Chapter II

The North Space: The Landlocked Space and the Incomplete Freeman

In this chapter, I will explore how the north space contributes to the definitions of identity with a special focus on Milkman's male ancestors. These ancestors have strong determination to move up to the north space, since they define it as the promised land or "utopia", the land of freedom and prosperity. Yet, the promised land is merely an illusion because there these characters experience new forms of slavery and racial discrimination. The north space proves itself not as the promised land, but the landlocked space, impeding the Blacks' pursuit of freedom and prosperity. Blinded from a new form of imprisonment, these male ancestors fail to create complete selves as freemen.

The north space as a promised land

The north space can be defined as the "promised land" in the African-American context in the post-slavery time. Freed slaves went up North to pursue not only their freedom and equality, but also better financial opportunities, which were impossible for them while living in the southern atmosphere of intense racial discrimination. After American Civil War, the North of America had been perceived as the land of freedom and opportunities because of its anti-slavery policy and its drive towards modernization. In contrast, for the South, despite the abolition of slavery, racism still prevailed. Many racists formed groups in order to declare their violent stand against Black ex-slaves. The most prominent one was The Klan or Ku Klux Klan (KKK), the White racists in the iconic white costumes who threatened to lynch and harass the Blacks. With the oppressive situation of the South, the North was the exit for the Blacks. It seemed to be an open space where there would be limitless change, progress, and opportunities as the consequences of modernization and urbanization. This can be seen through the Black immigrants' lives on "Not Doctor Street", the fictional community based on the real site of a coastal city along the Lake Superior in Michigan.

Urbanization and modernization had a tremendous impact on African-American lives on "Not Doctor Street" in opening up social and individual opportunities. Geographically speaking, we can see the expansion of the urbanized Black community. Doctor Street started on 1896 where there were no Black residents, apart from "the only colored doctor" (p. 4). He opened his clinic and lived on that street "which none of them[his patients] lived in or near" (p. 4). His presence on the street is the origin of the name "Doctor Street" that his patients used to locate his place. Later, the street had rapidly expanded to the larger community of a Black ghetto around 1931. With this image, we can see the transformation of a single isolated street to the urban community of Black residents. More importantly, the community had been further expanded and urbanized when it was incorporated into a part of city. The incorporation can be seen through the process of city planning, which in this case is the change of the street's name. We are told that the name "Doctor Street" was locally used by Black people. Yet, when the central authority starts its city planning, it modernizes and standardizes the name of the street to "Mains Avenue" (p. 4) and denies the local one. With this new name, the central authority seems to officially declare that the community is no longer isolated, but included as a part of it.

> Some of the city legislators, whose concerns for appropriate names and the maintenance of the city's landmarks was the principal part of their political life, saw to it that "Doctor Street" was never used in any official capacity. […] they had notices posted in the stores, barbershops, and restaurants in that part of the city saying that the avenue running northerly and southerly from Shore Road fronting the lake to the junction of routes 6 and 2 leading to Pennsylvania, and also running parallel to and between Rutherford Avenue and Broadway, had always been and would always be known as Mains Avenue and not Doctor Street. (p. 4)

The passage shows the process of inclusion through the standardization of the community. We can see the central authority's attempts to "organize" the community with its standard methods such as the written documents ("notices posted in the stores, barbershops, and restaurants") to declare the new name. Furthermore, the universal measurement of numbers and principal/minor space such as "routes 6 and 2",

"landmarks", and "Mains Avenue" crystallizes the image of the included community. Clearly, the authority's inclusion and standardization of the Black community can be seen as an attempt to bridge the racial gap. The inclusion of the local Black community seems to suggest the central authority's rejection of discrimination, its willingness to recognize the minority community as part of the city. The imposed standard usage can be seen as the way to destroy the barrier between Whites and Blacks for it makes the community easily accessible, as opposed to "Doctor Street" that is recognizable only among the local Blacks. The delocalization and the integration of the Black community seem to suggest that the north space is open and includes everyone. From this argument, it follows that the Blacks' "African-American Dreams", the pursuit of freedom and opportunities are partly fulfilled, since they can finally pursue their freedom and equality in the North.

In addition, modernization and urbanization enable the north space as the land of limitless opportunities where Black individuals are able to improve their financial and social status. Industrial modes of production and the modern commercial system provide wider opportunities for non-White and lower class people in America to move upward. In the novel, we can see the emergences of Black bourgeoisie and Black capitalists. The most obvious example is the Dead family's conspicuous consumption. For example, in the opening scene, Ruth's luxurious dress is the representation of urban middle class. She is described in "a neat gray coat with the traditional pregnant-woman bow at her navel, a black cloche, and a pair of four-button ladies' galoshes" (p. 5). The author emphasizes her bourgeois characteristics by comparing to Pilate's African traditional "old quilt" (p. 6). Hagar Dead is depicted as a materialistic woman. She tries to beautify herself with a lot of brand name clothes and cosmetics in order to satisfy Milkman, despite the fact that he has already abandoned her. Moreover, this middle class Black family embodies the modern lifestyle with up-to-date accessories such as "the big Packard" (p. 31) and the latest Buick (p. 236) and the sense of vacation such as owning a summer beach house (p. 33) or riding in Sunday afternoon as the family's leisure and "rituals" (p. 31). Furthermore, Macon attempts to make his superior status distinct by detaching his family from the Black underclass, for example by separating his daughters from the lower class community and hiring Freddie as the janitor to do manual or dirty work.

In addition to his bourgeois conduct, Macon Dead is also the distinguished representative of the Black capitalist. He proves that the north space is the real land for opportunities as "at twenty-five, he was a colored man of property" (p. 23). He devotes his entire life to obtaining more and more property. As Milkman describes his father's life, he "found himself rattling off assets like an accountant, describing deals, total rents income, bank loans, and […] stock market" (p. 236). It is interesting that Macon Dead's accumulation of property can be seen as the complete fulfillment of his "African-American Dreams", pursuing both prosperity and freedom. Wealth (property and money), according to Macon Dead, is "[t]he only real freedom there is" (p. 163). Hence, it is apparent that Macon's definition of freedom is financial freedom that comes from the accumulation of property and money.

