaldo show the friendship between these characters as much as their words.

This friendship and Rufus’ love for Vivaldo also elicit a state of vulnerability in Rufus. After Jane has taken Vivaldo to the hospital, Rufus reflects, “Vivaldo was unlike anyone else that he knew in that they, all the others, could only astonish him by kindness or fidelity; it was only Vivaldo who had the power to astonish him by treachery” (Baldwin, *Another* 36). The connection to another person, as presented by Baldwin in this relationship, reveals the complexity of human interactions—Vivaldo represents friendship and love as well as the potential for emotional pain through betrayal.

It is this complexity in the relationships Rufus has with others that Bigger largely lacks. As we saw with his family, he is either disconnected from people or feels hatred toward them. Even with regard to his brother Buddy, whom he feels the warmest toward (after he's left the house after the first scene, he thinks, "Buddy was all right. Tough plenty" [Wright, *Native* 15]), Bigger feels closest to him only because of the sense of self-worth he gets from the relationship: "he always liked the adoration Buddy showed him" (Wright, *Native* 103). Likewise with his friends—Gus, Jack, and G.H.—Bigger's relationship is figured in terms of the fear and hate that pervade the novel; Bigger thinks to himself, "it was his sullen stare and the violent action that followed that made Gus and Jack and G.H. hate and fear him as much as he hated and feared himself" (Wright, *Native* 29). None of these relationships, contain the same level of emotional complexity as Rufus' relationship with Vivaldo. Bigger is constantly abstracted from those around him and unable to feel the deep connection to them love represents.

Thus far, these scenes have only examined platonic forms of love, but Bigger and Rufus also have lovers in these novels. Bigger's girlfriend, Bessie, presents another potentially close relationship. In fact, after he has killed Mary, Bigger finds a sense of relief in his physical relationship with Bessie: "He felt two soft palms holding his face tenderly and the thought and image of the whole blind world which had made him ashamed and afraid fell away as he felt her as a fallow field beneath him" (Wright, *Native* 135). Bigger seems to be on the verge of finding a closeness to Bessie through the relief he feels. However, even the description of Bessie's body as a "fallow field" dehumanizes her in Bigger's mind and casts her as an image of unproductive, unseeded farmland. And indeed, Bigger feels no love, no deep connection toward Bessie. Max, too, reiterates this

in his speech, saying, “Love is not based upon sex, and that is all [Bigger] had with Bessie” (Wright, *Native* 401).

Bigger reveals how little he actually cares for Bessie when he thinks of her only as an asset in his plan to extract ransom money from the Daltons (“Maybe, yes, maybe he could, maybe he could use her” [Wright, *Native* 138]), and once she agrees to help him, he thinks to himself, “he felt like there were two Bessie’s: one a body that he had just had and wanted badly again; the other was in Bessie’s face; it asked questions; it bargained and sold the other Bessie to advantage. He wished he could clench his fist and swing his arm and blot out, kill, sweep away the Bessie on Bessie’s face and leave the other helpless and yielding before him” (Wright, *Native* 140). Bigger does not want Bessie to be a complex human being, because her complexity (her ability to ask questions and make her own decisions) represents a danger to himself. He wants her for her body, and he wants her to be pliable to his will. While a relationship with a complex human being is an avenue to love, it also represents the same vulnerability that Rufus recognizes in his relationship with Vivaldo; thus, Bigger rejects it. Reilly, in his essay, asserts that the lack of any meaningful relationships in Bigger’s life is due to the social pressures he faces: “Mary wants a color-blind acquaintanceship; Bessie wants an intimacy that releases spontaneous feeling... [However] in *Native Son* no such division of experience is possible, because it is Wright’s intention to show that social conditions cannot be ameliorated by exclusively personal action” (44). Wright’s representation of Bigger as primarily a victim of his sociological reality does not allow for the depth of human emotion or human relationships Baldwin views as essential in fiction.

