

A Study of Culture and Identify in the Novels of James Baldwin



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Preface

The novels of James Baldwin win laurels and gain international award. They include the social and cultural issues of the African American and reflect their pathetic condition in America. The Novelist focuses of racism, identity, sexuality, family fragmentation, injustice, oppression, religion and inequality. He uses these disciplines to depict how his people suffering and struggling in their daily life.

Go Tell it on the Mountain is Baldwin's first challenge as a writer. It reflects the oppression and injustice against his people through the religious experience of his life. Baldwin uses religion as alternative solution for people to survive. The Novelist describes the struggle that every individual faced with guilt, pain and with love which is passed from one generation to next generation. The Novel holds a central position in African American canon. Baldwin blends the rhythms of the African American church and the spiritual and emotional necessities of African American individuals in Harlem.

Giovanni's Room exposes the homosexual tendency of James Baldwin. He discusses his sexual identity in the time was such topic as a crime. Society and white American stand against his homosexuality. The novel becomes as a daring and explosive novel in the history of American literature. It touches the lives of the homosexuals portraying the racial prejudice and oppression against them. It also shows the interconnection between sexuality and racism. Baldwin uses homosexual theme as a tool to show how African gays encounter negative attitude due to their color and sexual orientation. This negative attitude stems from the prejudices and racist attitude of the whites.

Another country is based on the multiple love stories. It took up love in different dimensions such as love between the black and white, man and woman, man and man. The novel has positive and unique qualities. It combines love and racial politics. It also can be rightly considered as a true representation of American outlook of racism, homosexuality and atrocities. Baldwin flies American to safety and to live his life as he wants. The characters of the novel do the same. They search for another country to live like the other human beings.

Tell me How Long the Train's Been Gone depicts two important strategies against white racism, subjugation and social injustice, Nationalization and liberalism. Baldwin concentrates on interracial marriages to challenge the effects of racism. Such marriage is seen as a crime by American society and the characters of the novel are afraid of learning about each other for fear of what they might find about themselves. Interracial love shows how a social and racial issue impacts the lives of African American and racism stands as an obstruction in their path. Homophobia and misogynist attitudes used in the novel to put homosexual love as a resolve of African American nationalism with clear notations of white American racism and internalized self-hatred. However, the author confirms that violence is the best solution against white supremacy and racial oppression.

If Beale Street Could Talk gives America an ideal story of heterosexual love in the face of racism. The novelist explains how discrimination works as a monster in the face of African American and how white supremacy does not accept African American people as American citizens and deny their rights. Due to racism and economic situation, the characters of the novel do not get their rights and struggle to get marriage for a long time. However, Baldwin states the weakness of church and religion to find a solution for people. He believes in the power of love and family that help the protagonists of the novel to reach their goals.

Just above my Head boldly depicts the relationship between two males. Baldwin exposes that homophobia and heterosexism are major reasons behind the emergence of homosexuality in his society. He describes the culture and traditions of his people in this novel and how homosexuality becomes part of this culture. Baldwin clearly shows how racism affects and damages everything for the African American people through the protagonist's brother. Racism becomes as a disease and a plague in his society.

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To my loving parents, who have defined who I am and giving my life real meaning, I dedicated this book to them.

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