With the geographical expansion of the Black community and financial improvement of Black individuals, the north space seems to "keep its promise" as the promised land. It is seen as utopia for African-Americans in pursuing freedom and prosperity. However, it is later shown that the north space can be seen as a dystopia for Black Americans because all the freedom and prosperities are merely illusions. They are not completely free but "locked" in/out of the space.

The north space as the "landlocked" space

Physically, the north space seems to fulfill "African-American Dreams" for the migrant Blacks in pursuing prosperity and freedom; the author clearly suggests, however, that it is merely an illusion. Spiritually, African-American cultural identities have been "uprooted" by the invasion of mainstream culture (modernization and urbanization) and Whites' racial discrimination in "racializing" space. Modernization and urbanization are, actually, not universal, but profitable especially for White Americans. This becomes the new form of discrimination against the Blacks. If physical violence and segregation policy were the traditional forms of racial discrimination, the exclusive system disguised in the form of rules and laws of the authority can be called the new form of racial discrimination. Moreover, the obsessive accumulation of property and money separates Black Americans from the mutual relationship with their community. These spatial characteristics seem

absolutely opposite to the one of African-American culture in the South, in which family/community plays a major role. Therefore, for the migrant Blacks, the new form of discrimination and the individualism of urban life consequently cause the sense of isolation and alienation. It implies that the north space, in the Black American context is, in fact, made a private, close or "landlocked" space that entraps and prevents them from freedom. To clearly illustrate the limitation of the North and the people's illusion, Morrison employs the landlocked metaphor. She points out that this coastal city, in which the Black community resides, situated on the shore of Lake Superior (p. 3), one of the five Great Lakes[1] is trapped by its own geographical form.

> Truly landlocked people know they are. Know the occasional Bitter Creek or Powder River that runs through Wyoming; that the large tidy Salt Lake of Utah is all they have of the sea and that they must content themselves with *bank, shore,* and *beach* because they cannot claim a coast. And having none, seldom dream of flight. **But the people living in the Great Lakes region are confused by their place on the country's edge – an edge that is border but not coast. They seem to be able to live a long time believing, as coastal people do, that they are at the frontier where final exit and total escape are the only journeys left. But those five Great Lakes which the St. Lawrence feeds with memories of the sea are themselves landlocked, in spite of the wandering river that connects them to the Atlantic.** Once the people of the lake region discover this, the longing to leave became acute, and a break from the area, therefore, is necessarily dream-bitten, but necessary nonetheless. It might be an appetite for other streets, other slant of light. Or a yearning to be surrounded by strangers. It may even be a wish to hear

[1] The Great Lakes are a chain of freshwater lakes located in eastern North America, on the Canada – United States border. Consisting of Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, they form the largest group of freshwater lakes on Earth. They are sometimes referred to as the "Third Coast" by some citizens of the United States. Because of their size, some regard them as inland seas. In addition, the Great Lakes is also associated to the African-American in the context of their original home, Africa, since African continent also has African Great Lakes, expanding to Burundi, Rwanda, north-eastern DR Congo, Uganda and north-western Kenya and Tanzania. **(**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Lakes)

> the solid click of a door closing behind their backs. (p. 162, bold emphasis added)

The depiction of the "landlocked" space is the imagery that helps reflect the illusion of the Black people who live in it but rarely recognize its limitation and think that they are unbound living at the "final exit and total escape", or an open space. In other words, Black Americans have been lured into believing that prosperity and the modern/urban ways of life is the real freedom.

Despite being the promised land of prosperity and freedom, the north space proves itself "racialized" by the mainstream culture and Whites' racial discrimination. However, this discrimination is neither manifest in the form of physical violence or segregation policy. It is in disguise with the discourses of modernization and urbanization which "lock" Black Americans in/out of the space and cause them the senses of isolation and alienation both on the community and individual levels. For the urbanized African-American community, expansiveness and openness neither promote space as open place nor encourage mutual communication among people. On the contrary, it causes the sense of isolation and alienation. The most intriguing example is the enforcement of the official name of Doctor Street by the official authority. There is a tension in terms of the clash of cultures, which in this case is the concept of space, between the central authority and the local community. The central authority perceives the space as one continuum unit designated by the center. Meanwhile, the local community recognizes the space as part of local/collective memory ("took to calling the street", p. 4). Thus, the authority denies "Doctor Street" and insists on using "Mains Avenue" because the new name fits in its modern system. The local Blacks show the aggressive submission to the authority by cunningly accepting the central rules while retaining their collective memory. They finally call the street "Not Doctor Street". In this way, they can still refer to the first Black doctor and "submit" to the authority's notices that the street "would always be known as Mains Avenue and not Doctor Street." (p. 4) However, the standardization based on the Eurocentric concept of space represented by the new street name "locks" in/out the migrant Black community. The following passage will show that the incorporation to the larger system does not provide more freedom but more limitation to the Doctor Street community.

> when the postal service became a popular means of transferring messages among them, envelops from Louisiana, Virginia, Alabama, and Georgia began to arrive addressed to people at house numbers on Doctor Street. The post office workers returned these envelopes or passed them on the Dead Letter Office. (p. 4)

The quotation displays the Blacks' incomprehension of the system of the central authority. They do not understand that letters are the work of the post office, which requires the official address, not the local one. The passage shows that the postal service is new to them, since they do not take it as an official work, but just "a popular means of transferring messages among them". Therefore, they apply the traditional address ("Doctor Street") to the official operation, like they do to their oral culture. When southern Blacks apply the oral culture (collective usage of the street's name) to the written culture (writing letters), they fail to contact the northern Blacks. They have to adhere only to written culture (addressing "Mains Avenue" as declared in the notices) to successfully connect to their people via letters. Here, the postal system emphasizes the irony of written culture that it is as limited as the oral one. It does not promote more universal usage. In this case, it fails not only to connect with the Blacks, but also to connect the Blacks to one another. Therefore, "the Dead Letter Office" signifies the disconnection of the northern and southern Blacks as the consequence of the authority's imposition of spatial concept. The official name double "closes/locks out" the Black people, first, from their original home, since the dead letter signifies the migrant Black community isolated from their original southern family as a result of the change in the recorded street name. The standardized name, although it publicly opens the local Black community to the outside world, actually blocks the community from its roots, the southern family. Second, the new name "locks out" the Black community from its present home in the North, despite the fact that it is supposed to indicate the integration of the local Black community with the outside world. It shows that it is only geographically integrated, but not culturally, since the collective history of the first colored doctor is officially rejected. Without collective history, the senses of community and belonging are lost and the sense of alienation of the Black community towards the northern "home" is intensified. The modern and urban discourses of the north space, in this sense, uproot