Rufus' relationship to Leona in *Another Country*, as we would expect, does in fact present a more complicated case. The night he and Leona meet, Rufus first thinks of her in a purely sexual way, not unlike Bigger's attraction to Bessie. Responding to Leona's comment that "people's just people," Rufus thinks, "And pussy's just pussy as far as I'm concerned" (Baldwin, *Another* 13). Also similar to Bigger, Rufus is not looking for much of a connection with Leona at first: "Something touched his imagination for a moment, suggesting that Leona was a person and had her story and that all stories were trouble" (Baldwin, *Another* 13). Rufus, like Bigger, does not want to accept the emotional vulnerability that comes with a truly close relationship with another person. However, as the night progresses, and as he is practically raping Leona on the balcony, Rufus reveals that "he began to feel a tenderness for Leona which he had not expected to feel. He tried, with himself, to make amends for what he was doing—for what he was doing to her" (Baldwin, *Another* 21). Unlike Bigger, Rufus has actual feelings for Leona, and so feels remorse at his actions. Rufus' ability to empathize with Leona is all the more powerful when compared to Bigger in that he has only just met her, whereas Bigger has a comparatively long-standing relationship with Bessie.

We can further see the connection Rufus eventually forms with Leona later in the novel in a conversation with Vivaldo after Rufus and Leona's relationship has come to a tumultuous end, leaving Leona in a state of mental collapse. While talking about his relationship with Leona, Rufus thinks, "But it's not possible to forget anybody you were that hung up on, who was that hung up on you. You can't forget anything that hurt so badly, went so deep, and changed the world forever. It's not possible to forget anybody you've destroyed" (Baldwin, *Another* 51). The depth of Rufus' feelings for Leona is

evident in the pain and remorse he feels and separates his character from Bigger's relatively limited emotional breadth.

However, the relationship between Rufus and Leona is also framed in terms of race, Rufus being black and Leona white, and the social pressures interracial relationships face. Walking through Greenwich Village with Leona and Vivaldo, Rufus thinks, "No one dared to look at Vivaldo, out with any girl whatever, the way they looked at Rufus now; nor would they ever look at any girl the way they looked at Leona" (Baldwin, *Another* 31). And earlier, when they first leave Rufus' apartment, Rufus realizes that "he had not thought at all about this world and its power to hate and destroy" (Baldwin, *Another* 27). Here, we see that despite the deeper feelings Rufus has toward Leona, their relationship is unable to escape the social structures inherent in their world, and it is because of the pressure exhibited by the socially unacceptable nature of their relationship that it ends as it does. Thus, in some ways, Rufus is also unable to move beyond the social constraints of his disadvantaged position in a similar manner to Bigger.

Speaking of the relationship between Rufus and Leona in his essay "Sexual Exiles: James Baldwin and *Another Country*," James A. Dievler writes, "the difficult terms of their sexual relationship are racial, and therefore, for Baldwin, the relationship is doomed. Rufus expresses his anger toward whites through his maltreatment of Leona; she embodies the stereotypical white liberal sentiment of 'being nice' to the black person" (173). Donald B. Gibson expresses a view similar to Dievler's, and even takes it a step further, in his essay, "James Baldwin: The Political Anatomy of Space" when he writes, "[*Another Country*] contains more social protest than any of Baldwin's novels heretofore. Rufus and Leona constantly encounter racist reaction to their being on the



street together... Hence there is a real and actual social dimension to racial relations shown in the book... We see even that the interaction between Rufus and Leona is determined by social attitudes that they act out” (13). Again, we see that Baldwin portrays these characters as victims of the social structure of the world they inhabit, much in the same way Wright portrays Bigger. Thus, Baldwin’s depiction of the relationship between Rufus and Leona, while delving deeper into the complexity of their feelings toward each other and revealing a wider range of emotions than Wright does with Bigger in *Native Son*, is almost naturalistic, and certainly concerned with the power of the social reality to negatively impact those it disadvantages. In fact, it is the inability to escape his social reality which leads Rufus to mistreat Leona, and thus plays a major role in his remorse, decline, and eventual suicide.

