

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The terrain of John's imagination encompasses four main sectors : church, self, city, and race. Naturally the boundaries of these sectors are not always clearly defined, but they serve as general areas on which John's dilemma can be mapped. The church gives John a kind of invisible attachment that forces him to always follow its dogma for it has been dominating his spiritual life and teaching him the wages of sin. While the race seems to particularly bind John with a responsibility to enforce their agreed-upon values, social norms, and expectation, and generally with an unprofitable fact of being a member of minorities that might fail his dream as a character. And ashamed of his appearance - that is supported by his father mockery about his face -, his color, his ghetto environment, John has longed for what he considers the cleanliness and order of the white world. The city itself is John's idea or image of those cleanliness and order of the white world. It shows John a more better world and life that he longs for having, with all its pleasures and glammers that John wants to taste without having to moan and crawl before the altar.

The dilemma seems to begin when the church , self, city, and race are in conflict. Being ashamed of his blackness that he associates with ugliness, dirt, and humiliation, John wishes to get rid of them by getting into the white world with his intelligence. However, without having any support from either his community or his family, especially his father, John, who previously doubts the presence of God and his willingness to be a young preacher as both the community and the family demand him to

be, begins to doubt his ability to gain the 'dream'. It is not easy to John to deny his race and his family for they have been being with him in the years of growth that he feels to have a tie-up with them. John is aware also of the possibility of facing the difficulties of prejudice and discrimination in conjunction with his 'ascribed status' as a black man that may hamper his effort to elevate the quality of his life. He is terrified to imagine that if he should fall off the mountain of dream he built they will deny him as well for he seems to deny them by trying to get into the white world. Furthermore, the church keeps annoying John with a question which examines his firmness to converse ;

" If he should die and stand naked before the judgement bar, would those glammers and pleasures of the city help him ? "

While to see the shine of the city ,and the evil of his father's personality,John's heart is still hardened againts both his race and the church. John then is in the middle of a turbulence of uncertainty. He has to treat the crucial tension between the most absorbing of social institutions and the emergence of autonomous self. He wishes to exile from the gloomy of his neighborhood and his home into the city that may raise his dignity as a black man. However, he cannot easily deny his tie-up with the race and the church. Moreover, to be black in the largery white society John has to deal with the loss of his 'disadvantage' status; he may not be welcomed easily in the city.

Thus, as a racial minority adolescent, John faces some questions that represents a number of unique issues if he hopes to gain his dream. They result from growing up in two cultures and probably have no clear answer such as; how does he deal with questions of interracial friendship ? Is it worthwhile to take the risk that may be involved, or should he not cross the "color line ?" What determines which whites can

be trusted and which ones cannot? Can he strive for success and achievement in white society and yet be faithful to the 'brothers and sisters' who are living in poverty because of racism and discrimination based on social class ?

John then is stranded between the 'enchanted dream' of his own, the discriminating climate of the larger society and the 'exclusive' culture of his community that binds him with the responsibility to carry down the glory of its religion and values. At the tarry service at the night of his fourteenth birthday, John tries to confirm his heart and to ensure himself to take the more possible choice that is been appointed for him if he wishes to calm his raging heart and look for his future certainty. To be rejected by his stepfather, who thinks of him as the son of the bondwoman, and rejected because of race by the country and the city of which he is a native son, John turns to God and to the fellowship of the 'saints'. Through a kind of religious experience finally John is able to convince his own heart to save the dream and to tread the reality before him. Blacks had to go through unbearable suffer and humiliation before gaining their freedom. The voice that John feels to hear in part three seems to remind him of the fact that he is part of Blacks and their struggle and he cannot wish to see a change over one night only. It moves John through shame and hatred to love and temporary peace.

The dilemma happens when John has a desire to converse and has another life. It is forced by having no positive self-concept toward himself that is strengthened by the 'slum' of his race and neighborhood, and also his family's both mentally and physically condition, that John builds a dream to be a better person and live in a better neighborhood according to his ideal. It is also an act of aggression against his stepfather as an acceptance of his own identity that he is a smart boy. He presumes of having the

chance to realize his dream by his conversion. However, it is not easy for John to make a choice since his community seems to have quite influence toward his years of growth to be taken into account. It has taught him about morality, about 'right' and 'wrong' according to their agreed-upon values and give him the responsibility that is hard to deny. Moreover, his status as a poor black man does not give much choice. Fortunately, John is able to control his wish-fulfilling fantasies so that finally he can deal effectively with objective reality. John's own final conversion is his acceptance to take the responsibility of being the future preacher. The irony that he overcomes in his religious experience may be the very irony he needs to develop a sense of self in white society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY