



**Racial Symbolism in Dreams: A Psychoanalytic  
Exploration of the subconscious in Chester Himes *If He Hollers Let Him Go***

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**Résumé:** Cet article examine les profondes répercussions psychologiques du racisme et de l'oppression internalisée tels que dépeints dans le roman de Chester Himes, *If He Hollers Let Him Go*. A travers un cadre psychanalytique et de théorie critique de la race, cette étude explore le subconscient de Bob Jones, en analysant ses rêves comme une manifestation de l'impact psychologique des expériences raciales sur la psyché. En déchiffrant le symbolisme racial et l'imagerie qui imprègnent les rêves de Bob, cette recherche éclaire les moyens insidieux par lesquels le racisme pénètre le subconscient, influençant les désirs, les peurs, anxiétés, les tensions et les comportements. En outre, cette étude révèle que les rêves dissimulent souvent des significations latentes, offrant des perspectives profondes sur l'expérience humaine dans des conditions d'oppression raciale. En examinant l'intersection de la race, de l'identité et du subconscient, cette analyse fournit une compréhension nuancée de la dynamique du traumatisme racial et de ses effets durables sur la psyché humaine.

**Mots-clés:** psychologique, racisme, psychanalytique, théorie critique de race, subconscient, rêves

**Abstract:** This article explores the profound psychological repercussions of racism and internalized oppression as depicted in Chester Himes's *If He Hollers Let Him Go*. Through a psychoanalytic and critical race theory framework, this study explores the subconscious mind of Bob Jones, analyzing his dreams as a manifestation of the psychological impact of racial experiences on his psyche. By deciphering the racial symbolism and imagery that pervade Bob's dreams, this research illuminates the insidious ways in which racism permeates the subconscious, influencing desires, fears, anxieties, tensions, and behaviors. Furthermore, this study reveals that dreams often conceal latent meanings, offering deeper insights into the human experience under condition of racial oppression. By examining the intersection of race, identity, and the subconscious, this analysis provides nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics of racial trauma and its enduring effects on the human psyche.

**Keywords:** psychological, racism, psychoanalytic, critical race theory, subconscious, dreams

## Introduction

The exploration of dreams in the African-American context is a recurring theme in African-American literature. Writers like Toni Morrison examine the psychological impact of slavery's legacy on female black characters. In her seminal work *Beloved* (1987), Morrison employs a psychoanalytic lens to investigate the role of the unconscious and the haunting presence of the past through Sethe's dreams. This narrative device reveals the manifestation of unresolved trauma and pain inflicted by slavery, embodied in the ghostly presence that haunts black women in America. Similarly, Chester Himes shares Morrison's perspective, although his focus diverges to illuminate the impact of racism on black men through the lens of dreams. As a committed writer dedicated to liberating Black Americans from racism and its effects, Himes's works, such as *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (1945), underscore the significance of dreams in exploring the complexities of racial oppression.

Through this novel, Himes, by focusing on Bob Jones's dreams and experiences, reveals the profound psychological impact of racism and internalized oppression. By analyzing the racial symbols and imagery that permeate Bob's dreams, Himes sheds light on the ways in which racism infiltrates the subconscious mind, shaping his desires, fears, tensions, anxieties, and behaviors. In this context, Himes posits that dreams serve as a window into the unconscious thoughts of black characters, imbuing them with profound meaning and insight into the human experience under racial oppression.

This article, "Racial Symbolism in Dreams: A Psychoanalytic Exploration of Bob Jones's Subconscious", examines the issue of dream interpretation and the latent messages conveyed in the context of racial dynamics in the United States. These messages possess underlying meanings that pertain to our waking lives, yet remain inaccessible to conscious awareness. Rather than being inconsequential, dreams serve a significant purpose. This paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the psychological impact of systemic racism on Black individuals, shedding light on the subconscious effects of racism through dream analysis.

