

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

A. Analysis of John's Dilemma

Around the morning of his fourteenth birthday, John starts to think about his true ideal of a future life. He, who has been brought up in a strong nuance of religiousness community and been known as a fine young boy, was expected to be a holy man, a preacher, to follow his father's path. And John himself seems to believe by his innocence that it is a kind of future life he will should have. Everybody in the neighborhood and his family give him a total support. However, along with the development of his age that enables him to build his own ways of thinking, John, then, begins to doubt and consider about everything he has been believing. As he notices his surrounding environment he sees that people around him who praise the Lord every single day of their life and who carefully keep themselves from doing any sins still have to live in such a poverty that brings them nowhere but a gloomy dwellings and a gloomy church. Whereas, those people in the neighboring city who never seem to pray the Lord and keep doing various sins every day could live in such a glorious life. It is said to him during the sermon that narrow was the way that led to eternal life and few there who found it. The way that led to useless, sinful death, on the other hand, was broad and many could find thereon. But as a young boy who has been living in poverty ever since he was born, John sure has a dream to elevate the quality of his life that will elevate his dignity as a decent human being as well. He does not wish to live in that narrow way where all his people seem to walk. Their houses do not rise and piercing, as it seemed, the unchanging clouds, but

walk. Their houses do not rise and piercing, as it seemed, the unchanging clouds, but huddled, flat, ignoble, close to the filthy ground where the streets and the hallways and the rooms were dark, as dark as their skin, and where the unconquerable odor was of dust, and sweat, and urine, and homemade gin. The way of cross promises him nothing but a house like his father's house, and a church like his father's and a job like his father's, where he would grow old and black with hunger and toil. They are quite poor that unable them to have a full meal everyday and enough food for everybody or even to buy fine clothes for special occasions, and his mother has to work hard for having no sufficient facilities to ease her burden in keeping their house in order. All the glorious of life that he longs for having seems to dwell in the city where the buildings contest the God's power by the piercing peak against the sky. John sees beautiful people with happy faces who wear fine clothes and expensive jewelry as if they have nothing to worry about, have no burden in their life. John never seen such a happy faces around him for they seem to have the same weary look. The glamour of the city, thus, stun the greenhorn boy. Another reason of his rejection is his awareness that to live a holy life and becomes an example to his people that he should overcome if he was a preacher could be hard to resist. He has never realized how hard it is until he saw his Sunday teacher, Elisha, had to kneel down before the altar on the Sunday shortly before his 14th birthday. Father James had uncovered Elisha and Ella Mae, the granddaughter of Praying Mother Washington, been walking disorderly so that could be in danger of straying from the truth. They are forbidden to come together again afterwards. And if they do it would be in wedlock. They would have children and raise them in the church. Suddenly,

John's eyes were being opened by the fact that it is what was meant by a holy life and it is what the way of the Cross demanded. Although John learns, then, that it is a kind of life awaiting him and would not be far off but imminent, coming closer day by day, he wished to deny it for he has a dream to reach ; a life that will bring him away from his father, the church, and the people within. Furthermore, Elisha, the one whom he respects more than his father, whom he adores and looks up to, and who has already saved at the age of eleven, still can be tempted and almost fall into doing forbidden conduct. And to learn about the unexpected fact John doubts his ability to live the kind of life that the Cross demanded while his heart can not accept the way of the cross with fully surrender yet.

The strong nuance of religiousness that has been around John ever since he had first drawn breath, however, seems to possess him quite deeply. He does believe in God and wishes to stay in the right path - although there is a time when he doubts the presence of God as he begins to observe the poverty and misery of both his family and his people. He might eat and drink to his heart's content and clothe his body with wondrous fabrics, rich to the eye and pleasing to the touch , but the question is, could all those glamour and glorious life save his soul which would one day come to day and stand naked before the judgment bar ? Does he dare to hurl away, for a moment of an ease, pleasant life, the glories of eternity ? Nevertheless still those glories are unimaginable ; he will never find out how glorious it is unless he dies while the city before him is real and John would like to taste the real one. He dreams to be a rich prominent man whom everyone will give their respect and appreciation since his family life is financially difficult, its objective

