

Development And Deconstruction: Self-Identity Of Characters In Richard Wright's *The Outsider* (1953)

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Abstract: Modern concerns for personality support mental self-view as an interchange between the longing for independence and the certainty of arrangement. Self-character looms not just as a philosophical as well as political case to self-acknowledgment, yet in addition as the freedom of Descartes' cogito. The ramifications are various: abolishment of the Nietzschean resolution, post-structuralist legitimation of the decentred subject, borderland personalities, systematization of social relations, and self-contestation. The point of this paper is to investigate the manners by which Richard Wright builds and dismantles way of life as a socio-political and social explanation. The focal person of *The Outsider*, Cross Damon, endeavors to destroy the self from the trap of self-recognizable proof and social acknowledgment to accomplish a recently manufactured character. Originating from a natural yearning to sidestep over a wide span of time Afro-American subject-jobs, Damon's idealistic endeavor to a future character closes in a legendary like loss against the colossal powers of social limitation and observation, as encapsulated in the hunchbacked Lead prosecutor, Ely Houston. The twofold connection, exemplified in Cross Damon and Ely Houston's conflict, presents Richard Wright's existential journey for importance and a scrutinize of society. Richard Wright's predominant inquiry to broaden the socio-political union and additionally guarantee to self-personality rules over the unique capability of self-development/adequacy.

Keywords: Identity, subject, borderland, recognition, post-structuralist, binary.

In a 1953 meeting with Hans de Vaal, Richard Wright pinpointed the topic of his novel *The Outsider* (1953) as "man without a home, without rest, without harmony, in a modern culture. The fundamental person of the novel is a Negro, who doesn't respond as a minority individual in a ruling white world, however as a human casualty of social conditions" (158). The determination of the novel's topical concern recommends that Wright was battling the political predisposition of a stringently racialized method of composing. As per the prestigious Afro-American essayist, the politicization of Afro-American social presence had encroached intensely upon the group of Negro writing. Besides, Wright suggested to an understanding of the "human spirit" not as a variety bound fate, but rather a social sanctioning detained in the immense legislative issues and strategies of world affairs. The point of this paper is to investigate the hermeneutics of selfhood and personality in the odd existence of an Afro-American person, Cross Damon, who wavers between the exigencies for opportunity and the powerlessness to sidestep the dubious codes of social being. The philosophical setting, which educates the current reading regarding Richard Wright is formed out of three discrete but corresponded post-structuralist thought processes: to begin with, Michel Foucault's spatialized socialization in the advantageous talks of reconnaissance and discipline; second, Homi Bhabha's idea of hybridity in the meaning of a "third space" in culture and selfhood; lastly, Pierre Bourdieu's transience of self-character. Drawing from the above methods of reasoning of subjectivity and selfhood, the goal is to unwind the degree where Richard Wright discredits the transcendence of individual personality, to investigate how significance is joined to selfhood, how character is up to speed in an everlasting transaction of superfluous codes of presence, and to consider the suspended insight of the (post)modern subject.