By exploring racial symbols and imagery, this paper provides valuable insights into internalized oppression, revealing how systemic racism can lead to negative self-perceptions and self-doubt among marginalized individuals. Furthermore, this article has significant implications for mental health practices, informing therapeutic approaches and presenting

interventions for individuals experiencing racism-related trauma. It underscores the importance of culturally sensitive and trauma-informed care in addressing the psychological consequences of racial oppression.

This paper aims to investigate the significance of dream exploration in liberating Black Americans from the effects of racism. To achieve this objective, we will pursue the following central questions: How do dreams reveal and reflect the psychological consequences of racism on Black individuals? What role do racial symbols and imagery play in dreams, and how do they relate to experiences of racial oppression? What insights can dream analysis provide into internalized oppression and its impact on mental health? The primary objective of this paper is to examine the psychological consequences of racism on individuals through the lens of dream analysis, with a specific focus on the manifestation of racial symbols and imagery in dreams as a reflection of experiences with racism. By exploring these dynamics, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of internalized oppression and its implications for mental health and therapeutic practices.

This analysis will employ literary theories, notably Psychoanalytic Criticism and Critical Race Theory. Drawing from psychoanalytic principles, we will primarily engage with the works of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and *Man and his Symbols* (1964), Freud and Jung posit that dreams contain latent messages and symbolism, offering a window into the unconscious mind. This approach will enable us to examine the unconscious dynamics underlying Bob Jones's experiences. Critical Race Theory will also inform our analysis, providing a framework for understanding the profound impacts of systemic racism and oppression on Black individuals and communities. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between psychological dynamics and racial oppression.

This study is structured around three key points. Firstly, it examines how Bob Jones's dreams reflect his real-life experiences, highlighting the ways in which his subconscious mind processes and responds to the challenges he faces. Secondly, it analyzes dreams as a manifestation of Bob's desires, exploring how his unconscious mind expresses vengeance, homicide, violence, fears, hopes, and anxieties. Finally, it investigates how Bob's dreams foreshadow his downfall and lynching, demonstrating the predictive and symbolic nature of his subconscious thoughts.

## 1. Dreams as Reflections of Bob's Real-Life Experiences

### 1.1. *Dreams Evoking Racism, Hatred, and the Quest for Freedom*

The analysis of Bob's dreams is crucial, as it provides valuable insights into his internal reality. By examining his dreams, we can draw parallels between his waking life and the symbolic images that appear in his subconscious mind. As W.S. Kottiswari (1999, p. 30) notes, "dreams are spontaneous self-portrayal of the actual situation in symbolic form in the unconscious." This suggests that dreams can reflect our real-life experiences, often in a symbolic or metaphorical manner.

Our analysis, however, focuses on restricted and subjective meanings, rather than universal symbolism. This approach is justified, as even Sigmund Freud, a pioneer in dream interpretation, is known to have employed both universal and context-dependent interpretations. As D. Pick and L. Roper (2004, p. 263) observe, sometimes Freud interprets "dreams as if there were a universal symbolism, and sometimes not." In other words, Freud's approach to dream interpretation is flexible, accommodating both universal symbols and context-specific meanings. This highlights the complexity of dream analysis, where interpretation depends on the unique circumstances and situations presented in the dream.

The opening scenes of Himes's novel, which describe two of Bob's dreams, illustrate this point. In the first dream, Bob envisions a little black dog being led by a heavy wire twisted around its neck. The dog breaks free, attempting to escape, but is eventually caught and returned to its captor. When Bob purchases the dog and brings it home, he is met with disapproval from others. In fact, nobody else seems to like the little black dog (*IHHLHG*, p. 1). In this dream, we essentially identify the symbolic images present, such as 'the dog with the wire around its neck' and 'the home.'