circumstances are economically tenuous and socially repugnant, and since he is not a popular boy at school. His diminutive size and mental superiority make him the easy target of schoolyard bullies. It is his obvious intellectual prowess that help to sustain him in otherwise impossible circumstances. The unforgettable moment in his classroom of elementary school assures John that he has a power that most of his people lacked, that is, his academic competence. He might use the superiority to save and raise himself. It might open outward for him on a world where people do not live in the darkness of his father's house, do not pray to Jesus in the darkness of his father's church, where he would eat good food, and wear fine clothes, and go to the movies as often as he wishes. In this world he imagines that John, who was, his father said, ugly, who was always the smallest boy in his class, and who had no friends, may become immediately beautiful, tall, and popular. He was a poet, or a college president, or a movie star. He would drink expensive whisky and smoke expensive cigarette in the green package. John wishes to give up Harlem and get rid of its slum neighborhood. He is not interested with his people and still less in leading them anywhere. But, then, the same question disturb him again ; if he could really reach that kind of life, would he still remember to praise the Lord for in that city his heart would find perdition as his father and his mother ever said to him. John's deepest conscience, thus, still hold on his people religious belief for he has been brought up to learn that it is all that matter in the sinful world and it is not easy for him to deny. As he attends the tary service on the night of his fourteenth birthday, John is busy convincing himself that to live a holy life among his people is the kind of future life that he wants to have. He also hopes for a light that would

teach him, beyond all question, the way to go. Although John has a dream against the wishes of most people in the neighborhood, he still longs for a power that would bind him to the love of God. He is indeed in both weariness and confusion ;

To walk in Jerusalem just like John. Tonight, his mind was awash with visions ; nothing remained. He is ill with doubt and searching. He longed for a light that would teach him, forever and forever, and beyond all question, the way to go ; for a power that would bind him, forever and forever, and beyond all crying, to the love of God. Or else he wished to stand up now, and leave this tabernacle and never see these people anymore. Fury and anguish filled him, unbearable, unanswerable, his mind was stretched to breaking. (The Prayers of The Saints, page 89)

John thought of Hell, of his soul's redemption, and struggled to find a compromise between the way that ended in the pit. He can not easily deny that his father and mother and all the saints had not taught him from his earliest childhood what was the will of God. Either he arose from this theater, never to return, putting behind him the world and its pleasures, its honors, and its glories, or he remained here with the wicked and partook of their certain punishment. Yes, it was a narrow way - and John stirred in his seat, not daring to feel it God's injustice that he must make a cruel choice. (The Seventh Day, page 43)

Furthermore, there is another doubt in John's head for being black in the society dominated by whites, does he has the chance to live in that city where his ancestors had seen with longing from far away and where he is stranger there and the people he had seen held no love for him in their eyes ? He remembered when they passed they did not see him and if they do they would smirk. Nevertheless, there is an occurrence in the park, that stir up a hope in John's heart that he might has the chance, that not all whites hate blacks. When John ran down his favourite hill in the morning of his fourteenth birthday he almost knocked down an old white man with cane. He is amazed and astonished so did the white man. John thought the white man's astonishment was to find out a young Niger boy from a slum neighborhood dared to almost knocked him down and John then was busy asking for apologize. The white man to John's surprise, smiled at him instead of getting mad and John smiled back to him. It was as though the old man and he had between them a great secret that as a fellow human kind despite the difference of their skin color they will not cause difficulties for each other. Nevertheless, as he recalls his father's story about white men both his hope and spirit slowly fade away although he still considers not all white are wicked, some of them are nice as the old man in the park and his teacher at elementary school - some of them are white - who brought him a medicine when he had been very sick so that he was healed. His father keeps telling him that it is not easy for him being black in largely white society. All whites are wicked and God is going to bring them low. They are never to be trusted for they told nothing but lies, and that none of them had ever loved a Niger. It is hard for John to believe, though, that the man in the park and his kindhearted teacher would

also be burnt in Hell forever. John considers what they have done is sure a Christian act, that is, to forgive and help people who asks for and needs it. However, John can not argue for he realizes that he is less experienced than his father and that he might be wrong for being naive. His father might be right when he told him that he just does not know nothing about them until he gets little older and is able to see how evil white people could be. The kindness of few of them is not a guarantee that they would accept him as one of them, that they will surely love and honour him. The story reminds John of a book he had ever read about the things white people did to colored people ; how in the South, where his parents came from, white people cheated them of their wages, and barred them, and shot them, and other worse things which the tongue could not endure to utter. They always be a black sheep ; being burned in the electric chair for things they had not done, were beaten with clubs in riots and were the last to be hired and the first to be fired. It is true that he has never got such a bad treatment from any white men yet, but is he sure or can anyone guarantee that someday when he grows up and wishes to enter an outstanding college that most of its students are white since as a bright boy John sure dreams of taking a lecture in such a college to be a man as he desires, or when he starts to look for a job, they would give him the same opportunity? He remembered then the time when he took a walk on the city street that used to be forbidden for his people to walk there. Although there is no one raised a hand against him, he still did not dare to enter the shops out of which white men carrying a great round box or the apartment before which white men stood dressed in brilliant uniform. He was afraid of being kicked out ; to be a sensitive young