The *The Outsider* involves five segments called "Books." These areas follow Cross Damon's custom from social similarity and accommodation to defiance and abnormality, deducing in the hero's appalling demolition by his adjust self image, exemplified in the hunchbacked Head prosecutor Ely Houston. Damon is so moved by long for opportunity that he stops the chance to embrace another personality. A metro mishap in Chicago empowers Damon to sidestep the brutal real factors of his social being and to escape to New York. Once liberated from self-portrayal requirements Damon continues the job a divine being: he uninhibitedly plays with individuals, interferes with normal practices lastly carries out a progression of murders. "Book One: Fear" depicts the fundamental person of the storyline as the regular postal representative, a semi instructed Afro-American of the 1950s who performs low-paid obligations. Damon comes from a broken family foundation, since he was imagined in the lamentable connection between his devout mother and a meandering fighter, who not long after Damon's introduction to the world leaves his family looking for additional exotic joys. The shortfall of a mentor lingers intensely upon youthful Damon. As a grown-up, he considers his past and strikingly stops upon his mother's over the top devotion, just to make sense of her odd way of behaving as a pitiful cleansing system for her lamentable decision of a companion. As a matter of fact, Damon is suggestive of his mother's urgency to appease herself from her lustful sins, and this conduct turns into the prominent ground whereupon the child plots out the deconstruction of the mother figure. Damon demystifies his mother: he understands her as a lacking watchman furthermore, a tragedy of the honorable sentiments she teaches. Correspondingly to his mother, however, Damon has for some time treasured the chance of concentrating on way of thinking in scholarly world, just to pull out from that fantasy and for the most part backslide to the banality of a humble negro specialist. Through his readings of reasoning, Damon has attempted to tame his reigning inward confusion and procure trust in human life. So, by digging into the universe of reasoning, Damon endeavors to translate the items of common sense of life in the theoretical. Amusingly however, he imitates his mother's pointless hunt of internal settlement through legalism, yet his pursuit varies in that his decisions are consistent steps towards skeptical information. Put in an unexpected way, Damon longs for compromise with world undertakings, yet can't follow the talk where that correspondence can flourish.

Damon is the subject in suspension second to none. He is trapped, first by the need to remake his self-personality and second by his drive towards devastation. In his ceremony to mindfulness, Damon compares social being to a vain game between assumption for the development of a personality, and consistence for the deconstruction of exactly the same character. At the beginning of the novel, Damon establishes a cycle to implosion. The text unfurls the profile of the hero as the child of a strict, well behaved lady, the ex of a severe, noxious spouse, the father of three kids, the partner of a bunch of smashed, uninformed, happy postal representatives and the sweetheart of a curvaceous underage young lady. The real factors of his consistently life are turning out to be such an unendurable weight that Damon perseveres through evident experience through the utilization of liquor. Immediately, he stands up to the vanity of his reality, thus the presentation of the storyline harmonizes with the consideration of a suicide attempt:

"He had not eaten all day and, as the alcohol deadened the raw nerves of his twitching stomach, he thought: I'll do it now; I'll end this farce [...] He'd not crawl like a coward through stupid days; to act quickly was the simplest way of jumping through a jungle of problems that plagued him from within and without [...] [H]is chest heaved and he was defenceless against despair. He sprang to the dresser and yanked open a drawer and pulled forth his gun. Trembling feeling the cold blue steel touching his sweaty palm, he lifted the glinting barrel to his right temple, then paused. His feelings were like tumbling dice [...] He wilted, cursed, his breath expiring through parted lips. Choked with self-hate, he flung himself on the bed and buried his face in his hands"(16)

Damon sees of his life as a "joke," or the exchange of various talks against his singularity. These talks contain a progression of coordinated human exercises, which are basically cycles of reconnaissance and standardization. For Damon's situation, the talk of observation is acknowledged first in the prompt type of familial and work relations, and second in the more dynamic and approaching control of legal, strict and reformatory codes of control. Consequently, Damon feels numb in a condition of social entanglement as plotted

out by his family, individual relations and a bunch of state controls, which all overmaster his opportunity.

"Stifled with self-loathing" and sought after by the "forthcoming danger of destruction," Damon is irresolutely in full attention to his craving to live and winces from self destruction (22). In any case, he is educated of his powerlessness to dominate his feeling of fear. His awful experience unfurls where he fights between his yearning forever and the staggering fear originating from the real factors of his own and social halt. Subsequently, he wanders the roads of Chicago despondently, profoundly mangled by his mother's grave legalism, Gladys' longing for cash and Speck's interest for legitimate acknowledgment of her pregnancy. Damon wishes that he would be able "shut his eyes and rest this bad dream away" (87). Dormant and in desolation,

“[h]e felt as though he were already dead and was listening to [Gladys] speak about him. He went out [of the Post Office Union] and did not glance back. He was so depressed that he was not aware of the trampling through the deep snow. About him were sounds that had no meaning” (88).

