Student Essay

Richard Wright in "Black Boy" by Richard Wright

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Richard Wright in "Black Boy"

In the novel "Black Boy" Richard Wright makes very strong metaphors and observations. One such is in a short passage on page 169 he trys to explain how he was trying to break away from the stereotype of an African American and how it would cause him much pain because he totally ignored what he was cautioned of.

After Richard publishes his first story in the newspaper, "The Voodoo of Hell's Half-Acre", nobody can embrace Richard's accomplishment and he receives only negative responses from his peers and family. They warn him of consequences but he ignores them. It is odd that one of Richard's most meaningful achievements can only to isolate him more from his environment. Instead of praise, Richard is seen as different. Richard believes the educational system he grew up in with was corrupted and high levels of intelligence and creativity are encouraged for whites, while black intellectuals are shunned or taken offensively. His companions and family feels as if it will make whites angry or that it was just plain wrong. He becomes angry and feels he can fulfill his dreams of becoming a writer. I feel as though Wright was trying to protect the desire that the entire system of Southern racism was designed to suppress. I found it odd that the people opposed to his story are all African American though.

His family and friends are disturbed by the idea that he published such a story in a newspaper, especially because the story is so dramatic. He points out that if he had known how much he was going against the norm (writing fiction as a young black man in the rural South) he would have been too afraid to continue.