person, John will not feel up to take such a treatment. His father has always said that things for them will not ever change, not today, not tomorrow either since the world they live is not for them. There will always the back doors for them and the dark stairs and the kitchen or the basement. He had better forget his dream of having the same opportunity with whites. John's heart, however, is still hardened against his people. To be a preacher actually is not his ideal of future life. He would not be like his father, or his father's fathers. He would have another life, a life that he suddenly realizes to have been dreaming of, but could he, for he has to overcome not only his people's and his family's opposition surely but also the discriminating climate of largely white society. These two difficult choice that John has to make earn him a great conflict within.

B. The Influence of John's Social Background Toward His Dilemma

Since America is a heterogeneous society, there is a great diversity of people who inhabit the country ; this is especially evident in large urban areas, but is apparently in most sections of the country. These differences reflect ethnic and racial background, religious tradition, and life style. The society where John takes a hand is a kind of largely self-sufficient neighborhood of people of the same group which has the same ethnic and racial background, i.e., the Blacks' society of Harlem. However, there is rather a small and exclusive society within the large one where John takes a part mostly, that is, the society of Temple of Fire Baptized members, one of the what so-called storefront churches around Harlem. They share language, heritage, and traditions that provide cohesion among the

members. Most of them came from the South, share the dark history of their race during slavery, and work in menial jobs. They hold onto their religion almost strictly and built their own way in praying the Lord. The decorum of traditional liturgy was of no interest or use to storefront worshippers. They desire, above all, an atmosphere conducive to emotional spontaneity, to the informalities and improvisations of religious expressions. They are used to screaming and yelling at services, rolling in the aisles, and speaking in tongues. Beside freedom of expression, storefront worshippers looked to their minister to provide solace or answer to their social and economic problems. The congregations are ordinary, hard working, poor, and least educated people who have never seen the inside of a night club or a cinema ; they consider such places as a sinful building where a religious and decent people are not supposed to go into ; and who were occupied with the stern necessity of making a living, of making ends meet, of finding money to pay the rent and keep the children fed and clothed. And having such an unpleasant experience with whites the parents bring up their children not to socialize with whites which has a lot to do with their suspicion and distrust of whites.

John Grimes, being born as a silent and unassuming child, is used to follow the rules of his particular society as both a form of his obedience and a matter of habit since he grows up within the society. Besides, John's father who is the head deacon of the church is one of the toughest who carefully watch his family not to stray from the truth. He obliges his children to join Sunday school and read the bible every night under his supervision. Otherwise, they would earn his awful

wrath. John, thus, spends most of his life at the tabernacle that he had been loved and feared just before his heart begins to converse around the morning of his fourteenth birthday. John is also used to watch his people while they are singing to praise the Lord with all their heart and all the strength that is in them, along with the clapping of their hands for joy. Their singing, in some way or another, caused him to believe the presence of the Lord, although while he is thinking of the gloomy life of his people and his family ; how his mother has to lose her former beauty and cheerfulness because of the hardworking in the house, how his father becomes so stiff and hard for he never seems to earn enough money to give his family a fancy life no matter how hard he has been working ; he can not truly believe that God has ever been existed and gives answer to all their troubles as has always been said in the sermon. Thus, it is his doubt that he further understands to forbid him to feel the same joy that his people seem to feel while they are rejoicing the name of the Lord, the joy that he is supposed to feel. He has been always wondering why he does not seem to feel the joy of praying the Lord. It is John's fear, timidity and obedience which activate his actions in serving the Lord, and also his admiration toward Elisha, his new Sunday teacher after sister Mc Candles. He was not much older than John, only seventeen, but has already saved and becomes a young preacher. John adores him by both his physical appearance ... since his father has always said to him that he has a face of satan. Gabriel links the innate depravity of John's face which was intensified by the onset of puberty with his illegitimacy although John never learnt about the fact ... and his holiness that John always dreams of having. Unlike his father, Elisha is

opened to ask for a discussion. He is hard and discipline but he could be also a gentle and affectionate teacher whom John wishes his father to be. If John did not follow the lesson so that he can not answer a question, Elisha would smile and reprimand him gently. While at home, when John can not remember the golden text, his father is going to be mad without ever trying to help his son. And everyone in the neighborhood, then, to see John's piety, consider him as a fine young boy who is going to be their future preacher. They never know the inside of John's deepest heart, that he is not as holy as they have been presuming. And John himself, being undared to reveal his true feeling let their presumption grows strong until he is too reluctant to betray their belief upon him. John is afraid of thinking what would they say if John, the son of a used to be an outstanding preacher and still obedient adherent, tends to deviate from both their religious belief and the appointed career that is for him. Here we learn that John feels to be obliged to consider his people's sensibility since he himself has given them a hope ... without he himself purposely has planned for ... that he would accomplish his duty to carry on the glory of their religious tradition. It indicates that John, despite his wish to deny his people, still has a kind of tie-up with the community in which he has been spending his life. John's years of early growth finds him participating in institutional activities manned largely by other marginal individuals where he gets protection and safety from. John does not have any heart to betray both their trust and hope for they might be very disappointed and hurt to find out the truth of John ;

“Brother Johnny is mighty faithful, said sister Mc Candless. “The Lord is going to work with him in a mighty way, you mark my words.”

“Yes.” said sister Price with her gentle smile,” He says that he that is faithful in little things shall be made chief over many.”

John smiled back at her, a smile that, despite the shy gratitude it was meant to convey, didn't escape being ironic, or even malicious. But sister Price didn't see this, which deepened John's hidden scorn. (Page 63-64, The Seventh Day)

The kind of tie-up that John feels is usually found in most members of a marginal community that set their life apart from the mainstream ;

Minority status has been found to intensify already existing group identity or to actually create it, as when individuals rally as a result of discrimination. Because they've been forced to live in a particular locations and associate with one another, members of a subculture have become a community, feeling an allegiance and a sense of responsibility to one another. (Lewin, 1941 ; Kothman, 1962)

Furthermore, John has the responsibility to keep the honour of his family's name. He is totally aware that he's the only hope since his brother, Roy , turns up to be a nasty child.

At the tarry service at the night of his fourteenth birthday, then, it is hard for John to sing and rejoice along with Elisha, sister Price and sister Mc Candles. He has to, however, since they would wonder his unwillingness. John wishes he could say to them that he does not wish to follow the holly life of the cross, that he would like to have another life. But no words has ever been uttered. John feels like a hypocrite who does not have any right to sing or rejoice ;

He watched them, singing with them - because otherwise they would force him to sing - and trying not to hear the words that he forced outward from his throat. And he thought to clap his hands, but he could not ; they remained thihgtly folded in his lap. If he did not sing they would be upon him, but his heart told him that he had no right to sing or to rejoice. (Page 66; The Seventh Day)

As the society that John firstly recognized and got involve with, family, both its mentally and physical condition, also gives contribution to the appearance of John's doubt and uncertainty about his future when to be fourteenth-year-old, John is able to make his own judgement. John comes from a family that is dominated by the father, Gabriel Grimes, who uses religion as an instrument of oppression. He is a sternly authoritarian religious fanatic who strives to inculcate his fuith in all the members of his family and does not allow anyone in the house to have opinion against his belief. He would rather solve problems that arise in the family by using his authority as the head of the family that forces the others to obey his rules and affirm whatever he says beyond all questions. There is no

discussion allowed for he is sure that everything he does is for the sake of the family's welfare and goodness. He asks for total obedience from each member of the family. It is his privilege for working all day outside the house to support his family. Gabriel, thus, is not too scruple to wound them which according to him to be the way to put his family in order. He dares to slap his faithful wife before their children while she is trying to deliver her opinion that he considers to offend him, or beat both John or Roy whenever he considers them to have unbecoming manners. Gabriel demands to be respected by all the members of his family but he refuses to respect any of them. He reminds John repeatedly of his unattractive face and never given any encouraging comment on whatever John thinks or does. Unlike Roy who dares to protest against the domination of the father by getting into mischief, John prefers to be a good boy before his father for he does not wish to hurt his mother's heart whose burden has already been enough although deep inside he is very devastated to find a way to break through and can only curse his father in his heart. John, thus, finds no paternal figure in his father to whom he can ask for advice or support and appoint for a role model. John cannot accept how his father, to be a God's minister, the ambassador of the King of Heaven, could be so heartless to wound his own wife and also his own flesh and blood, and, furthermore, to run his family with hands of steel. It is hard for John then to kneel down before the altar and receive God's power upon him for he has to kneel down before his father first as his senior. His conversion is partly an act of aggression against his father. His wish to be a rich prominent man is not

only meant to have a better life in the future but also to be a way that will give him a chance to take a revenge against all his father's unpleasant treatments ;

.... ; yet his father could never be entirely the victor for John cherished something that his father couldn't reach. It was his hatred and his intelligence that he cherished, the one feeding the other. He lived for the day when his father would be dying and he, John, would curse him on his deathbed. (Page 20 ; The Seventh Day)

Nevertheless, John is thrilled to imagine how his father's reaction would be ... to consider how hard he has been teaching John to learn about their religion custom and to live with it in their everyday life ... if he chooses to have a future life that may not follow the way of the cross and their belief that they have been holding so far. Furthermore, despite his fear toward his father John has a kind of complicated feeling in conjunction with his father. Deep in his heart he longs for his father's love and would do anything to win his love. Although it is hard to endure, to be a good boy before his father is John's effort to gain his father's love. And if his father's first wife whom his father had known in a life where John was not, and in a country John had never seen, was still alive, he would ask her how to make his father love him. He would even follow his father's path if it could make his father respect and love him ;

Then he would no longer be the son of his father's, but the son of his Heavenly Father, the King. Then he need no longer fear his father, for he could take, as it were, their quarrel over his father's

head to Heaven - to the Father who loved him, who had come down in the flesh to die for him. Then he and his father would be equals, in the sight, and the sound, and the love of God. Then his father could not beat him anymore, or mock him anymore - he, John, the Lord's anointed. He could speak to his father then as men spoke to one another - as sons spoke to their fathers, not in trembling but in sweet confidence, not in hatred but in love. (Page 165 ; The Prayers of the Saints)

However, John's love and hatred toward his father seem to be in balance. They occupy the same portion in John's heart. When John thinks of his father's awful wrath and face, he suddenly feels no love for his father and no need to do anything to have his love either. It is another conflicting situation for John to overcome before he makes any decision about his future ;

Yet, trembling, he knew that this was not what he wanted. He didn't want to love his father ; he wanted to hate him to cherish that hatred, and give his hatred words one day. He didn't want his father's kiss - not anymore, he who had received so many blows. (Page 165 ; The Prayers of The Saints)

From such nightmarish reality at home church is John's sanctuary which offers him spiritual and physical safety and emotional release. He can always tell of his dejected heart to Elisha and get a cheerful respond, - John then seems to lose a role model when one day approaching his fourteenth birthday Elisha's

caught to walk 'disorderly' with Ella Mae which influence his reluctance to be a preacher - listen to people's preamble that's meant for him being such a good boy who never get into mischief while at home his father never does such a thing, and the most important thing is while at church his father won't dare to show his force toward his son before the congregations, and John can be saved from both his awful wrath and humiliation. The incessantly giving oof doctrine about God, holy life, wages of sin, etc., that is taken by John at the church, whether being realized or not, has left a quite deep trace in John's heart despite the feeling of duty and obedience. It disturbs him whenever he thinks of his conversion. While John is taking a walk along the park at fifty avenue in the morning of his fourteenth birthday and sees the old fashioned carriage were lined along the curb, John fancies himself of having a wonderful house with a ranch full of horses. He was a wealthy man, a landowner, who has a beautiful wife and children and who was capable of making their ends meet and giving his family a fancy life that his father lack. However, there is a question in John's heart whether they still remember to praise the Lord or not, or whether he is capable of providing his family's spiritual need. And when he sees the fancy looks of Whites along the avenue, John recalls of how they're sinned for being so wordly ;

... , and his thought of what it would be like to have one day a horse of his own. He would call it Rider, and mount it at every morning in the open field of his own. Beside him stood his house, great and rambling, and very new, and in the kitchen, his wife, a beautiful woman, made breakfast, They had children, who

called him papa and for whom at Christmast he bought electric trains - but what church did they go and what would he teach his children when they gathered around him in the evening. (Page 37-38, The Seventh Day)

He looked straight ahead, down Fifth Avenue, where graceful women in fur coats walked, looking into the windows that held silk dresses, and watches and rings. What church did they go to ? And what were the houses like when in the evening they took off these coats, etc. and leaned back in soft beds to think for a moment before they slept of the day gone by ? Did they read a verse from the bible every night and fall on their knees to pray ? They were in the world, and of the world, and their feet laid hold on hell. (Page 38, The Seventh Day)

Even John does not dare to watch any movie since, according to their belief, it's such a good place to enter. He goes there, however, on the morning of his fourteenth birthday both to lighten his troubled heart and to satisfy his curiosity of a young blood. John is so careful since he knows that he'll be dragged back if one of the saints of the church run up against him . And when John actually sits on his designated seat in the movie, he assures himself repeatedly that the day of judgement is not yet to come. He sinks far down in his seat, as though his crouching makes him invisible and deny his presence there.

Family's physical condition, as has been mentioned previously, is also take into consideration when John begins to think of a conversion. Conditions of Blacks' life in the contemporary urban ghetto in northern cities in the beginning of 20th century were prevailed to be slum housing, drastic limitation of employment opportunity, large numbers of working mothers, inferior education, lack of police protection and sanitation services, high incidencies of crime and delinquency, and prostitution. And the Grimes' itself lives in a cramped flat in one of slum districts in Harlem, New York. It is not such a good neighborhood to raise a child but it is the place that John's father could afford and it is also the only place that is particularly made for them. There are bars, schoolboy gang fights, and casual sex on the street. The hospital nearby is always busy every nihgt for there are so many evils on the street. The flat room which was occupied by the Grimes' is located above a prostitution house where John can hear the music and cursing from every night. The room has only two bedrooms, one for the parents and the baby, and one for the other childrens. There is a n unpleasant-look kitchen where John's mother has to wash their clothes also beside dishes in its only washtub - that's why John dreams of having a great house with a chimney in its kitchen so that it will not be as dirty as his mother's and his wife could still be beautiful while she is doing her cook - , and a front room that can be considered as a living room where the Grimes used to gather. Their condition is far from luxury ;

The room was narrow and dirty; nothing could alter its dimension, no labor could ever make it clean. Dirt was in the walls and the

floorboards, and triumphed beneath the sinks where roaches spawned; was in the fine ridges of the pots and pans, scoured daily, burnt black on the bottom, ... ; was in the wall against which they hung, and revealed itself where the paint had cracked and leaned outward in stiff squares and fragments, the paper-thin underside webbed with black. (Page 21, The Seventh Day)

There is not enough space in their room, then, that John can hear his parents 'activity' at night. Roy and he, had once seen such an 'activity' on the street between a man and a woman in the basement of a prostitution house while they walked home from the church. As smart but innocent child, John had never watched again since he had been afraid and embarrassed and he wonders that his father and mother, who goes to church on Sundays, does it also. He does not yet understand the difference between them. However, he does understand one thing that he would like to get rid of the squalor and vice of the neighborhood of his in which the most that could be expected is physical survival. It left an indelible impression on John's mind that he dreams of having a better life and living in a better neighborhood ;

.... The darkness of his sin was in the hardheartedness with which he resisted God's power ; in the scorn that's often his while he listened to the crying, breaking voices, and watched the black skin glisten while they lifted their arms and fell on their faces before the Lord. For he had made his decision. He wouldn't be like his

father, or his father's father. He would have another life. (Page 18, The Seventh Day)

Their neighborhood is separated from the whites' by a high wall of crossed wire where John often sees ladies in fur coats walking with their great dog or old white gentlemen with canes. John passes the wall whenever he goes to his favourite hill in central park as he does on his fourteenth birthday to give rein of all his hidden feeling that he does not dare to speak up. And when John reaches the clearing spot that led to the hill where he can see before him the skyline of New York beyond the brilliant sky far away, an exultation and a sense of power is arisen him. And as John stands on the crest of the hill, John imagines himself as if he was a giant who might crumble the city with his anger, a tyrant who might crush the city beneath his heel or else was a long awaited conqueror at whose feet flowers would be strewn. He would be, of all, the mightiest, the most beloved, the Lord's annointed ; and he would live in the shining city which his anchestors had seen with longing from far away (Page 35), since as his teacher has said to him that he had in himself a power that other people lack. John does not wish to live in the cramped flat of his father that might be his, too, if he should follow his father's path.

Nevertheless, there is another barrier that seems to hamper John's dream to get rid of the neighborhood and the people within, that is, the discriminating climate of largely white society which confine his movement as the member of minorities. It does not mean that John never learnt about the fact to built such a

dream of his. The memory of his elementary school when his teacher seemed to promise him to have a power to elevate himself raises a hope in John's heart that someday he might have the chance to realize his dream. However, along with the development of his age John also aware that it will not be as easy as he has ever presumed. The whites, as his father has always said, will never accept niggers to be one of their own. It will need more than just a bright brain. After all, white Americans give out most of the rewards and prizes associated with success. The decisions about their identity, then, are rendered all the more painful by the hypocrisy of it all, since even if they make every effort to conform, whites will still consider them as a nigger ;

... and he heard his father laugh : "No, nor tomorrow neither !" For him there's a backdoor, and the dark stairs, and the kitchen, or the basement. This world wasn't for him. If he refused to believe, and wanted to break his neck trying, then he could try until the sun refused to shine ; they would never let him enter. In John's mind, the people and the avenue underwent a change and he feared them and knew that one day he could hate them if God didn't change his heart. (Page 39, The Seventh Day)

John is very upset to learn about the unprofitable fact of his 'ascribed status'. He feels, as he reaches the age of fourteenth, that he could not live in such a gloomy neighborhood for the rest of his life. He dreams of a change to a better life and a better dignity. But the question is, could he ? Does he have any guts ?

He might has a power to have a better job than his father - he still, however, has to live in the old neighborhood - , but does he have a power to break the domineering of white open and reaches his dream ? John doubts that he, whom his father has always said to be little, weak, and ugly and who does not even dare to break the domineering of his father in the house, could make such a major breakthrough.

Despite his father's saying John might dares to run off his neighborhood as soon as he could stand on his own feet. But he does not have any useful experience and could not imagine what it would be like for him to live in the city of whites

3.6 How John solve His Dilemma

At the tarry service at the night of his fourteenth birthday, John tries to find the answer of his dilemma through a kind of religious experience. No matter how hard John wants to deny the church and its dogma, but he cannot deny that the church has a quite role in the years of his growth that influences his action. Thus, there is a natural tendency for John to use the most common reference point he knows when he tries to solve his problem, that is, to which he is socialized. Since he used to see people around him surrender all their problem before the altar and wait for the Lord to help them, John does not know any other way to solve his problem but to bring it back to church and ask for the help of God whose existence he has ever and still doubts. By this, John seems to betray his own judgement about the Lord and the church, but he

has no other choices. John cannot turn to his father for he learns that his father would do nothing to help him but making his own judgement that will ridicule John's pride as usual. John's behaviour, then, reflects how his family and the community has taught him ;

Adolescent behaviour is dependent both on the particular society and, more specifically, on the position the individual holds within the social environment. The adolescent's behaviour is mediated by home and neighborhood influences :
“ the effects of differential learning in the home and the neighborhood during the childhood years are the basic conditioning factors which give rise to the highly significant differences in social behaviours among the adolescents in the different (social) classes “ (Hollingshead, 1949, P. 441).

In solving his problem John cannot turn to Elisha, his substitute paternal figure, either, as he has always done. John seems to lose his adorable role model in Elisha. Furthermore, both his father and Elisha would acknowledge the 'evil' of John's deepest heart that he intends to deviate from their hereditary religious believe and custom. Nevertheless, Elisha gives a quite valuable help to ensure John that he can try to ask for God's help whenever he should need it. Unlike Gabriel, who covers his shameful sin in the past by acting as if he was the most holliest man on earth , Elisha is brave enough to admit his oversight before John or anybody. He, when is alone with

John a couple hour before the service in the night of John's fourteenth birthday begins, encourages John to keep trying to 'talk' with the Lord. He reminds John that Lord's way is not such an easy path to take, especially when they are young and there is so much temptation out there. He convinces John that he, too, can be saved if he should try. At first John wonders how could Elisha gives him such an advice after he was revealed to almost stray from the truth so that it is hard for John to believe in him anymore. He has destroyed John's image of a 'perfect ' figure and open John's eye all at once. But, finally, when John is able to see with an open mind, he learns that Elisha is honest and it is his personal experience that enables him to give the kind of remark, and he is only a human despite his outstanding holiness. And the beginning of John's belief of Elisha's words is strengthened by the coming of his aunt, Florence Grimes. She, as far as John could possibly recall, had never come to the church until the tarry service in the night of his fourteenth birthday ; the time when John feels to make an important decision of his future life. Her first and sudden coming arise a little faith in John about God. As John sees his aunt kneels down before the altar to pray, John suddenly feels as if the Lord himself is going to come and guide them ;

"I know it looks hard," said Elisha, from the outside, especially when you young. But you believe me, boy, you can't find no greater joy than you find in the service of the Lord."

...

He stared in dull paralysis of terror at the body of Elisha. He saw him standing - had Elisha forgotten ? - beside Ella Mae before the altar while Father James rebuked him for the evil that lived in the flesh.

“You see how the Devil tricks people into losing their souls ?”

“Yes,” said John at last, sounding almost angry, unable to bear his thoughts, unable to bear the silence in which Elisha looked at him.

“That Sunday, you remember ? - I been on my knees many a time, weeping and wrestling before the Lord - crying, Johnny, and calling on Jesus’ name. That’s the only name that’s got power over satan.

...

And he watched Elisha, who was a youn man in the Lord ; The Lord had lifted him up, and turned him around, and set his feet on the shining way. John wonders were Elisha’s thoughts, body and bed foul, and what his dreams are when he was alone at night.

It was only the presence of his aunt that shocked him, for she had never entered this church before;

The lord was riding on the wind tonight (Page 59-67, The Seventh Day).