and transform the migrant Blacks into a diaspora, allowing them to live in their houses while erasing the sense of home/belonging. Without the sense of belonging to their own "house", it conveys that their position in this "northern house" is the "guest", not the "host". This shows that the local community has no autonomy to determine the status of its space. It has to conform to the rules and laws of the central authority. Thus, the incident can be seen as showing that the Blacks' lives are still controlled by "the White master," represented through the absolute power of central authority. Moreover, the north space is racialized by White official authority for its own interest. It is narrated "in 1918, when colored men were being drafted, a few gave their address at the recruitment office as Doctor Street. In that way, the name acquired a quasi-official status. But not for long." (p. 4) The "quasi-official status" of Doctor Street presents its racialized space that the White authority temporarily allows the Blacks to claim their homes (using the original street's name) for the sake of its own profit ("recruitment"). The incident emphasizes the Blacks' status as the "guest" in the North for the Black community is gradually losing its autonomous ability to manage and protect their collective cultural legacy. The local name here is not used for the profit of local residents, but employed by the authority to exercise its power and gain its own interests. The two incidents clearly depict the White authority's manipulations of space resulting in the Black community's isolation and alienation due to "rootlessness" and "homelessness". In this case, it signifies their loss of home both in the south and the north space. It symbolically illustrates the Black community that retains only its body, while its spirit is already dispersed.

On an individual level, the racialized north space creates the fragmented self to Black individuals with the sense of isolation and alienation as well. Black individuals who assimilate to the north space find themselves isolated and alienated from their traditional community. The emergence of a Black middle class as the consequence of the modern economic system can lead to class, "racial", and "gender" discrimination among Black individuals. This is clearly depicted in the scene when Milkman visits the Deep South. Milkman is unable to assimilate to the southern Black folks because of the way he unintentionally displays his wealth. He tells them that he wants to buy a new car, instead of fixing the broken one. Unfortunately, the local Black men interpret his action as an insult towards them.

> They looked with hatred at the city Negro who could buy a car as if it were a bottle of whiskey […] His manner, his clothes, were reminders that they had no crops of their own and no land to speak of either. Just vegetable gardens, which the women took care of, and chickens and pigs that the children took care of. **He was telling them that they weren't men**, that they relied on women and children for their food. […] They looked at his skin and saw it was as black as theirs, but they knew **he had the heart of the white men** who came to pick them up in the trucks when they needed anonymous faceless laborers. (p. 266, bold emphases added)

Although the scene seems to suggest Morrison's attempt to romanticize the South and to criticize the North with her portrayal of an "indifferent" northern Black looking down on the "inferior" southern folks, it clearly reveals the internal conflict in Black community. In " "Can't Nobody Fly with All That Shit" The Shame-Pride Axis and Black Masculinity in *Song of Solomon*", J. Brooks Bouson (2000, p. 76) claims that the novel dramatizes "the troubling issue of internalized racism as it crystallizes Black cultural anxiety about the class and color hierarchies within the African-American community." And this passage supports his argument. However, I perceive the scene in a different way. First, I think the scene does not only display racial and class discrimination, but also the dynamic articulation between race, class, and gender. Second, the conflict does not actually start with internalized racism. Conversely, it begins with class conflict and then leads to racial and gender discrimination. We can see that the southern Blacks use the hierarchy of class to designate race and gender. Middle class is white and men; underclass is black and not men. Milkman is seen as the northern "city Negro" who shows off his wealth ("could buy a car as if it were a bottle of whiskey"). His wealth defines his masculinity ("He was telling them that they weren't men") and his whiteness ("he had the heart of the white men"). Furthermore, Milkman as the representative of the northern urban Black is described with individuality, as opposed to the southern Blacks' communal characteristics. The author separates the two spaces by the subject indicators of "they" and "he". The plurality of "they" refers to the southern traditional space suggesting community, while the singularity of "he" suggests the individuality of the northern urban space

and the sense of masculinity. It indirectly connotes that the south space, including its inhabitants, are associated with femininity, blackness and the dependent underclass. In this context, the sense of alienation is so intensified that, among African-American whose skin is "as black as" each other, there is a set of hierarchies of class, race, and gender, which clearly explains the rural men's "look[ing] with hatred" towards the city man who is exhibiting his wealth, since they are humiliated (class), "discriminated" (race) and "emasculated" (gender) by him. Having no malignant intention, Milkman also senses, but does not understand, the unfriendliness and resistance of the local Black folks. Milkman's sense of isolation and alienation is described in Andrea O'Reilly's "Reconnections to the Motherline, Deliverance and Exile: *Song of Solomon* and *Tar Baby*" in which she explains her view towards northern African-Americans. O'Reilly states that African-Americans such as Milkman are made fragmented from their roots as a result of slavery, migration, and assimilation. While living in the North they are imposed upon by the masculine self from White western culture defined as "autonomous, separate, and individuated." (O'Reilly, 2004, p. 100) Therefore, being brought up in the opposite environments of communal consciousness and collective history, he is unable to share the feelings of the southern Blacks. Albeit sharing the same ancestors, Milkman cannot identify himself with the community because the modern and urban influence of the north space has alienated him from African collective history and community.

In addition to creating alienation among the Blacks, middle class status also lures Black individuals into believing that it helps them completely assimilate to White's society. According to their expectation towards the North, it is the land of freedom, equality, and opportunity, unlike the South. The capitalistic society seems to be the way out for non-Whites to improve their lives. However, it is merely an illusion. As Catherine Carr Lee observes, racism still prevails in the northern U.S. culture. Lee depicts it with the terms "competition, capitalism, and racism" (2003, p. 45). Due to Lee, we can see that capitalistic society is not free from racial discrimination. It shows that although the non-Whites can improve their financial status, they still face racial discrimination from Whites. For example, the life of First Corinthians Dead, Milkman's sister, is victimized by racialized spaces. Corinthians is brought up to believe that race is not a serious issue in assimilating to White society.

For her and her family, middle class ways of life such as upbringing and education are more significant to qualify them for assimilating in White society. Although her life is described as "overqualified", Corinthians cannot overcome racial discrimination in the north space. The following passage will show that her "distinction" makes her unfit for both the White society and the Black community.