The similarity of the depiction of the sociological forces acting on both Bigger and Rufus in *Native Son* and *Another Country* reveals a more complex relationship between these two novels than Baldwin’s critique of *Native Son* would at first suggest. Not only is Baldwin’s portrayal of Rufus based in part on a sociological perspective, which complicates the view of Baldwin as post-naturalism, but also, later in *Native Son*, we can see the beginnings in Bigger of the possibility for more meaningful relationships as well as a broadening of his perspective of the world around him. This indicates that a more complex view of Bigger is necessary than that which Baldwin presents in his criticism of the novel.

After Jan visits Bigger in prison, and forgives him in spite of the fact that Bigger killed the woman Jan loved, Bigger realizes, “For the first time in his life a white man became a human being to him; and the reality of Jan’s humanity came in a stab of

remorse: he had killed what this man loved and had hurt him” (Wright, *Native* 289). In this scene, we see a departure, albeit a small one, from the fear and hate so prevalent throughout the novel. Bigger’s remorse mirrors that of Rufus for the pain he caused Leona, and so the relationship between Bigger and Rufus is closer than it would first seem.

Bigger’s perspective also changes slightly with regard to his family and friends. During the improbable scene with Bigger, his mother and siblings, Gus, Jack, G.H., as well as a host of others, all in one room, Bigger realizes, “He had lived and acted on the assumption that he was alone, and now he saw that he had not been. What he had done made others suffer” (Wright, *Native* 298). Donald B. Gibson also points out in his essay on *Native Son*, “Wright’s Invisible Native Son,” that “The point [of Book Three] is that Bigger, through introspection, finally arrives at a definition of self which is his own and different from that assigned to him by everyone else in the novel,” which also suggests that by the end of the novel, Bigger is in fact on his way to becoming a more complex character, more of a human being (76). While Bigger still lacks the full spectrum of emotions and, due to his incarceration, the ability to attempt to interact in more meaningful ways with others which Baldwin depicts in Rufus, Wright, nonetheless, presents the beginnings of that emotion and human interaction which Baldwin then expands in *Another Country*.

Bigger’s “definition of self,” as Gibson calls it, comes to a head in the final scene of the novel. After being convicted and sentenced to death, Bigger has a final conversation with Max when he comes to a sort of peace. He tells Max,

I’m all right....Sounds funny, Mr. Max, but when I think about what you say I kind of feel what I wanted. It makes me feel I was kind of right... I ain’t trying to

forgive nobody and I ain't asking for nobody to forgive me. I ain't going to cry. They wouldn't let me live and I killed. Maybe it ain't fair to kill, and I reckon I really didn't want to kill. But when I think of why all the killing was, I begin to feel what I wanted, what I am... I didn't want to kill... But what I killed for, I *am*! (Wright, *Native* 428-29).

In this final moment, Bigger finally gets a voice of his own. As Reilly points out, all through Book Three Max has been Bigger's voice, but here Max stands mute, and Bigger finally comes to the conclusion "what I killed for, I *am*;" he finally has come to grips with what he did and the reasons he did these things, and that realization itself is enough to give him a sense of peace in the face of imminent death (Reilly 59-60).

Rufus' death, however, contrasts sharply with Bigger's final moments with Max in his cell. At the end of the first chapter of Book One in *Another Country*, we are told, "Something in Rufus which could not break shook him like a rag doll and splashed salt water all over his face and filled his throat and nostrils with anguish. He knew the pain would never stop. He could never go down into the city again" (Baldwin 87). Rather than coming to a sense of peace with who he is and what he has done, Rufus feels only despair and chooses to end his own life. Ernesto Javier Martínez writes in his article "Dying to Know: Identity and Self-Knowledge in Baldwin's *Another Country*,"

Rufus's decision to kill himself—an act of desperation arising out of a compelling identity crisis and loneliness—looms heavily over attempts in the novel to explore more figural, but no less dangerous, losses of self. These attempts are often cast in terms of what it might mean to take responsibility for one's self (and one's identity) in contexts of intense ideological violence and interpersonal conflict, particularly when the possibility of unscripted action (action that transcends and challenges the norms of one's community) is obstructed by self-doubt, confusion, and fear (Martínez 784).

Thus, like in *Native Son*, a sense of self is central. However, Rufus loses his sense of self due to the social pressures he faces, whereas Bigger, who started with no real sense of who he was, finds a sense of self despite the social structure that sentences him to death.

In this way, though both characters are in the end tragic, Bigger is almost a more redemptive character than Rufus.

Through this discussion of Bigger Thomas and Rufus Scott it becomes clear that although, certainly, Richard Wright presents a more sociological approach to Bigger than Baldwin to Rufus, James Baldwin also makes use of a sociological perspective in his portrayal of Rufus. And, though Baldwin focuses more clearly on Rufus' individualized emotions and relationships, Wright, too, by the end of *Native Son* depicts a fuller sense of Bigger as a human being. Thus, the relationship between these two novels is more complex than they seem at first glance.

Also important in the discussion of these novels, of course, is the fact that Rufus dies ninety pages into *Another Country*. As Martínez writes in his article, "Rufus Scott's unexpected suicide ninety pages into Baldwin's novel is the narrative premise that sets in motion the tense interracial and homosexual relationships in the novel" (784). While Rufus is in many ways similar to Bigger, he is simply the starting point for the full story Baldwin tells and the relationships he weaves. Thus, symbolically, Baldwin moves beyond the influence *Native Son* represents, and into a novel all his own.

## Conclusion

Through the study of Richard Wright's and James Baldwin's essays and novels, the authors' disagreement over the role of literature is founded on a legitimate difference in opinion. Baldwin disagreed with the extent to which Wright's novel relied on sociological theories and motivations, and with the representative nature of Bigger Thomas. Wright, on the other hand, felt he presented an honest and legitimate view of the reality of a young black man in an American urban environment. However, it is also true that this distinction is not as definitive as one might originally believe. Especially through a close inspection of the novels *Native Son* and *Another Country* and the similarity between Bigger and Rufus, the reliance of both authors on the presentation of a similar social reality and its deterministic effects, and both authors' attempts to present not only that social reality, but also a character that honestly portrays an individual human being with particular dreams and feelings, we can see the close relationship between these two authors' methods in fiction as well. The ways in which Baldwin departs from Wright's writing style are due largely to the fact that he came into literary prominence after Wright, and thus was able to build further on Wright's literary works. In fact, as Reilly suggests in his essay, it is quite possible that without Wright and *Native Son*, Baldwin would not have been the same writer he was. Reilly states,

Just as Bigger Thomas was imprisoned in an environment that provided no words to articulate his alienation, so had [Richard Wright] been pent up by customs of language that took no account of Afro-American culture and with impunity denied black subjectivity. Marking Bigger's freedom by the power of self-expression, Wright makes Bigger's voice the emblem of his novel signifying that through the brilliant complex of linguistic acts we know as *Native Son* freedom also comes to black writers (60).