We can interpret the presence of the 'dog' as a symbol of faithfulness, constant companionship, and protection, as suggested by Pick and Roper (2004, p. 57). However, in the context of this dream, the dog's situation takes on a different connotation. The wire around the dog's neck and its being sold and bought evoke the historical condition of slavery, where Blacks were treated as commodities. This imagery also resonates with the current experience of systemic racism, where Bob feels trapped and unable to escape. The dog's

attempt to break free only to be caught reflects Bob's own struggles to integrate into American society as a free individual. Just as the dog is constrained by its circumstances, Bob is hindered by the systemic barriers that prevent him from achieving true freedom. This parallel highlights the pervasive nature of racism and its impact on Bob's life.

Freedom being unreachable, Bob Jones's personality and mind become mentally sick, depressed, and affected by tension and anxiety. His behaviors become altered. Fear of racism invades Bob Jones, just as he posits:

But I began feeling scared in spite of hiding from the day. It came along with consciousness. It came into my head first, somewhere back of my closed eyes, moved slowly underneath my skull to the base of my brain, cold and hollow. It seeped down my spine and into my arms, spread through my groin with almost sexual torture, settled in my stomach like butterfly wings. For a moment I felt torn all inside, shrivelled, paralysed, as if after a while I'd have to get up and die (*IHHLHG*, p. 2).

The unbearable weight of systemic racism takes a profound toll on Bob's mental health, manifesting in increased aggression and emotional turmoil. Each new experience of racism adds fuel to the fire of frustration, anger, and helplessness, making it difficult for him to manage his emotions. It becomes obvious that Bob Jones adopts a demeanor of tension and aggression as a coping mechanism in response to the racial injustice perpetrated by his white superiors, namely McDougal, Mr. Kelly, and Hank.

Furthermore, the 'home' in Bob's dream, where the little black dog is brought but met with disdain, symbolizes a space that should represent comfort, joy, and security. However, the lack of affection for the dog in this setting mirrors the harsh realities of racism in the United States of America, where Black Americans are often met with hostility and disdain. This rejection of the dog in the dream reflects Bob's own feelings of being unloved and marginalized. As W. S. Kottiswari (1999, p. 31) notes, this condition "reflects Jones's own feeling of being trapped, unloved and rejected," highlighting the profound psychological impact of systemic racism on Bob's sense of belonging and self-worth. Indeed, deep inside, Bob Jones feels like he does not belong or is not worth love and acceptance due to his skin color.

The rejection of the little black dog is also seen as a manifestation of internalized oppression, where Bob Jones internalizes the negative messages and stereotypes perpetuated by American society. This leads to adverse self-perception. For instance, Bob deems that colored individuals are just "a wonderful goddamned race. Simpleminded, generous, sympathetic sons of bitches" who feel "sorry for everybody" except for themselves. He

further underscores, “the worse the white treat us the more we love ‘em” (*IHHLHG*, pp. 5-6). The above extracts suggest that Bob’s experiences have led to internalized racism, resulting in self-hatred and a diminished sense of self-worth tied to his black identity. This psychological impact manifests as shame about his racial identity, potentially motivating him to prioritize individual goals over collective identity and community ties.

### ***1.2. Dreams Reveal Messages of Irrationality and Injustice***

In the same dream sequence, Bob’s subconscious mind shifts to a scenario where he is interrogated by police officers for the murder of Frankie Childs, a white man, at a war plant. The presence of police officers in this dream is significant, as it symbolizes an institution meant to maintain law and order in society. According to P. J. Balls (2008, p. 406), “dreaming particularly of police can indicate a kind of social control and a protective element for us as members of society. Often a policeman will appear in dreams as one’s conscience.” Typically, police officers in dreams represent an authority that upholds justice and order. However, in this context, the police officers’ actions starkly contrast with this expectation. They accuse Bob, a Black and crippled individual, of murder without evidence, highlighting the theme of racial injustice and the failure of the system to provide fair treatment.

The police’s method of investigation is absurd, as they ask all suspects to climb the stairs, with the implication that the one who fails to do so will be deemed guilty. When the lieutenant asks the first black worker if he can ‘stand the test,’ this black worker inquires about the nature of the test. The lieutenant then clarifies that the test involves going up to the third floor to view the dead body of Frankie Childs. Just as he questions, “Can you go up in to the third floor and look the dead body of Frankie Childs in the face?” (*IHHLHG*, p. 2). It becomes clear that the ‘test’ is an unreasonable and arbitrary means of determining guilt, based solely on the physical ability to climb stairs, rather than any actual evidence.

Faced with such blatant irrationality and injustice, Bob Jones’s response is one of laughter, which serves as a critique of the American system. Through this reaction, Bob’s negativity towards societal injustices is evident. The police’s assumption that the guilty party is a disabled black person, as W.S. Kottiswari (1999, p. 32) notes, “the guilty person is the one who limps,” highlights the deep-seated racial biases that permeate the system. This dream reflects Bob’s lived experiences of fear and terror of being unjustly accused due to his skin color, mirroring the historical injustices faced by other marginalized groups, such as Japanese-Americans and Mexican-Americans. The dream serves as a critique of the dominant

ideologies in American society, revealing Bob's skepticism towards the notion of justice and equality.

Through Bob's dreams, we have demonstrated that symbolic images convey hidden messages, which can be uncovered through interpretation to reveal their underlying meanings. These dream images function as a "metaphor" (Ball, 2008, p. 21), drawing comparisons between the dream world and Bob's real-life experiences. Essentially, the dreams serve as a reflection of Bob's current reality, mirroring the challenges and fears he faces daily. W. S. Kottiswari (1999, p. 33) aptly describes this phenomenon as "the interchangeable nature of dream-reality situation in which Bob Jones finds himself." This highlights the blurred lines between Bob's dreams and reality, where his nocturnal fears and terrors seamlessly translate to his waking experiences, and vice versa. Consequently, Bob's dreams and reality become increasingly intertwined, making it difficult to distinguish between the two.

## **2. Dreams as the Manifestation of Bob's Desires**

### **2.1. Dreams of Homicide for Revenge Compensation**

We concur with the notion that certain dreams represent the fulfillment of desires or wishes. According to J. Strachey (1955, p. 159), in *Sigmund Freud: The Interpretation of Dreams*, it is prudent to use the term "some" rather than "every"<sup>1</sup> when discussing the relationship between dreams and wish fulfillment, to avoid unnecessary controversy. This perspective aligns with Sigmund Freud's view that dreams are "essentially as the fulfillment of a wish" (Kottiswari, 1999, p. 30). In the context of Bob Jones's dreams, we observe that they not only reflect his reality but also serve as a means of wish fulfillment. Bob's dreams, therefore, can be seen as a manifestation of his desires, providing insight into his subconscious mind.

In the dream where Bob imagines killing Johnny Stoddart at his home with a gun (*IHHLHG*, p. 197), Bob's subconscious mind fulfills a desire for revenge compensation. This desire stems from a past incident where Bob was humiliated, hurt, and terrified by Johnny and others during a game of craps. Unable to exact revenge in reality, Bob's dream serves as an

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<sup>1</sup> Strachey gives the explanation why he prefers using the quantifier "some" rather than "every". If I proceed to put forward the assertion that the meaning of *every* dream is the fulfillment of a dream, that is to say that there cannot be any dreams but wishful dreams, I feel certain in advance that I shall meet with the most categorical contradiction. "There is nothing new," I shall be told, "in the idea that *some* dreams are to be regarded as wish fulfillments; the authorities noticed that fact long ago . . . . To assert that there no dreams other than wish fulfillment dreams is only one more unjustifiable generation, though fortunately one which it is easy to disprove."



outlet for his pent-up emotions. The act of killing Johnny in the dream allows Bob to momentarily experience a sense of empowerment and satisfaction, as he subjects his tormentor to the same fear and humiliation that he, as a Black man, faces daily due to systemic injustices. This dream reflects Bob's deep-seated desire for retribution, echoing the notion of 'an eye for an eye.'

## 2.2. Dreams Conveying the Image of Violence or Aggression

The symbolized image of 'gun' in Bob's dream reinforces his desire for vengeance. In this context, the gun is a personal symbol, rather than a universal one, representing the idea of homicide as the ultimate form of revenge. The presence of a gun in the dream signifies violence and aggression. According to P. J. Ball (2008, p. 261), "the gun in dreams can signify a particular aggressive action and the result of that aggression." This suggests that the gun in Bob's dream is a manifestation of his intense desire for revenge, highlighting the depth of his emotional response to the injustices he faces.

The act of 'killing' in Bob's dream also holds significant meaning. Similar to the image of a gun, the act of killing in a dream often symbolizes violence or a desire to overcome an adversary or a hostile person. According to P. J. Ball (2008, p. 317):

Killing almost inevitably symbolizes a violent ending of some sort. Often there is a struggle involved and spiritually it is important in dreams that we are the one who overcomes our opponent. Killing is an extreme answer to a problem . . . . Killing someone in a dream is attempting to be rid of the influence they have over us.

It becomes apparent that killing in dreams can represent an attempt to break free from the influence or control of someone or something. In this context, Bob's dream suggests that he is trying to overcome the oppressive forces that dominate his life, and the act of killing serves as a symbolic representation of his desire for liberation and empowerment.

In the dream, Bob's desire for compensatory revenge against Johnny Stoddart is underscored by his overwhelming sense of exultation and joy. As described by Himes, Bob's emotions are palpable, with feelings of elation and triumph. Just as Bob posits, "all inside of me felt swollen and bursting with joy as if I'd just hit a hundred thousand dollar jackpot. I wanted to run and leap and shout and roll in the goddamned street" (*IHHLHG*, p. 198). This vivid depiction highlights the intensity of Bob's emotional response, suggesting that the act of revenge in his dream has brought him a profound sense of satisfaction and liberation.

The symbology of the words 'gun' and 'killing' in Bob's dream reveals a deep-rooted desire for revenge against the ideology of whiteness. This dream can be seen as a



manifestation of Bob's wish for reparation, fulfilled through the act of killing. The use of a gun to assassinate Johnny Stoddart is significant, as it symbolizes a strong degree of violence and aggression, reflecting Bob's desire for power, manhood, and adequacy. The dream suggests that Bob's subconscious mind is driven by a need to reclaim control and assert his identity in the face of oppressive forces.

### **3. Dreams as Foreshadowing Bob's Downfall and Lynching**

#### ***3.1. Dreams Prophesying Bob's Unjust Lynching***

While some of Bob's dreams serve as wish fulfillments, others function as premonitions, predicting future events in his life. According to G. H. Miller (1994, p. 2), "dreams are rudiments of the great state to come. We dream what is about to happen." This suggests that some dreams have an anticipatory function, foreshadowing events that may unfold. Carl Jung also supports this idea, saying that:

A dream has a prospective function, which is described as an anticipation in the unconscious of future conscious achievements, something like a preliminary exercise or sketch, or a plan roughed out in advance. It cannot be called prophetic, as they are merely an anticipatory combination of probabilities, which may coincide with the actual behavior of things (Qtd in Kottiswari, 1999, p. 33).

Jung emphasizes that the anticipatory function of dreams is not prophetic, but rather a blend of likelihoods that may match with future events. Some of Bob's dreams have a premonitory role, foreshadowing his eventual lynching. The term 'foreshadow' refers to the literary device of hinting at events that will occur later in the narrative. According to the *Longman Dictionary* (2003, p. 630), foreshadowing involves indicating or suggesting future events. In one of Bob's dreams, he is lying in the street in front of the Federal Building, being beaten to death by two white men at the orders of President Houghton, dressed in an army uniform (*IHHLHG*, p. 69). Notably, the reason behind Bob's brutal treatment is left unexplained in the dream. Despite Bob's attempts to articulate his own account to a passing black couple, his voice is rendered inaudible and incoherent.