> Unfit for any work other than the making of red velvet roses, she had a hard time finding employment befitting her degree. The three years she had spent in college, a junior year in France, and being the granddaughter of the eminent Dr. Foster should have culminated in something more elegant than the two uniforms that hung on Miss Graham's basement door. (pp. 187-8)

For the Black community, Corinthians is overqualified because of being brought up in the middle class family. She is the first daughter of Macon Dead, the rich landlord and "granddaughter of the eminent Dr. Foster". Moreover, she is so well-educated that "she had a hard time finding employment befitting her degree". These qualifications seem to suggest that she would never choose manual work, unlike other members of the Black underclass. However, in White society, she could never get academic professions because, in reality, most of them are reserved for White people. Corinthians has been blinded to the fact that the north space is racialized. She has waited for the suitable job that satisfies her and her family's expectation to come to her hand, but can find none. Apparently, Corinthians faces the dilemma of being unfit for both Black and White society. Without any better choices, at forty-two, she faces the reality that she is still just a Black woman in the White society, despite her middle class status. She ends up working as a maid of a White female writer, Miss Graham, and lies to her family and neighbors to save her face and her family's name that she is Miss Graham's "amanuensis" or a "secretary" (p. 187). However, Corinthians' well-educated and well-mannered characteristics do support her status as a maid because Miss Graham "was delighted with Corinthians' dress and slightly uppity manners. It gave her house the foreign air she liked to affect." (p. 190) Here, we can see the irony that her "overqualified characteristics" properly serve her underclass job. Corinthians' case shows that although Black individuals can improve their life and social status, they cannot avoid racial discrimination in terms of the unequal

opportunities in the White society. Unable to completely assimilate to White society, she is also "locked" out from the Black underclass community because of her superior status. Her middle class family and high education make her distinct and isolated from the lower class neighbors. It is apparent that Corinthians cannot completely fit in both societies. Her identity is fragmented, since she is isolated from other Blacks by her middle class family and education and discriminated against by the Whites because of her race. This female character is another life exploited by the intersection of race, class and gender in the north space.

Furthermore, the northern lives focusing on personal progress and prosperity traps them within their individuality or egocentrism and isolates them from community. For example, the portrayal of the Black neighbors' indifference towards Mr. Smith's flight in the opening scene displays the northern Blacks' emotional/moral paralysis and lack of conviction towards the African traditional myth of flight.

> […] not more than forty or fifty people showed up […] Children were in school; men were at work; and most of the women were fastening their corsets and getting ready to go see what tails or entrails the butcher might be giving away. (pp. 3-4)

Although the date of flight is declared, the town folks act indifferently towards the event. The quotation shows that neither do they express their compassion, nor their admiration towards the flying Mr. Smith; they just keep on their daily activities. Similarly, the people who come to witness his flight do not focus on it, since the onlookers pay more attention to the beauty of spilling red velvet rose petals on the snow than the man's leap from the hospital building (p. 5). Although their ignorance is distracted by Pilate's song about a flying African ancestor, the people do not know the meaning and the connection to Mr. Smith's flight. Or in Hagar Dead's case, Black folks in the community try to avoid her, when she has gradually gone out of her mind because of her tragic love life. For example, the hairdressers in "Lilly's Beauty Parlor" (p. 312) actually want to send her away but one of them finally yield to do her the service to ward off Hagar's harmful reaction. Hagar is left alone in melancholy and eventually dies.

Another example showing individualism and the indifference towards communal problems is Milkman's ignorance towards the death of Emmett Till[2]. Till's death was a historical event presenting the brutality of the White racist towards the Blacks. His story is added here to illustrate Milkman's indifference towards the pervasive issue of racial discrimination. While other Black folks feel tense and sad about the news, Milkman is preoccupied only with his problem, hitting his father because his father hits his mother. When Guitar tries to say that Milkman's problem is not as serious as Till's, Milkman replies "Yeah, well, fuck Till. I'm the one in trouble." (p. 88) This scene portrays how the new generation of northern Blacks are made distant from collective history and embrace egotistic characteristics. The Black individuals' indifference towards communal or mutual relationship reaffirms their isolation and alienation towards themselves and other Blacks.

In conclusion, the north space is neither a promised land nor utopia. It is not completely open for Black Americans to pursue freedom and prosperity defined by ownership and wealth. In fact, it is the "landlocked space" because of a new form of racial discrimination and people's self-centered characteristic. The new form of racial discrimination is represented through the racialized space as we can see through the unequal rules and laws of the central authority and through the limited opportunities provided for the Blacks by White people. Black Americans are still segregated and discriminated against by the Whites. Furthermore, the modern individualistic ways of life confine people within themselves and detach them from community. These create the sense of alienation and isolation among the Blacks. It can be said that the Blacks have not yet pursued complete freedom. The closeness of the north space has an influence on the Black individual's formation of identity. The senses of isolation and alienation reduce their selves into incomplete freemen. It is illustrated from the above examples that their identities are fragmented, since they cannot completely claim their identity with "North or South or "Black or White".

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[2] Emmett Till was a northern young Negro who visited the South, Sunflower County, Mississippi. He was murdered for whistling at a White woman and for declaring that he had slept with White women. Unaware of the intensive racial discrimination in the South, he was stomped to death by some White racists, who were proud of their murderous act.

Milkman's male ancestors: the incomplete freeman

To clearly illustrate the influence of space towards the formation of self, I will focus on Milkman's three-generation male ancestors: Milkman's grandfathers, Dr. Foster and Macon Dead (Jake), his father, Macon Dead, and his "brother", Guitar. These male characters similarly define the north space as utopia where they can successfully pursue freedom and prosperity. Yet, their north space or utopia does not embody a single meaning. It does not exclusively embody only White western or Black American cultures and values. We can see the encounter and negotiation between the two values in the space. For these male characters, the definitions of the north space can be crudely separated into two groups. First, it is seen as a utopia exclusively for Black people in the cases of Jake and Guitar. Second, it is perceived as a White utopia in which the Blacks should assimilate in the cases of Dr. Foster and Macon Dead.

By regarding the north space as Black "utopia", it explicitly declares that it is a private space of Blacks without the presence of Whites. For example in Jake's case, the north space is his farm called "Lincoln's Heaven", where he celebrates his freedom from slavery and multiplies his prosperity. It is situated in Danville, Pennsylvania, which is not really the northern part of America in the meaning of modern states. Yet, compared to his original home in the deeper South - Virginia, Danville can be regarded as the North. The name "Lincoln's Heaven" is historically related to Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of America who advocated the abolition of slavery. Therefore, the success of the farm fulfills President Lincoln's dream of emancipation as it presents not only the freedom of the Blacks, but also their prosperity. According to Macon Dead's telling, "Lincoln's Heaven" can be seen as a Black utopia as a gift for ex-slaves to compensate for the long suffering of slavery. The Eden-like depiction of the farm with "the oak and pine", "a pond", "a stream, full of fish" situated "[r]ight down in the heart of a valley" as the "[p]rettiest mountain you ever saw" (p. 51) seems to suggest that Jake has an ideal pastoral life in the north space. In addition to his pastoral and agrarian ways of life, we can see the modern spirit in Jake's creation of the farm. His ceaselessly expanding and taking full advantages of his farm prove his utilitarian mind. It is told that "in one year he'd

leased ten acres, the next ten more. Sixteen years later he had one of the best farms in Montour County." (p. 235) The rhythmic movement done to the land, "Grab it. Grab this land! Take it, hold it, my brothers, make it, my brothers, shake it, squeeze it, turn it, twist it, beat it, kick it, kiss it, whip it, stomp it, dig it, plow it, seed it, reap it, rent it, buy it, sell it, own it, build it, multiply it, and pass it on – can you hear me? Pass it on!" (p. 235), can clearly depict his utilitarian spirit in attempting to make the land as productive as he can. By creating the most productive land, he builds the utopia for his descendants to grow up with freedom and prosperity. Jake multiplies his farm and lives a pastoral life with his family without being aware of the malicious intention of his White racist neighbors who finally bring Jake and his "Lincoln's Heaven" to hellish reality.

Apparently, Jake's creation of Black utopia is to cultivate the space in the agricultural way, which represents the image of pastoral land. However, Guitar constructs his Black utopia in the different context. Living in the northern city, he does not concern the agricultural productivity of land, but freedom and security of northern Blacks in living their daily lives. With his secret Society called "Seven Days", they choose to act violently to create the land where Black "children can make other children" and "a world where one day White people think before they lynch" (p. 160). In "Civilizations Underneath: African Heritage as Cultural Discourse in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*", Gay Wilentz (2003, p. 144) notes the approaches to the search for identity often shown as mainstream assimilation/accommodation and radical separatism, which are characterized by Macon Dead and Guitar. For Wilentz, Guitar and Seven Days are seen as the separatists. They refuse to conform to the White authority and system and establish their own rules to violently subvert the Whites.

> "They call themselves the Seven Days. They are made up of seven men. Always seven and only seven. If one of them dies or leaves or is no longer effective, another is chosen. (…) Their secret is time. To take time, to last. Not to grow; that's dangerous because you might become known. They don't write their names in toilet stalls or brag to women. Time and silence. Those are their weapons, and they go on forever." (p. 155)

From the definition of the Society given by Guitar, we can see the attempt to create authority and uniqueness of the Seven Days, as opposed to the White Society such as Ku Klux Klan. As we commonly know that the White racists like the Klan try to publicly declare their violent stand against Blacks, yet, the Seven Days refuse to be known. The number "always seven and only seven" proves that they want their Society to be limited and private. While the publicity of the violence against Blacks is the Klan's weapon, "secret" and "silence" are the core "weapons" of their group. Guitar claims his action are based on a scientific stance that is "to keep the ratio [between Blacks and Whites] the same" (p. 155). Moreover, killing does not make his Society similar to the Klan because the Seven Days is not "one, having fun; two, trying to gain power or public attention or money or land; three, angry at anybody." (p. 157) Here, we can see their attempt to create difference and to separate in order to create their own identity and their own world detached from White people. It can be concluded that the Black utopia, for Guitar and the Seven Days, is the land of freedom and justice, achieved only through the radical and violent reaction against Whites.

Nevertheless, the north space that is racialized especially for Blacks does not provide the real freedom for these two characters. The segregated utopia cannot be possible in reality. Jake's blindness towards the White's racialized space and Guitar's attempt to create racialized utopia finally becomes a new form of confinement trapping them with the senses of isolation and alienation and even "death". Consequently, it leads to their construction of identity as incomplete freemen.

In Jake's case, the success of Lincoln's Heaven, at first, seems to represent Jake's freedom and prosperity. Nevertheless, the farm becomes the confinement of Jake and his family. Geographically, although Lincoln's Heaven is rapidly expanding, it is, in fact, a landlocked space. The author depicts that his land is distant from the Black community and surrounded by the land of the White folks called "the Butlers" who eventually murder him for his farm. It is stated "the people what did it owned half the county. Macon[Jake]'s land was in their way." (p. 232) The isolation of the farm and Jake's blindness to the White's racist neighbors lead to Jake's loss of his "Black Eden" easily. Jake's case is one of the most traumatic cases of African-Americans who become the victim of Whites' racialized space.

> [Jake] couldn't read, couldn't even sign his name. Had a mark he used. They tricked him. He signed something, I don't know what, and they told him they owned his property. [..] Everything bad that ever happened to him happened because he couldn't read. (p. 53)

The passage illustrates the different world views between Whites and Blacks in terms of ownership of land. For Jake, being the first man settling down and cultivating the empty land is enough to claim ownership on it. Yet, the Butlers, seeing their chance and recognizing Jake's illiteracy, used law and official authority based on written culture to dislodge Jake from his land and prove them as a legal owner. In this case, the official recorded paper as the product of western writing culture "locks" the illiterate Black American out of his own land. When Jake tries to protect his property, they murder him. This incident displays the space racially contested from both sides. It is clear that Lincoln's Heaven is formerly the "Black Eden" for Jake. It is Black utopia, where he and his family can live freely without the imposed power of the Whites. But later, it is transformed to a "White Eden" by the Butlers through the murder of the Black man. In this sense, "Lincoln's Heaven" negatively signifies the place for the dead Lincoln, which can be seen as the death of Blacks, specifically Jake as well. The racialized space impedes Jake's creation of his identity as a freeman.