Damon is at the limit of an individual emergency. Truth be told, he is stood up to with the absence of rationale in personhood. As opposed to the legalism of his mother, who intensely advocates the need to control one's impulses and to attest the honest against the freak, and much against western culture's requests for consistence and accommodation to the socio-social standard, Damon perceives no discernment in being. As such, he rises up out of inside present day power just to take apart any feeling of judicious personhood. To make sense of, the western portrayal of self-character outlines the individual as "a focal point of mindfulness, an incorporated universe and an unmistakable entire [and thirdly as] a limited element set contrastively against other such substances" (Shotter 8). In any case, Damon dismantles the above three sided set of personhood since he thinks about way of life as "expansive, essential meanings of presence [...] currently contained verifiably in the overall extent of other men's expectations and fears" (115). In his most genuine period of mindfulness and not long prior to boarding the tram train, Damon handles with the world as a huge snare of negligible emblematic practices. Damon strongly characterizes the person as a pre-given substance - one that is exposed to the nonsensical codes of the rest of the world- - or as "a living and acting [that] started some time before he might have had the option to give his genuine assent" (115). In reverberation to the abovementioned, "Book One" uninhibitedly uncovers the dehumanization of the person in post-war US and the fear, which overpowers Damon, springs from the mindfulness that self-character is the intervened personhood of an unreasonable society.

Toward the start of *The Outsider* the talks of reconnaissance and discipline loom upon Damon to cripple his restraint. To line up with post-structuralist hypothesis, self-personality is basically disproportionate as it can't be isolated from the turbulent incidental signifier. Society addresses this undefined signifier and the individual is the connoted. The cycle wherein the meant (or the singular subject) agrees with the socio-social standard is emerged through the acts of reconnaissance and discipline. In a similar hypothetical setting, Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1979) approaches present day culture as a system of compulsion coordinated against the person. For Foucault, coordinated society is basically a power structure, which is estimated upon the proficiency to direct the singular's involvement with reality. Also, the ability to control the contemplations and wants of human subjects is best shown in the prison plan of the Panoptikon. To make sense of, the structural complex of Jeremy Bentham's Panoptikon is a spatialized type of observation, where a structure with a pinnacle at the middle permits the engaged to watch the detainees, without the last option being able to see or speak with different prisoners or the superintendents. In the Panoptikon, the double ideas of look and perceivability become locales of strengthening: the prisoners realize that they are continually being watched, a reality which denies them of actual opportunity. However, the detainee, who is the beneficiary of the force of the look, is simultaneously the conveyor of the information on the look, which is being aimed at him. What's more, much in likeness to how the detainee capabilities in a "look" talk, the superintendent - who releases the examination - is at the same time mindful of the way that the force of the look might be controlled towards him/her eventually throughout everyday life. Foucault's hypothesis is that the detainees and the superintendents are at the antipodes of similar arrangement of force relations, and as collectivities- - having been emplaced in a provided social and spatialized request - they might be addressing contrasting qualities, they are by the by working and working

under similar request of things. To put it plainly, power relations might be polished among explicit subjects, however the standards and codes of oppression saturate the entire of society.

In the Foucauldian worldview of the Panoptikon, look and space become the fundamental tasks of a disciplinary society. Subsequently, the singular varieties the self with the truth of perceivability and the chance of entrance. Consequently, present day man/lady decreases self-character to a disciplinary cycle for the standardization of subject-difference(s). *The Outsider* begins with the similitude of contrast in an "insect pile" society, and Damon is the site where this distinction is sensationalized (453). Damon is an Afro-American who agrees with society's correspondences in "Book One," however who is likewise smothered by his absence of distinction. His self-personality of a low-class smashed, who ends up in legitimate difficulty in view of his extra-conjugal relationship with Odd, completely carries out society's assumptions from an Afro-American subject. Then again, he violates cultural standards, when he esteems his philosophical readings, endeavors to find a center importance from social exchanges, dismantles human relations or rejects religion. "Book One" presents the underestimation of Damon as both a social and a philosophical abnormality, so when he has the chance to dodge the (pre)constructed real factors of his reality and change his character, he essentially turns around the request for social enslavement. In the irregular occurrence of a tram mishap, Damon immediately jumps all over the chance to get away from the look of coordinated society, and thusly to coordinate his own look upon the impedances of social being. Damon doesn't violate his involvement with Chicago to get away from before, however endeavors the remaking of his personality in New York as an enabled and somber social pundit.

Wright's most striking contention in *The Outsider* is that the reconceptualization of post-war US doesn't imply that cultural qualities die. More forthright, the text recommends that the codes of character arrangement endure notwithstanding one's endeavors to avoid them. Accordingly, in "Book Two: Dream" and "Book Three: Plummet" Damon enters a similar world request in New York yet from an alternate outlook. After the tram mishap, Damon re-surfaces social relations first with the force of the look to himself, and second from the vantage highlight analyze and supervisor the usable guidelines of society. Put in an unexpected way, the tram mishap approves a difference in space and an inversion of force relations. Concerning the term space, it doesn't relate essentially to the genuine geological presence of a given subject. As indicated by Michel de Certeau, the term space connects with the social direction that decides "states of probability. The act of room is as of now built when it presents a development or a dislodging. By 'place' [de Certeau] not set in stone and separated places coordinated by the financial framework, social ordered progressions, the different kinds of punctuation in a language, customs of custom and mindset, mental designs" (145). To put it plainly, the expression "space" connects with all types of socio-social practice, and the reshuffling of room relations is at last a political demonstration of inversion. In arrangement with de Certeau's post-structuralist hypothesis, "social activities are developments" (145). What's more, for Damon's situation the employable framework he devises as being inside and simultaneously outside society is a political demonstration in essence. As a matter of fact, after the metro mishap Damon doesn't seek after individual flexibility or ecstasy. All things considered, he seems to submerge himself in an over the top reassessment of normalized upsides of selfhood.

Damon encapsulates the demonstration of movement, yet not in that frame of mind of a bandit or rebel ideology. Assuming turmoil is the political demonstration of escaping from all types of coordinated social arrangements to upswing them, Damon doesn't really get away from any socio-political framework and in no point of the story line does he represent the wish to overrule any request for things. Damon might be escaping from the past, yet his separation is an interpretation and not a transformation. In various terms, Damon is moving or relocating the self from a certain spatialized aspect in Chicago just to enter a similar social setting in New York. The depiction of the train ride in Chicago not long before the accident scene is emblematic of his approaching re-birth and rebound:

“Diving into the subway, he paid his fare and, two minutes later, when a train roared up, walked into the first coach and sank into a seat, closing his eyes. The train pulled into motion; he opened his eyes and noticed that another Negro, shabbily dressed, of about his own color and build, was sitting across the aisle from him. The movement of the coach rocked some of the tension out of him, but not enough to let him relax. Restlessness made him rise and go to the

front window and stand looking at the two ribbons of steel rails sliding under the train. A motherent later, when the train was streaking through the underground, darkness suddenly gouged his eyes and a clap of thunder smote his ears. He was spinning through space, his body smashing against steel; then he was aware of being lifted and brutally catapulted through black space and, while he was tossed, screams of men and women rent the black air”(92-3).

The train is the case which discharges Damon to the world; the underground cylinder is the course he follows out of the belly of Chicago, and the mother figure is emblematically seen as tremendous society. Damon's early stage and invalidated state on the train is revived in the accident; also, the train ride turns into the site of his restoration. In any case, the huge wonder that Damon becomes in New York is constantly suggested since "Book One" depicts society as a turbulent starting place.

While Damon switches jobs of social sanctioning, he pleasantly fits the similitude of relocation. His movement is a theme which proposes "the action of uprooting" (Bhabha 210). The hero of *The Outsider* withdraws from a specific subject-job to go over another name-character without however changing the social practices and needs which he enters and reenters in the following four segments of the book. Damon's movement comes from a subtle long to reevaluate his self-character inside the moral stories of a bigot, inserted economic wellbeing quo. In various terms, Damon starts his explorer to self-recognizable proof from the place of having lost "the sway of oneself" (Bhabha 213). The deficiency of the singular aspect and the involving strengthening of society are the main thrusts behind his different changes. Thus, once set free from his diligent self-portrayal in Chicago, Damon migrates himself in the coordinated life exchanges of New York and toys with the characters engaged with them. Truth be told, he turns into a prankster figure, who shows up and afterward disappears from the plot with the appeal of a naughty first conceived. In outcome, he readily and happily associates with a lodging whore, members a naïve lady in New York, enters the universe of the Socialist Coalition and incredibly delights in the philosophical discussions he holds with the Lead prosecutor Ely Houston.

Damon is the joke artist figure second to none. He is the person who shows up and yet again shows up in the mise-en-scene of social order, shuffles with the misinterpretations of different characters and relishes the craziness of present day life. Considering that, he shows no regret over the homicides he commits in light of the fact that he has jumped into the component of a semi-god, a divinity who tyrannically resumes the right to allow and annul life. " Book Four: Despair" portrays Damon as a heartless culprit and hostile to social victimizer:

“There was in him no regret for what he had done; no, none at all. But how could he have done it? He [...] had acted like a little god. He had stood amidst those red and flickering shadows, tense and consumed with cold rage, and had judged them and had found them guilty of insulting his sense of life and had carried out a sentence of death upon them [...]He had assumed the role of policeman, judge, supreme court, and executioner,- all in ones wift and terrible motherent”(308).

Damon's recently obtained polysemous character after the mishap in Chicago isn't a distinguishing proof, yet a simple floating over public activity. As per Homi Bhabha, "ID is a course of relating to and through another item, an object of otherness, so, all in all the organization of ID the subject-is itself generally undecided, in light of the mediation of that otherness" (211). In a similar method of presence, Damon picks an alternate character, however he doesn't genuine this self-contrast with the essential human nature to socialization. Basically, Damon denies both ID and collectivization, a refusal which thu positions him in a half breed reality. Hybridity is a condition of consistent removal, or as indicated by Bhabha "the third space which empowers different situations to arise. This third space dislodges the accounts that comprise it, and sets up new designs of power, new political drives, which are deficiently figured out through gotten astuteness" (211). Essentially, Damon devises a "third space" in New York, which doesn't mean to a decent reality, however to a half breed feeling of existence.³ Besides, this uprooted feeling of being, which discredits the doctrines of an all encompassing personality and of natural society, is a political demonstration of debilitating what Bhabha refers to society's as "got shrewdness."

In a similar casing of reasoning, "Book Two" shows Damon enjoying of his hybridity in the philosophical dealings he holds with Ely Houston on the train to New York. Damon plays out an earnest and trying destroying of strict and political grids, which is his strategy at dismantling the soundness and power of the cutting edge self. As a matter of fact, the underlying experience with Ely Houston destroys Damon's skeptical hypothesis of human life:

"Is not life exactly what it ought to be, in a certain sense? [...] If you've anotion of what man's heart is, wouldn't you say that maybe the whole effort of man on earth to build a civilization is simply man's frantic and frightened attempt to hide himself from himself? That there is a part of man that man wants to reject? Man may be just anything at all. And may bemandeep down suspects this, really knows this, kind of dreams that it is true; but at the same time he does not want really to know it?"(171-2)

As indicated by Damon, man is subtle in light of the fact that "he stows away from himself" (171). The hero of *The Outsider* sees of man as up to speed in a mental distress to get away from the consciousness of his inward bedlam, which thusly leads to an image outlining sort of presence. Social qualities, social images, strict symbols and political beliefs are simple method for concealing man's void. Damon's hybridity- - or dislodged self-personality - emerges from the way that the deconstruction of man's character can't be enhanced by endeavors to recreation. In New York, Damon expects an impenetrable position to world undertakings: he devises the job of a pariah or an unapproachable, who contemplates over regular experience without wishing to partake in it as a genuine subject. Never does he adventure on the reconstruction of the world nor does he display any evident benevolent feelings. All things considered, he dives into a philosophical demystification of socio-political standards without epitomizing any longing to reappear and move himself in friendly communications.

The train mishap approves the deception of independence from legitimate responsibilities to Damon's ex, children and sweetheart, from the monetary ties to the mail center association and from the moral obligation to his mother. Be that as it may, this incidental condition of community and moral non-presence is simultaneously a perspective for what's in store. In Pierre Bourdieu's terms, Damon's habit us relates the past, the present and the future in a complex limited entirety. As per Bourdieu, habitus "is a result of history [...] an arrangement of demeanors a current past that will in general propagate itself into the future by reactivation in comparably organized rehearses, an inner regulation [...] -the guideline of progression and routineness which objectivism finds in friendly practices" (54) Damon is caught in a worldly exchange between past, present and future. Thus, the subject's current effort to express a beginner personality is in every case currently in suppression in light of the fact that such an endeavor relates either to a prior or to a speculative future transient aspect. As a social subject Damon falls in the entanglement of erroneously accepting that he can take the self from feelings and connections adjusted to the past. In the first place, by killing family attaches with his mother, ex and three youngsters, then, at that point, by discrediting the obligation to remain by Crazy on her outside of a stable family structure pregnancy and furthermore by disengaging the self from the trap of his work and social climate, Damon endeavors to break liberated from a past self-portrayal. Damon's previous personality profile in Chicago likely could be seen as a development or a post-structuralist result of social, social and political broodings. In various terms, the text suggests a divided feeling of the self as it springs out of the basic classifications of race, class, and culture. Also, in a legendary like design, Damon feels the huge load of those normalizing social cycles, denies them and afterward attempts to recreate what his identity is. Notwithstanding, this current endeavor connects with previous encounters; also, over a significant time span form what's in store: what Damon becomes in the present is constantly associated with what his identity was and who he tries to turn into.

All in all, the way that Damon promptly calls the chance of the train crash to discredit the snare of his legitimate and moral capture deceives a beginning craving to re-articulate his self-personality. However, he doesn't do as such to move away from society or to change his prompt past presence, since he incidentally reenters a similar social setting he get away. Besides, Damon is neither chasing after a renewal of a provided world request, nor does he relentlessly intercede the moral stories or dispensed subject-jobs of post-war US. All

things being equal, he sets out upon a single explorer to individual understanding. Damon arranges the past, yet in a singular mode. All in all, he shows no wish to re-embed his self-character inside world undertakings in a genuine or conspicuous manner. More forthright, he experiences the completely drenched citizenry with a perverted quality: the manner in which he tends to the characters he meets, whether Afro-Americans in the ghetto, white-American bigots working in open workplaces, the police or his relatives, is absent any and all any philanthropic reason. His exchanges uncover an epicurean longing to play with the world and giggle at a nonsensical world request. Never in the storyline does Damon show any enthusiasm for public activity nor does he imply to any positive thinking, all things considered. Furthermore, this is where Damon commits a definitive sin against society: by expecting the job of *The Outsider* Damon misuses his social intangibility, infringes upon human naïveté and mishandles his power as a non-subject to control and oversee human relations. Damon's pride is performed when he reenters society in rebellion of the outright force of coordinated life. Furthermore, the closing emotion of Cross Damon's demise established in Richard Wright's *The Outsider* is the legendary discipline encroached upon a person who derisively and heretical dismisses the matchless quality and prevalence of an harsh society.

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