This dream serves as a harbinger of the lynching situation that Bob will later face at the war plant, his workplace. The dream's depiction of Bob's inability to articulate his defense parallels the reality of his situation, where he is denied the opportunity to prove his innocence against the false accusation of raping a white woman, Madge Perkins. The inability to articulate words in this dream echoes like the reality in which he is accused of raping Madge Perkins but can only stutter and not be understood. As he puts it, "I was slow getting it. My

first reaction was surprise. ‘What the hell?’ I lisped” (*IHHLHG*, p. 187). The simple past ‘lisped’ refers to the speech difficulty that symbolizes the marginalized voice, which is often ignored in a racial context. We understand the reason why Bob puts, “I knew in one great flash she really could send me to the pen for thirty years. My words against hers, and all the evidence on her side” (*IHHLHG*, p. 187).

The violent actions of the two white men in the dream are mirrored in reality, where Bob is subjected to physical abuse by his white coworkers. Just as Bob confirms, “. . . well, she [Madge Perkins] got me lynched all right” (*IHHLHG*, p. 184). Without any proof at a trial, Bob Jones is found guilty and sent to the US Army as sentence. In his own words, “Two hours later I was in the Army” (*IHHLHG*, p. 203). Ultimately, the dream’s themes of racial injustice and silencing are tragically realized. The psychological impact of systemic racism on Bob Jones is severe when this dream reflects his lynching. Mentally, he is hurt. The vivid and disturbing nature of this dream triggers feelings of trauma, fear, and anxiety, making it difficult for Bob to feel safe and secure in the entire system of his country. He expresses it as follows, “But now I was scared in a different way. Not of the violence. Not of the mob. Not of physical hurt. But of America, of American justice. The jury and the judge. The people themselves . . . . I was scared more than I’ve ever been scared in all my life” (*IHHLHG*, pp. 187-8).

The lynching imagery also symbolizes the erasure of Bob’s ambition and purpose, leading to feelings of hopelessness and despair. As Bob means it, “I knew there was no way in the world I could prove I hadn’t tried to rape her . . . . All I could think of was flight, desperate, cold-headed flight” (*IHHLHG*, pp. 187, 189). Through the expression ‘no way’, Bob feels that there is no chance and hope of proving his innocence, and that the situation is stacked against him. It conveys a sense of powerlessness and frustration. Bob thinks that he is in a dire situation and needs to “escape” (*IHHLHG*, p. 188) due to desperation.

### ***3.2. Dreams Expressing the Downfall of Bob***

In addition to the preceding dream that predicted Bob’s lynching, another dream foreshadows his downfall or demotion at work. In this dream, Bob is seeking employment but is mocked by two white men who question his preparedness for the job due to his lack of tools. This humiliating experience foretells Bob’s eventual collapse at the war plant. The dream’s emphasis on having the tools for the job is symbolic (*IHHLHG*, p. 2), referencing not only Bob’s ability to perform the task but also the pervasive racial discrimination and

inequality in American workplaces. The white men's inquiry about Bob's tools serves as a veiled assessment of his willingness to accept the racial injustices that pervade his workplace.

The question above arises whether Bob can function within the racially oppressive system. It seems that Bob lacks the necessary adaptability, implying he cannot tolerate the system's injustices. This intolerance leads to his demotion, the loss of his leadman position, and the shattering of his ambitions. The dream's prediction of Bob's joblessness is tragically fulfilled. Notably, the circumstances of his discharge mirror the dream, as Bob faces mockery from the same white superiors, including McDougal, Mr. Kelly, and Hank, highlighting the cruel parallels between his dream and reality.