While landlocked or racialized space is represented by White racists in Jake's case, it transforms into the White system in Guitar's case. Theoretically, Guitar and the Seven Days intend to deny and subvert the Whites and their system as we can see from their violent revenge and establishment of their own rules. But practically, they are imposed upon by White perception because the Seven Days, in fact, operate under the logic of capitalism. Capitalism here substitutes for the return of investment or profit. The idea can be clarified with the "capitalistic" terms such as demand/supply (the equilibrium of what is needed and what is provided), mass production (the production of large amounts of something), and impersonality (without connection to any particular person). In my opinion, the operation of the Seven Days is not different from an industrial enterprise that concerns with "investment" and "profit". First, they are involved with impersonality, which is one of the characteristics of industrial management. The secret Society operates under the name "The Seven Days". Its seven agents conceal their real name and present

themselves with the days, for example, Guitar calls himself the Sunday. Separating into each day, the different functions of the agents reflect departmentalization of industry. Furthermore, if an agent is dead or unable to work properly, they will find a new member to replace him immediately. It emphasizes the anonymity of the agents, similar to the image of "faceless laborers" (p. 266) of capitalism or a part of machine that can be easily replaced when it "is no longer effective" (p. 155). The agents have to be "selfless", since they must not "write their names" in public "or brag to women" (p. 155) to show off their power. Here, we can see that individuality of a person is less important than the whole of the organization, similar to the industrial system.

Second, the Society obsesses with mass production and demand/supply. They are clearly described in the following quotation.

> He couldn't do it with a piece of wire, or a switchblade. For this he needed explosive, or guns, or hand grenades. And that would take money. He knew that the assignments of the Days would more and more be the killing of white people in groups, since more and more Negroes were being killed in groups. The single, solitary death was going out of fashion, and the Days might as well prepare themselves for it. (pp. 173-4)

Apparently, mass production is clearly displayed as the Society wants to make further progress to keep up with social trends. They change the killing style from "single, solitary death" that is "out of fashion" to the death "in groups". Moreover, we can sense a glimpse of demand/supply in the capitalism. The society's mass production requires more "money" to purchase expensive and advancing technology like "guns", "hand grenades" instead of traditional manual devices like "wire" or "switchblade" that can no longer serve its bigger plan. Especially, its perception about number and ratio towards human life clearly represents demand/supply. Guitar justifies his Society's killing that it is "to keep the ratio the same." (p. 155) If Black people are killed in the large amount, White people must be killed in the same proportion in order to bring balance to the society. And when the proportion between the Blacks and Whites is the same, there will be a utopian world. From these depictions, we can see that the Seven Days is not different from a business enterprise, which always competes with its opponent. It obsesses over numbers, proportions and quantities and denies human relationship. However, we can sense that the original philosophy of the

group and the methods of capitalism are basically incompatible. It is impossible for the group that wants to limit its members to only seven to expand their oversized scale of works. The contrast logics somehow intensify the strain and anxiety among the agents that they can possibly be out of control. For example, the pressure of trying to achieve his oversized goal makes Guitar break the Society's rules in killing fellow Blacks instead of Whites. To get more money for the group, Guitar intends to kill Milkman and Pilate for the gold. It is clear that Guitar and the Seven Days live in the landlocked space. They cannot avoid the pervasive power of the White system or capitalism, which they are against. It suggests that they fail to gain freedom and justice and to create a utopian world for Blacks.

For Guitar, Jan Furman suggests, in "Male Consciousness: *Song of Solomon*", "Guitar cannot claim a more personal love of wife, children, friends. The secrecy of his work isolates him and precludes intimacy." (1996, pp. 40-1). I agree with Furman that Guitar loses connection to other Blacks and abandons other aspects of life to obsess only with the Seven Days. He denies the friendship and brotherhood towards Milkman and rejects human relationship in killing Pilate for the sake of his Society's profit. But Furman does not reach to the fact that Guitar is finally selfless because of his strong belief in his group. In the following conversations, we can see his transformation from the term he calls himself when talking to Milkman.

"Because I ripped you off?"

"Because you ripped *us* off!" (p. 297)

"That I was going to cut you out?"

"Cut *us* out. Yes." (p. 297)

The conversation reveals both Guitar's integration into a collective self with the Seven Days and transformation to selflessness within the Black community at the same time. It shows through the way he addresses himself, since he no longer says "me" but "us". It shows his loss of individuality and his complete integration into the Seven Days. At this point, the integration of Guitar into his secret Society seems to represent his collective self. Yet, the collective identity embraces the specifically limited meaning. Guitar defines himself only in his group; he does not reach out to the Black community in general. Since the secrecy of his group isolates and alienates

them from what it serves - the Black community- Guitar is prevented from integrating into the wider Black community. Although Guitar embraces collective self with the Seven Days, he is selfless within the wider Black community. He is "locked" within his belief until he is "dead". It totally suggests that Guitar fails to free not only other Black people from the White racialized space, but also himself from his own misleading belief.

While the north space for Jake and Guitar is a segregated utopia, for Dr. Foster and Macon Dead it is the Whites' utopia with limitless opportunities. Unlike Jake and Guitar, they perceive that separation or segregation cannot make a real utopia, but assimilation to the White community because it is the source of freedom and prosperity. Thus, it is apparent that Dr. Foster and Macon Dead focus on conforming to White society and rejecting Black community, especially underclass Blacks.

Dr. Foster's life represents the ideal self-made Black man, who assimilates into the north space by his profession. With his degree as a doctor, he wishes to be accepted and respected among White people. And his respectable status as the first Black doctor in the city makes him a hero of the Black community. His life is the collective history of the Blacks in the north space. He is depicted as a legendary hero, eulogized as "the most important Negro in the city" (p. 22) or "the biggest Negro in the city. Not the richest, but the most respected" (p. 71). When he is alive, the Blacks call the street he lives on "Doctor Street" in order to give recognition towards his status as the first Black doctor living in the city. When he is dead, the Black people posthumously "immortalize" him by calling it "Not Doctor Street" in order to subvert the White authority's imposition of a new street name. Since the appearance of Dr. Foster is the beginning of the migrant Black community's formation in the town, it can be said that Dr. Foster is the Black "ancestor" of this town. Moreover, he is also financially successful. It is mentioned that he possesses the "big dark house of twelve rooms" (p. 9) and "the second man in the city to have a two-horse carriage" (p. 71). Thus, with his fame and prosperity, he represents an extreme case of self-made Black Americans attempting to improve their lives. With his fame and financial success, Dr. Foster seems to achieve "African-American Dreams" in the north space.

While Dr. Foster's assimilation shows through his respectable status, which later brings him financial success, Macon Dead's assimilation is the other way around. Macon starts to gradually accumulate lands and property, which finally brings him respectable status. Similar to Dr. Foster, Macon Dead perceives the north space as the White utopia where he can assimilate in order to pursue freedom. It provides him chances to collect and multiply his property from "only two keys in this pocket" (p. 22) to "shack town" (pp. 71-2). However, his desire of freedom and wealth does not simply come from his greed, but his love for his father.

> As the son of Macon Dead the first, he paid homage to his own father's life and death by loving what that father had loved: property, good solid property, the bountifulness of life. He loved these things to excess because he loved his father to excess. Owning, building, acquiring – that was his life, his future, his present, and all the history he knew." (p. 300)

Like Jake, Macon multiplies his property for the sake of his family; especially, it is the way to express love to his father by "loving what that father had loved: property, good solid property" and trying to gain things to excess "because he loved his father to excess". Here, because of the strong bond of father-son relationship, Jake's legacy, which is "ownership", transfers to Macon. However, the accumulation of property in the north space in Macon's context, unlike Jake, is not to do manual work with his own strength. To do business in the White space, Macon has to negotiate with and depend on the Whites who control the business and legal systems.

> he had time to think, to plan, to visit the bank men, to read the public notices, auctions, to find out what plots were going for taxes, unclaimed heir's property, where roads were being built, what supermarkets, school; and who was trying to sell what to the government for the housing projects that were going to be built. The quickie townlets that were springing up around the war plants. He knew as a Negro he wasn't going to get a big slice of the pie. But there were properties nobody wanted yet, or little edges of property somebody didn't want Jews to have, or Catholics to have, or properties nobody knew were of any value yet. (p. 63)

It is apparent that the idea of American Dreams is presented through Macon Dead's faith in the north space. He assimilates to the Whites' business world, works hard and grabs every chance and opportunity to accumulate property without concerning himself that the "American Dreams" is in fact racialized. Though he experienced the brutality done to his father by White racists, we do not see his anxiety towards the White businessmen who discriminate against other races ("Jew") or religions ("Catholics"). He keeps on multiplying lands and property and never resorts to revenge or segregation, unlike Guitar's violent acts of separation. In one way, the accumulation of property can be seen as the representation of love towards his father, who gives away his life in exchange for the protection of his family and property. In another way, it can be interpreted that Macon's accumulation of property allows him to assimilate to the White society, which he perceives as the land of prosperity and power. With his wealth, he is accepted among the White businessmen and also by the great Dr. Foster, who allows Macon to socialize with and finally marry his beloved daughter. The assimilation to the White society enables him to successfully pursue "freedom", defined by wealth and power. Thus, he can be perceived as a "freeman" because in the Black community, he is a wealthy and powerful landlord, who represents another successful life of a self-made Black man in the North.

Dr. Foster's legendary fame and Macon Dead's financial success seem to suggest their complete assimilation into the White society. It can be assumed that they triumphantly achieve freedom. Nonetheless, freedom defined by individual wealth and power does not make Dr. Foster and Macon feel completely free. Although they are accepted among White society, it is only to some extent. Besides, the assimilation to the White society and the obsession with progressing in life "lock" the two characters in their illusions, creating in them the senses of isolation and alienation towards the Blacks' community.

In the case of Dr. Foster, in spite of his respected and powerful status in the Black community, Dr. Foster is alienated from the White racialized spaces. He is "locked out" from both the White and the Black societies. For the Whites, Dr. Foster's reputation is not accepted by the hospital because he is Black. Famous for refusing to admit Black people, the hospital in the story officially called "Mercy Hospital" is called "No Mercy Hospital" (p. 4) by the Black folks. The hospital's

racial discrimination is emphasized as "during his [Dr. Foster's] entire professional life he had never been granted hospital privileges and only two of his patients were ever admitted to Mercy, both white" (p. 5). Obviously, the racialized hospital is the "landlocked" space that locks the Blacks out. As the presence of Dr. Foster is denied, it can be said that his profession is "killed" by White racists. After his death, he is metaphorically "killed" in his posthumous life by another White institution when the post office officially deletes the name "Doctor Street". These two incidents signify the alienation of Dr. Foster towards the White society as a result of racial discrimination.

In addition to being alienated by the White racists, Dr. Foster is also isolated and alienated from the Black community by his own "locked" perception. With the uncritical assimilation into the White society, Dr. Foster detaches himself from the Black community. According to Macon Dead, it seems that Dr. Foster is a racist man who tries to "racialize" his space.

> Negroes in this town worshipped him. He didn't give a damn about them, though. Called them cannibals. He delivered both your sisters himself and each time all he was interested in was the color of their skin. (p. 71)

The passage shows Dr. Foster's class and racial prejudice. His dehumanization of the Black underclass to "cannibals" is similar to the White masters addressing their Black slaves. Apparently, the wealthy Dr. Foster performs his role as a White master, separating from the poor Black "cannibals". Moreover, the obsession in skin color also proves Dr. Foster's "White mind". Macon Dead tells Milkman that Dr. Foster delivered both of his sisters himself "and each time all he was interested in was the color of their skin." (p. 71) And he "would have disowned" (p. 71) Milkman because of his darker skin. Thus, Dr. Foster is not different from White racists who discriminate against people according to their skin color. This perception makes him isolate himself from the Black underclass community. The self-isolation, furthermore, leads to the problematic relationship between him and his daughter. Dr. Foster tries to separate Ruth from other lower-class Blacks. Moreover, he is a single father whose daughter "at sixteen […] still insisted on having him come to her at night, sit on her bed, exchange a few pleasantries, and plant a kiss on her lips", which is "an ecstasy he felt inappropriate" (p. 23). Due to the isolation from other Blacks,

Ruth has an extraordinarily strong attachment to her father, even after his death and her marriage. Macon has suspicions about Ruth's incestuous relationship with her father; it causes his hatred towards her and her sexual deprivation for the rest of her life. Due to these negative consequences, the isolation from the Whites and the alienation from the Blacks emphasize the failure in assimilating to both White society and Black community. It display Dr. Foster as an incomplete freeman trapped in between the two spaces.

The blind assimilation into the White society causing the sense of isolation and alienation can be seen in the case of Macon Dead as well. The obsession in recreating his father's dream through collecting property isolates and alienates Macon Dead from the Black community. Creating an ideal image of businessman to gain property in the White business world, Macon embodies "White" identity, as criticized many times by the Black folks that he "behaves like a white man, thinks like a white man." (p. 223) To make himself a respectable businessman, he isolates himself and even cuts himself off from the Black underclass family and community. For example, in spite of having only one sister who used to be "the dearest thing in the world to him" (p. 20), Macon "locks her out" of his life and other family members because of her "improper ladyship" in terms of urban bourgeois values. For Macon, her improper career as a "bootlegger" (p. 20), improper dress wearing "sailor's cap" (p. 20) instead of "stockings" (p. 20), improper manner such as singing in public space, and her poverty do not support his respectable and powerful image. Her impropriety "make[s] him seem trashy in the eyes of the law – and the banks." (p. 24) Therefore, he cuts her off from his life.

Furthermore, to make himself a respectable businessman, he distorts his family members' lives in order to display the perfection of his family. He denies the role of "father" and, instead, turns to be the "master" and "owner" of the family. His characteristic as a "master" is emphasized through the father-son/daughter relationship. When Milkman is young, Macon talks to "his son, to whom he could speak only if his words held some command or criticism." (p. 28) He distorts his daughters' lives by isolating them from Black underclass and displays them as if they are his inanimate properties. For example, Magdalene called Lena says, "First he displayed us, then he splayed us. All our lives were like that: he would parade us like

virgins through Babylon, then humiliate us like whores in Babylon" (p. 216) or First Corinthians mentions, "[h]e never wanted us to mix with…people." (p. 195) Like Dr. Foster, Macon's uncritical assimilation to White society isolates himself and his family members from the community and dehumanizes them to live in loveless and lifeless conditions where they have to seek "love" from artificial objects like "blood-red squares of velvet" (p. 11). It is clearly depicted that Macon, though being an effective businessman, in the family realm is defective. At this point, Macon is different from his father, Jake, who sacrifices his life for his family, while Macon sacrifices his family members' lives, as when it is stated that he "distorted life, bent it, for the sake of gain" (p. 300).

Furthermore, Macon cuts himself off from the Black underclass community. To be a successful businessman, he establishes a new form of "master-slave" relationship with them. Macon no longer recognizes the other lower-class Blacks as his friends whom "he would lounge around the barbershop and swap stories with" (p. 52) because "for years he hadn't had that kind of time, or interest." (p. 52) When he becomes the owner of many properties, he stops seeing those people because of having no "interest". The term can be interpreted in two meanings: intention and benefit. It presents that Macon is absent from his community because he has no intention to meet people that could not benefit him in pursuing his wealth. His detachment from the community is repetitiously emphasized. For example, we can see from the scene he tries to collect his money from Porter, a drunken tenant, despite the fact that Porter is holding a gun, standing on the roof, and threatening to kill somebody. Moreover, he threatens to drive an old woman with her little children out of the house because she cannot pay him the rent. After she has gone, Macon tells himself "if he had let people like the woman who just left have their way, he wouldn't have had any keys at all" (p. 22). Here, we can see no trace of the communal relationship between him and other Blacks. Completely embracing the role of the "White murderers" (the ones that kill his father) or the White master, he denies human life and focuses only on money. In "Dead Teachers: Rituals of Manhood and Rituals of Reading in *Song of Solomon*" (2003), Linda Krumholz describes Macon Dead's egocentricity and obsession with wealth with the image of a peacock, the flightless bird that represents "masculine pride, vanity, and the desire for domination and

material wealth." (p. 211) He is described as having "strutted" (p. 17), instead of "walked" to illustrate his pride and egocentric characteristics. His detachment from human relationships and obsession with wealth "locks" him out from his own community. They are the barriers that alienate him from the community and prevent him from achieving freedom. The denial of human relationship alienates him from not only other Blacks, but also from the property that he thinks is the only thing to leads him to freedom.

> Tired, irritable, he walked down Fifteenth Street, glancing up as he passed one of his other houses, its silhouette melting in the light that trembled between dusk and twilight. Scattered here and there, his houses stretched up beyond him like squat ghosts with hooded eyes. He didn't like to look at them in this light. During the day they were reassuring to see; now they did not seem to belong to him at all – in fact he felt as though the houses were in league with one another to make him feel like **the outsider, the propertyless, landless wanderer**. It was this feeling of loneliness that made him decide to take a shortcut back to Not Doctor Street, even though to do so would lead him past his sister's house. (p. 27, emphasis added)

It is apparent that Macon is stuck in between his traditional life of the South and the modern life of the North. Although embracing "White" identity and devoting his life to accumulating property, he feels alienated from them because they cannot create the sense of connection or bond to him. However, he cannot completely create the communal identity because his work requiring moral and emotional death "locks" him out from his southern "home" and people. He can only show his bond to them and release his sensitivity ("the feeling of loneliness") in silence or private ("crept up to the side window" and "peeped in", p. 29). There are several pieces of evidence telling that he still yearns for his traditional life such as "surrendering to the sound" (p. 29) of Pilate's song which relieves him "under the weight of memory and music." (p. 30) This scene clearly shows his isolation and alienation from both the south space (family, community) and the north space (property). Explicitly, it proves that the obsession with wealth and property creates Macon Dead the fragmented self, instead of a complete freeman.

From the portrayals of Milkman's male ancestors, we can see that their drives in integrating to the north space lead them to tragedy because the north space proves itself not totally open for them. The "promised land" becomes merely an illusion, since it traps African-Americans with the notion of freedom that is based on prosperity. Racialized spaces and the senses of isolation and alienation from community "lock in/out" the Black Americans in one way or another. They cannot create identity as complete freemen. Without realizing their mistakes, these ancestors pass on to Milkman the landlocked space which leads them to become incomplete freemen. Yet, fortunately, Milkman is introduced to the other "path" unlocking him and leading back to his "home", and the new meaning of freedom enabling him to reconstruct his self. That path leads to the south space that will be clarified in the next chapter.