Thus, in Reilly's view, Wright opened the door for black writers in the United States through his depiction of "black subjectivity" in *Bigger Thomas*. Certainly, *Native Son*, as the first novel by an African American to reach the best-seller list, had a tremendous impact on the writers to come, including James Baldwin. As Howe writes, "Bigger Thomas was a part of Richard Wright, a part even of the James Baldwin who stared with horror at Wright's *Bigger*, unable either to absorb him into his consciousness or eject him from it" (Howe 64). Howe even cites Baldwin himself from "Many Thousands Gone:" "No American Negro exists who does not have his private *Bigger Thomas* living in the skull" (42). The *Bigger Thomas* in the skull of *Another Country* is Rufus Scott, and though Baldwin moves beyond focusing solely on Rufus in that novel, Rufus (and through him, *Bigger*) resonates throughout the novel to its conclusion. Rufus' death functions symbolically as the death of *Bigger* and *Native Son*, following Lyne's metaphor of "slaying the father" in order to escape his overarching influence. But like Rufus resonates through the rest of *Another Country*, *Native Son* will continue to stand as a landmark in both African American literature and the American novel generally, and it will continue to influence writers in the future.

## Bibliography

- Baldwin, James. "Alas, Poor Richard." *Nobody Knows My Name, More Notes of a Native Son*. New York, NY: The Dial Press, 1961. Print.
- . *Another Country*. New York, NY: Vintage International, 1993. Print.
- . "Everybody's Protest Novel." *Notes of a Native Son*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984. Print.
- . "Many Thousands Gone." *Notes of a Native Son*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984. Print.
- Correio, Amy E. "Ghosts of the Harlem Renaissance: 'Negrotarians' in Richard Wright's *Native Son*." *Journal of Negro History*. 84.1 (1999): 247-259. EBSCOhost. Web. 13 May, 2010.
- Dievler, James A. "Sexual Exiles: James Baldwin and *Another Country*." *James Baldwin Now*. Ed. Dwight A. McBride. New York, NY: New York University Press, 1999. Print.
- Ferguson, Roderick A. "The Parvenu Baldwin and the Other Side of Redemption: Modernity, Race, Sexuality, and the Cold War" *James Baldwin Now*. Ed. Dwight A. McBride. New York, NY: New York University Press, 1999. Print.
- Gibson, Donald B. "James Baldwin: The Political Anatomy of Space." *James Baldwin, a Critical Evaluation*. Ed. Therman B. O'Daniel. Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1977. Print.
- . "Wright's Invisible Native Son." *Critical Essays on Richard Wright's Native Son*. Ed. Kenneth Kinnamon. New York, NY: G.K. Hall & Co., 1997. Print.
- Howe, Irving. "Black Boys and Native Sons." *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Native Son*. Ed. Houston A. Baker, Jr. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1972. Print.
- Kent, George E. "Baldwin and the Problem of Being." *James Baldwin, a Critical Evaluation*. Ed. Therman B. O'Daniel. Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1977. Print.
- Kershner, R. B. *The Twentieth Century Novel: An Introduction*. Boston: Bedford Books, 1997. Print.
- Lewis, David Levering. Introduction. *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*. New York: Penguin Books, 1995. Print.

- Lyne, Bill. "God's Black Revolutionary Mouth: James Baldwin's Black Radicalism." *Science and Society*. 74.1 (2010): 12-36. *EBSCOhost*. Web. 27 April, 2010.
- Martínez, Ernesto Javier. "Dying to Know: Identity and Self-Knowledge in Baldwin's *Another Country*." *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association*. 124.3 (2009): 782-797. *EBSCOhost*. Web. 5 May, 2010.
- Nagel, James. "Images of 'Vision' in *Native Son*." *Critical Essays on Richard Wright's Native Son*. Ed. Keneth Kinnamon. New York, NY: G.K. Hall & Co., 1997. Print.
- Reilly, John M. "Giving Bigger a Voice: The Politics of Narrative in *Native Son*." *New Essays on Native Son*. Ed. Keneth Kinnamon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Print.
- Wright, Richard. "Blueprint for Negro Writing." *Richard Wright Reader*. New York: Harper & Row, 1978. Print.
- . "How 'Bigger' Was Born." *Native Son*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Perennial Classics, 1993. Print.
- . Introduction. *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*. By St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1945. Print.
- . *Native Son*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Perennial Classics, 1993. Print.