The demotion and dream imagery in this context symbolize disillusionment with the American Dream and push the adoption of violence. In fact, when Bob Jones loses his position, he becomes furious with anybody. He becomes maniac with white people and colored ones, as well. Anger and confusion prevent him from behaving with certain level of morality. The suitable example is when he plans to get "[his] pistol" (*IHHLHG*, p. 195) and "kill Johnny Stoddart and let them hanged [him] for it" (*IHHLHG*, p. 194). According to Bob, this murder will provide him with a measure of retribution and happiness to watch a white man dying. From a psychological perspective, Bob believes that committing homicide would serve as a potential means of compensating for the racial injustices and daily struggles he endures.

## Conclusion

This analysis has examined how Chester Himes's novel, *If He Hollers Let Him Go*, exposes the profound psychological toll of systemic racism and internalized oppression on its protagonist, Bob Jones. By exploring the theme of dream interpretation, this paper has beforehand demonstrated how Bob's dreams serve as reflections of his real-life experiences by analyzing the ways in which his unconscious mind processes and navigates the challenges he daily faces. It has also considered how Bob's dreams reveal his subconscious wishes for homicide, revenge, and violence, shedding light on the psychological impact of racial trauma. Eventually, this paper investigated how Bob's dreams ominously anticipate his tragic downfall, highlighting the predictive quality of his subconscious thoughts.

We have shown the ways in which the pervasive nature of racism has profoundly impacted Bob's life, haunting him in both his waking and sleeping states. The study has

exposed that Bob's dreams are a manifestation of the oppressive Jim Crow system, which permeates every aspect of his existence. The omnipresence of racism is underscored by the fact that it follows Bob even into his dreams, prompting nightmares and symbolizing the inescapable nature of racial oppression. By analyzing the racial symbols and imagery that pervade Bob's dreams, Himes has brought to the fore the ways in which racism infiltrates his subconscious mind, shaping his desires, fears, tensions, anxieties, and behaviors.

We respond to the main questions outlined in the introduction. Our analysis reveals that Bob's dreams have served as a window into the psychological impact of racism on black individuals, reflecting feelings of trauma, anxiety, and internalized oppression. Racial symbols and imagery in dreams, such as manifestations of fear, anger, or despair, have been linked to experiences of racial oppression. This highlights the lasting effects of systemic racism on the psyche. These symbols often represent the unconscious mind's attempt to process and cope with the trauma of racism, underscoring the need for healing and liberation of Black Americans.

Through Bob's dreams, Chester Himes masterfully weaves together the psychological impact of racism, the fragility of black life, and the societal realities of oppression, offering a nuanced portrayal of the human experience. The dreams provide profound mental insight into Bob's inner world, revealing his deep-rooted fears and anxieties, while reinforcing the novel's themes of racial tension and oppression. By foreshadowing the tragic events that will unfold, the dreams create a sense of tension, frustration, and foreboding, underscoring the dangers of internalized oppression. Furthermore, the dreams serve as a powerful social commentary, highlighting the dehumanizing effects of racism and the constant threat of violence faced by black individuals. Ultimately, the dreams contribute to rich character development, humanizing Bob and illuminating the complexities of his experiences, making his tragic fate all the more poignant and thought-provoking.

This paper offers a therapeutic exploration of the psychological impact of racism, providing a platform for catharsis through the investigation of racial trauma and its emotional effect. By validating the experiences of racial oppression, it acknowledges the suffering endured by individuals and communities. It suggests that unchecked and non-mastered internal rage can render individuals of color particularly vulnerable to the destructive consequences of racial injustice. It proposes that the predictive nature of dreams offers a unique insight, advocating that Black Americans can achieve liberation from the adverse

effects of racism by learning to navigate and regulate the internalized anger that stems from their experiences of racial trauma. If they do not manage their rage inside prompted by racism, they will end up like Bob Jones. This work also contributes to developing positive self-worth and self-perception of black identity by challenging internalized racism. It starts with liberating from the internalized rage prompted by racism.

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