To learn John's inconstancy belief of God's existence, however, it must be a hard and difficult effort for John, then, to pray and ask for God's help to find something that is missing in his heart while he seems to have to chose the unpleasant choice of becoming a preacher. Now as he is able to see the problem of his race and his family and how long they have been moaning and crying without having no major significant progress in their life, John has to pray in both weariness and confusion. He finds himself in the darkness of his troubled heart during his consolation. But it is not only his uncertainty of God's existence that harden his effort to pray but also John's left desire to exile from the church in order to avoid the same tiresome life of his people. Only his reluctance toward other congregations and his fear toward his father that keep his staying in church. It is John's experience that encourages John to feel that way. He has learned what kind of behaviours will bring them approval from others ;

There're two criteria by which all experiences are evaluated : one which leads to self -actualization and one which leads to social approval. Often the two conflict, as when children wish to play with the household pots and pans. From a self -actualization perspective this would be good for children, enabling them to experience and grow. From a social -approval perspective, parents may object because such paly make noise and annoys others. Their disapproval may then cause the children not to paly with pots, thus limiting their

growth toward self-actualization (Henry L. Roediger III, J
philipe Rushlton, Elizabeth D. Capaldi, Psychology, Page 490
: Carl Rogers and Self-Theory)

The conflict make John to scream so that he could give rein of all the burden that covers his heart. John hopes to pray for his heart confirmness but the image of the gloomy side of his religious community and its neighborhood seem to haunt him ;

He wanted to rise - a malicious, ironic voice insisted that he rise - and at once, to leave this temple and go out into the world (Page 20, The Seventh Day).

During his effort to pray then John tries to remember the cross and his admiration toward Elisha that he has ever had a dream to be as holy as him so that it may help him to be more reasonable to take the possible choice of being a preacher and does not fight anymore. If he should pursue his dream he might be alone and none will reach him when he should fall, and he has to face the world all by himself. John imagines himself to fall into a very deep pit while people that he cares and others are far above and are watching and weeping for they cannot help him anymore. He assumes that they do not love him anymore. Either his family or his people does not give John unconditional acceptance and love so that John becomes ashamed of his experiences and thoughts about conversion. John then feels like being beaten down since his

father's and his community will seem to be stronger than his since they belong to God. John is afraid of being left alone. In his unbelieving despair John starts to think that all prophecies were true, salvation was finished, damnation was real ;

"Set thine house in order," said his father , for thou shalt die and not live." (Page : 222)

However, John's hiding desire to leave the community and has another life seems to be not easy to be given up for John is aware of having a competence that should gives him the right to reach a better life. It still forbids him to accept his father's and the community triumph over him with fully surrender yet. Only when he realizes that there is things that will not seem to change in short time, that is, his father's opinion about whites and the fact about this country of whites that is implied from, John begins to think of releasing. His father will not let John easily reaches his dream for he considers the world of whites would deviate John's heart from God. Furthermore, John will never reach such a 'sily' dream since, as has always been said by his father, all whites hate niggers and they will never give any opportunity for niggers to be equal. And John cannot being unbelieve in his father's world for being unexperienced yet and he knows by inspection that for some aspects his father is telling the truth. Besides, he feels unprepared also to break down the wall of his father if he should take the risk for the sake of his dream; John is not quite sure yet that he does have the heart. He feels that there will not be any mountain top for him, a nigger boy from a slum

neighborhood, the chance seems to be given only to the whites and John has to live with this alarming fact :

He thought of the mountaintop, where he longed to be, where the sun would cover him like a cloth of gold, would cover his heart like a crown of fire, and in his hands he would hold a living rod. But this was no mountain where John lay, here, no robe, no crown. And the living rod was uplifted in other hands (Page 223, The Threshing Floor).

Suddenly John feels nothing, no lust, no fear, no shame, no hope anymore. His 'ego' orders him to deal with the objective reality that he should take. On the threshing floor of the Temple of the Fire Baptized John does come to a tentative racial acceptance when he feels to hear a "sound that come from darkness" - the sound of the black past of suffering and victimization - " that yet bore such sure witness to the glory of the light." By the help of God finally his people find their freedom as a descent human being although they find no equal opportunities yet. John hears this sound in the mood of religious transport. For the first time he admits God's help toward his people that he often learns but refuse to believe because of his wish to deny his being as a nigger and his dream of having a better life. The sound also reminds John that he belongs to the blacks despite his majority of brain, and it is not such a noble effort to deny his own origin. John thus decides to stop fighting against his fate and to accept anything that has been given to him. He tries, no matter how hard it is, to lighten his heart and allow himself to be saved if he wishes to ease the

terrible rage inside him. It brings John down from mountain top to the world, from his dreams to reality that cannot either be avoided or prevented yet. Moreover, the conversion surely reconcile his hidden fight againts his father.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION