AT HOME BUT NOT AT EASE, THE TRAPPED IDENTITIES IN THE LAND OF THE FREE: THE POLITICS OF RACE AND SEXUALITY IN JAMES BALDWIN'S FICTION

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by

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For all those who have a dream to hold on and never give it up

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1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.
2. The advanced study of English Language and Literature graduate program of which this thesis is part has consisted of:

i) ResearchMethods courses both in the undergraduate and graduate programs.

ii) English literature as well as American literature including nevel, poetry, and drama studies, a comparative approach to world literatures, and examination of several literary theories as well as critical approaches which have contributed to this thesis in an effective way.

iii) The thesis is composed of main sources including three novels discussed in relation to each other; and the secondary sources including scholarly articles from a variety of academic journals; and theoretical books on race and sexuality in general and African American culture in particular.

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ABSTRACT

Tuğba ELMAS **June 2013**

AT HOME BUT NOT AT EASE, THE TRAPPED IDENTITIES IN THE LAND OF THE FREE: THE POLITICS OF RACE AND SEXUALITY IN JAMES BALDWIN'S FICTION

This thesis firstly investigates the concept of race and sexuality; how these two elements shape one's identity; and how hierarchical structures and political discourses emerge out of them through writers and intellectuals like W. E. B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, and bell hooks. Then, the thesis analyzes these concepts in James Baldwin's three novels: *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, *Another Country*, and *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* within religious and secular context. In these novels, Baldwin reflects a contradictive world where the American dream, along with its utopic ideals, clashes with the American practices resulting from binary oppositions on which American society is based. Thus, the thesis examines the hierarchical relationship between the white and the black; female and male; and homosexual and heterosexual in order to deconstruct them.

The aim of this thesis is to .examine Baldwin's fiction as a mirror of the American dilemma which traps its citizens at their "home" and to discuss how all forms of exploitation work in the same way through the similarities between the experiences of different oppressed groups in terms of race, sexuality, and gender. As the reason of the alienation and pain of Baldwin's characters is "difference," the thesis suggests that Baldwin offers a solution to the hierarchical and oppressive nature of his country through reflecting a need to accept the similarities between people rather than pointing at differences; and thereby, aims to lessen the distance between the American dream and reality.

Key Words:

Race, Sexuality, Gender, Homosexuality, Patriarchy, Masculinity, Identity, Religion, Essentialism

KISA ÖZET

Tuğba ELMAS **June 2013**

VATANINDA AMA HUZURSUZ, ÖZGÜRLÜK ÜLKESİNDE KAPANA KISILMIŞ KİŞİLİKLER: JAMES BALDWIN'İN ROMANLARINDA IRK VE CİNSELLİK POLİTİKASI

Bu tez, öncelikle, ırk ve cinsiyet kavramlarını; bu kavramların insan kimliğini nasıl şekillendirdiğini; ve sıradüzensel (hiyerarşik) yapıların ve politik söylemlerin bu iki kavramdan nasıl doğduğunu, W. E. B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, ve bell hooks gibi yazar ve düşünürlerin ışığı altında incelemektedir. Tezde daha sonra, bu kavramlar, James Baldwin'in *Go Tell It on the Mountain, Another Country* ve *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* romanlarında dini ve laik içeriğiyle analiz edilmektedir. Bu romanlarda, Baldwin, Amerikan rüyası ve ütopik ideallerinin, toplumun temel taşını oluşturan ikili karşıtlık ilkesinden dolayı, Amerikan uygularımyla çakıştığı zıt bir dünya yansıtmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu tez beyaz ve siyah, kadın ve erkek, heteroseksüel ve homoseksüel arasındaki hiyerarşik ilişkiyi incelemektedir.

Bu tezin amacı, Baldwin'in romanlarını, kendi insanlarını "vatanında" kapana kıstıran Amerikan ikilemine bir ayna olarak incelemek; ve bütün sömürü biçimlerinin nasıl aynı şekilde çalıştığını ırk, cinsellik, ve cinsiyet yönünden ezilen değişik grupların benzer deneyimleriyle tartışmaktır. Baldwin'in karakterlerinin ötekileştirilmelerinin ve acılarının nedeni "farklılık" olduğundan, bu tez Baldwin'in insanlardaki farklılıkları ortaya çıkarmak yerine benzerliklerine odaklanmaya olan ihtiyacı göstererek ülkesinin hiyerarşik ve baskıcı yapısına bir çözüm sunduğunu ve böylece Amerikan rüyası ve gerçeği arasındaki mesafeyi azalttığını savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Irk, Cinsellik, Cinsiyet, Homoseksüellik, Ataerkillik, Maskülinite, Kimlik, Din, Esasçılık

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INTRODUCTION

> *We are all androgynous, not only because we are all born of a woman impregnated by the seed of a man but because each of us, helplessly and forever, contains the other — male in female, female in male, white in black and black in white. We are a part of each other.*
>
> *James Baldwin, "Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood"*

An ideal and democratic government together with a tolerant, forgiving, and egalitarian society has been dreamed, desired, and searched for by human beings since the very beginning. On the other hand, the dream of domination, the desire to keep the power in one's hand, and the wish to be superior have also been yearned for. This state of ambivalence is especially apparent in the case of the United States of America, a country that is torn between its ideals and practices. On the one side, there are its utopic ideals that embrace every person in the world without a hegemonic order. On the other side, its somewhat dystopian practices regarding its citizens who do not fit the qualifications necessary to be included and accepted in mainstream culture exist.

These "qualifications" imply a certain kind of rejection of difference. Every relationship carries with itself a hegemonic order: black people are regarded as inferior to white people; women are accepted as inferior to men; heterosexual desire is redeemed far beyond homoerotic desire, and so on. As a homosexual African American, James Baldwin belongs to a minority within a minority; and as a stranger in his so-called democratic and freedom-loving country, he experiences alienation and makes his readers know his experiences which are hard to believe when the ideals of his country are taken into consideration. In his works, Baldwin tries to negotiate conflicting groups with each other. That is to say, he shows the equality of human beings by reflecting them as a part of each other without a system of hierarchy.

This thesis is basically about race and sexuality; and how these two elements affect people and are used at times for the interests of the people; and particularly about how race and sexuality work in the United States of America where Baldwin portrays a complex relationship between the world of dreams and the world of bitter reality. In three of his novels, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, *Another Country*, and *Tell*

Me How Long the Train's Been Gone, Baldwin examines the lives of his countrymen through both forgiving and critical analysis. The aim of this thesis is to analyze how different the political discourse and practices of a country can be and how it affects the people who live there through a complex interrelationship among all kinds of oppression regarding one's race, sexual orientation, and gender.

The first chapter of this thesis mostly deals with the historical background of race and sexuality in the United States of America, and how these histories work in a complementary way to shape the identities of the American people, especially the African Americans through some theoretical analysis. First of all, I critique Jennifer L. Hochschild's study on the American dream and what this dream hides underneath its shining and promising surface. Hochschild examines the concept of American dream within four tenets which pose the questions of what is the American dream, who can have it, how can one pursue it, and why one should pursue it. Through these questions, Hochschild deconstructs the ideal portrait of the American dream as the answers to her questions bring out the fact that not all of the citizens of the United States have the means to reach it. Then, I analyze the ideas of intellectuals like Du Bois and Frantz Fanon on the issue of race. I examine Du Bois' remark on race as a veil and how this affects the relationship between different races in America. Besides, Fanon's analysis on how illusions like whiteness and blackness become the touchstones of the hegemonic structures is examined and analyzed within the context of Baldwin's views.

The first chapter also covers the issue of patriarchy regarding black men and women with an analysis of bell hooks' works. As hooks has suggested, the chapter analyzes how black women come to be so inferior, in her own words, "at the bottom" of the social hierarchy, and how black men cling to the norms of white patriarchy in order to claim at least a limited power over women. Also, the enlightening book by John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* is examined in terms of how race and sexuality are interrelated as a form of oppression and exploitation; in other words, how one's race has affected one's sexuality in America.

The second chapter of the thesis covers Baldwin's first novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, a novel that exclusively focuses on the lives of black people. Baldwin's

ideas on the black church and how it affects the lives of black people are examined. I suggest that the church, as the only available institution and area of power in the lives of the black characters, has an important role on the identity of the individual. Through the character Gabriel, the power the church gives to the African American male and the illusion of a sense of self-worth regarding the love of God are examined. Gabriel becomes the symbol of the spiritual exploitation of the church. Through the character Elizabeth, the black church becomes both a refuge that may undo what is done to black people, and a justification of the subjugation of African American women. On the other side, Florence poses a different approach to the racist and patriarchal society with the rejection of her own people. Last but not least, John, as a representation of the new generation, examined as a reflection of the American dilemma and a new hope for the future generations through his loving and homoerotic conversion.

In the third chapter of the thesis, I analyze Baldwin's third novel *Another Country* as a way of showing how all forms of exploitation work in the same manner in the United States and how all the characters are trapped in the contradiction between how the society regards them and how they actually are. The examination of heterosexual and interracial relationships through the couples Leona and Rufus; and Ida and Vivaldo reveals that the effects of racism, and therefore the effects of sexuality on the American characters mostly cause to destroy themselves and the others. Also, through the homoerotic relationship between Vivaldo and Eric, Baldwin's implications on homosexuality as a liberating love are examined in contrast to the values of the heterosexual American community. Besides, the intraracial relationship between Cass and Richard is examined as a proof to the similarity between the sufferings of the characters: both white and black, heterosexual and homosexual, male and female who are, in Baldwin's words, "equal in misery, confusion, and despair" (*Another Country*).

In the fourth and last chapter, I analyze Baldwin's fourth novel *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* as a continuation and reevaluation of the issues in the above-mentioned novels. Unlike the two, in this novel, Baldwin lets his protagonist Leo Proudhammer reach his American dream. Yet, contrary to the promising end of the first novel where John gives the impression of the possibility of a better life, Leo,

through his bitter experiences, sheds light on the hidden realities of the American dream among which are the inevitability of loneliness, the impossibility of equality, and the price of becoming successful in his intraracial and interracial relationships. Once more, the novel explores the devastating effects of racism in terms of humanity in general and black masculinity specifically, and the useless solution of religion as it completely passivates the individual. As for interracial relationships, even though Leo and his white and rich friend Barbara are conscious and resist the essentialist views of race, Baldwin implies a failure through the presence of Christopher who does not pose an interracial model for the political resistance but calls for "guns."

The thesis finally comes to the conclusion that Baldwin's above-mentioned novels reflect his wish to awaken his countrymen who have long been in the illusionary world of the American dream and to shed light on the reality of both white and black Americans through his characters who are "at home but not at ease." Baldwin gives a solution to the "Negro problem" which is, according to him, the American problem by showing the similarity between different kinds of oppression, and in this way, trying to destroy the hierarchical roots of the American practices. That is to say, through the analysis of race and sexuality and how they are exploited by the dominant culture to create hierarchies in society, Baldwin embraces a constructive attitude rather than a destructive one. In his novels, he refuses to create and to accept the hierarchical polarities among different groups of people and reflects the need to love and embrace the self and the Other together in a realistic and honest way in order to create a truly free individual and a truly free country.

CHAPTER 1

THE RHETORIC AND THE REALITY OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

> *A civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization.*
> *A civilization that chooses to close its eyes to its most crucial problems is a stricken civilization.*
> *A civilization that uses its principles for trickery and deceit is a dying civilization.*
>
> − *Aimé Césaire (1)*

1.1. The "Incorrigible Disturber of the Peace" and the American Dream

Race and sexuality, the indispensable elements of one's identity, have been examined, discussed, evaluated, and theorized by intellectuals, philosophers, political scientists, psychologists, and sociologists. However, the most important of them, most probably, is the artist, the writer who is supposed to be the mirror of his society in which the issues of race and sexuality are shaped and internalized accordingly by the members of the society. He is the one who can reach far beyond the fields of philosophy, politics, psychology, and sociology as his tool, literature, can address a wider range of people from all around the world no matter which job they have, which class they belong to, or what kind of education they get. Of all the societies throughout world history, the United States of America has been very remarkable in many respects regarding its founding ideals and its "dream," and of all the American writers in general and African American writers in particular, James Arthur Baldwin can be regarded as unique in many ways in terms of the issues he touches on and his shockingly challenging openness in both his fiction and nonfiction. The examination of these two, the United States of America and Baldwin, can be an invaluable experience in understanding one's society, one's own identity, and above all, as Baldwin would call it, "our humanity" especially in the racial and sexual context.

In his essay, "The Creative Process," Baldwin defines the artist as the "incorrigible disturber of the peace." Belonging to a nation that boasts of its democratic and egalitarian principles, but a nation that also has a history of slavery

and is based on patriarchy, Baldwin, as an artist, feels a need to challenge the so-called “peace” in his country through both his fiction and nonfiction. On the surface, his country is, as the national anthem of the United States asserts, “the land of the free and the home of the brave.” However, whether it is valid for all its citizens or not remains an unanswered question. Therefore, Baldwin goes on in his essay, "Society must accept some things as real; but he [the artist] must always know that the visible reality hides a deeper one, and that all our action and all our achievement rests on things *unseen*. A society must assume that it is stable, but the artist must know, and he must let us know, that there is nothing stable under heaven" (italics added). Regarding everything in a society as unstable and the reality as hiding a deeper and a bitter reality. Baldwin rejects the identity categories and definitions of the society he grew up. His subject matter consists directly of the taboos in the United States concerning religion, race, sexuality, interracial relationships, and so on. Baldwin attacks and deconstructs everything constructed by American society including anything sacred or taboo. He tries to wake his countrymen who “have set up themselves a fantastic system of evasions, denials, and justifications, which system is about to destroy their grasp of reality, which is another way of saying their moral sense" (Baldwin, “The White Problem”).

But what is the illusion that Baldwin repeats in his writings all the time, what is it that he blames his countrymen for having? It is directly related to the democratic principles of the United States including the famous American dream which so many people have searched for, but at the same time, which so many people have been unable to reach. In her book *Facing Up to the American Dream,* Jennifer L. Hochschild regards the American dream as a phenomenon that makes America a new world where anything is possible for any person no matter who he is, and she relates it to the concept of success. In order to evaluate its measurement, she divides success into three parts as absolute, relative and competitive (16). In the Absolute success, the person’s success is obvious compared with his previous condition, and everybody may achieve it. In the Relative one, one’s success is rather related to his neighbors, friends, etc. However, in the Competitive success, one’s success requires another’s failure. In other words, the success which is the basis of the American dream and

which the American dream seems to promise most is very narrowly defined and addressed only to the few. Focusing on the measurement of success. Hochschild examines the American dream under four tenets in order to shed light on the deeper reality of the dream that Baldwin deconstructs.

The first tenet of the American dream is that everyone may pursue it. Hochschild poses the question, "Who may pursue the American dream?" (18). The standard ideology of the American dream promises at best and implies at worst opportunities and possibilities for everyone regardless of his family background, race, gender, and sexual orientation. However, it is a flawed thought when the practices in the United States are taken into consideration. As Hochschild states, it is "a fantasy to be sought but never achieved" (26). What is more, the first tenet not only implies the racist and sexist nature of the country, but also those that do not fit into the so-called category of "everybody" are excluded from the national self-perception as well. In other words, "not only has the ideal of universal participation been denied to most Americans, but also the very fact of its denial has itself been denied in our national self-image" (Hochschild 26).

The second tenet of success asks: What does one pursue? Hochschild's answer is, "reasonable anticipation." However, this anticipation is closely connected with possibility. It is like an anticipation of presents on one's birthday. Thus, the American dream, or America, is rather like "an extravagant birthday party" (Hochschild 19). Hochschild hints at the Walt Disney movies that give a message like the one in the lyrics of Pinocchio: "When you wish upon a star, makes no difference who you are, your dreams come true" (25). However, the problem begins with the distinction between the right to dream, or the right to anticipate, and the right to succeed. Does it really make no difference? Does everyone in the United States have the same expectations regarding their position in social life? Does a white man with a middle-class family background and a heterosexual orientation have the same dreams and expectations as a black girl who is both poor and lesbian? The questions challenge the idea that everybody in America has the same right to expect and dream. To shed light on the contrast between the richness of his country and limited availability of it, W. E. B. Du Bois, in *The Souls of Black Folk*, points

out, “To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships” (12).

The third tenet of the American dream, and maybe one of the most important, leads one to ask “How?” How does one pursue success? From the very beginning, starting with Puritan logic, hard work has been an important and indispensable element of daily life in America. But the idea that everyone can reach his dream if he works hard enough poses an unjust situation. Success and failure become the responsibility of the individual. If one succeeds, it is his success, the result of his hard work, not the opportunities that are supplied to him by his privileges over the minority groups. Likewise, if one fails, it is not anybody’s fault. If a poor man fails, it is not the rich man’s fault, not the exploitative system’s fault. It is only the individual’s fault. The ideology of the American dream blames the individual for his situation rather than the nation itself.

The fourth and last tenet contains the question, “Why?” Why is success worth pursuing? Because it is directly associated with virtue. If you are successful, you are virtuous. If you are virtuous, you are successful. There is also the other side of the coin: “If success implies virtue, failure implies sin” (Hochschild 30). Thus, if you fail, it means that you are sinful; you are even evil. This is the most problematic tenet as the logic underneath it gives people an opportunity to exclude, to define, to limit, and to label the losers without taking their social status and the opportunities that are available to them into consideration. The virtuous success gives a right to dominate the loser. As Hochschild notes:

> This phenomenon extends the idea of competitive success from individual victories to collective hierarchies. If women are weak and emotional, it is *right* for men to control their bodies and wealth; if blacks are childlike pagans, it is *right* for whites to ensure their physical and spiritual survival through enslavement and conversion; if citizens of other nations refuse to recognize the value of capitalism and free elections, it is *right* for Americans to install a more enlightened government in their capitol. (34, italics in the original)

Thus, worse than being just a fantasy, the American dream is among the justifications of the privileged group regarding the *unseen* realities of the country Baldwin talks about.

What contains even deeper realities than American dream is the myth of American origin, that people came to build a free nation with democratic principles. Baldwin examines the heroic ancestors in the national history and claims that nobody came to America just to be free. The reality is disguised. The aim of the people who came was to be better in every sense. "Anybody who was making it in England did not get on the *Mayflower*" (Baldwin, "The White Problem"). Actually, Baldwin deconstructs the heroic history of America rather bitterly:

> It's a bloody history, as bloody as everyone else's history, as deluded, as fanatical. One has only to look at the Pilgrims, the Puritans – the people who presumably fled oppression in Europe only to set up a more oppressed society here − people who wanted freedom, who killed off the Indians. Look at all the people moving into a new era, and enslaving all the blacks. These are the facts of American history as opposed to the legend. ("The Uses")

This myth of a free country is supported by the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" (1776). According to Baldwin, what is left with this great dream of equality, this dream of giving everybody the opportunity to pursue happiness is just an illusion, a self-image of Americans who, rather than seeing everyone as equal, create an atmosphere full of inequalities where only the happiness of the privileged one, the white middle-class male especially, is pursued. The violation of the well-known and accepted democratic principles is especially apparent in the racial history of the United States. Julius Lester deconstructs the ideals that so many Americans are proud of in theory but ignore in practice. "America has the rhetoric of freedom and the reality of slavery. It talks of peace, while dropping bombs. It speaks of self-determination for all people, while moving to control the means of production on which self-determination depends ... and if we seek to break out of this world, we're ostracized, clubbed, or murdered. Power maintains itself through rhetoric and force" (qtd. in hooks, *We Real Cool* 49). This

implies not only the contradiction between the ideal and the real, but also the alienation of people who challenge the illusions of mainstream society. In other words, the insistence on keeping the illusion makes the illusion even deeper by not letting people wake up and demand equality.

Baldwin, in his essay, "The White Problem," discusses the words of "liberty" and "freedom," and defines them as "misused words." Rather than just a slogan, liberty is rather a political possibility, and freedom is a phenomenon that does not free one of his responsibilities toward his society and his past, on the contrary, it requires responsibility. For Baldwin, the basis of freedom is responsibility, the responsibility to be true to oneself and to others. Otherwise, the misused freedom is, like all the other ideals, just a dream and illusion and nothing more. Thus, denying what you did in the past and are still doing in the present imprisons the self. Unless one becomes responsible and admits his mistakes, his lies, rather than creating an illusionary world of happiness, one is doomed to be kept behind bars of illusion and never be free.

The existence of the illusion from the national history to the everyday life concerning the issues of democracy, equality, and freedom makes entrapment inevitable. Implying all the Americans who believe in the perfect self-image of America but do not practice it in daily life, Baldwin explains, "We are very cruelly trapped between what we would like to be and what we actually are. And we cannot possibly become what we would like to be until we are willing to ask ourselves just why the lives we lead on this continent are mainly so empty, so tame, and so ugly" ("Mass Culture"). Inevitably, Baldwin's solution to the problem of entrapment is to ask, to challenge, and to change the current system of American identity that creates a contrast between the beliefs and the practices, and thus, creates a dilemma in the souls of people. Not every problem can be solved, and everything done throughout history cannot be undone just by being faced. However, as Baldwin nicely and clearly puts it, "not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced" ("As Much Truth").

Facing reality means facing history and accepting it the way it really is. Baldwin regards those Americans who live in the prison of illusion as innocent. However, innocence is not used positively, but rather too negatively: innocence in the sense of the inability to grow up, to mature. To grow up, one has to live in the real world,

rather than in a fantasy. If not, "people are trapped in history and history is trapped in them" (Baldwin, "Stranger in the Village"). Unless accepting it honestly and trying to change it, people are doomed to be trapped in history. But what does the United States history have that makes American people who live "in the land of the free" trapped and imprisoned? No wonder the first thing that comes to mind is the race problem which is kept hidden in the shadow of the American dream. As Baldwin points out, it is rather a delusion: "For the sake of one's children, in order to minimize the bill that they must pay, one must be careful not to take refuge in any delusion—and the value placed on the color of the skin is always and everywhere and forever a delusion" (Baldwin, "Down").

1.2. The Delusion of Color

In order to understand Baldwin's comment on color as a "delusion," one has to be aware of United States history; how the concept of race was created and the kind of role it has played in both the national identity and the individual identities of different races, especially in the famous dichotomy of white and black personalities. First of all, it is a delusion because everything that is based on the color of people is itself a delusion, as color is a socially constructed criterion rather than a reality that justifies actions made in the name of the color. As in the example of success and virtue in contrast to failure and sin, white has been associated with everything good. As Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, which is his psychological study on the effects of racism, states, "I am white, that is to say that I possess beauty and virtue, which have never been black. I am the color of the daylight" (31). Here, speaking like a white man, Fanon sheds light on the logic underneath the concept of "white." It is not just a color, but a way of living, a way of seeing, a way of categorizing oneself and the others on the basis of color. In Fanon's sentence, white is associated with beauty, virtue and daylight, all of which have obvious positive connotations. No one has ever connected beauty with evil, or virtue with evil. Daylight has always been the symbol of peace, beauty, and hope. On the contrary, these concepts "never have been black." This logic requires a binary opposition that implies everything that is not beautiful is black, everything that is not virtuous is

black, everything that does not have light is black. To sum up, black is in opposition of all the values white symbolizes.

The color black is, without doubt, the color of the "Negro." Thus, everything that is related to the blackness and darkness is also related to "Negroes." Fanon tries to explain the Negro image in the eyes of the whites by revealing an experience he had on a "white" winter day when a little white boy, with his mother, saw Fanon:

> The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly; look, a nigger, it's cold, the nigger is shivering, the nigger is shivering because he is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger, the nigger is shivering with cold, that cold that goes through your bones, the handsome little boy is trembling because he thinks that the nigger is quivering with rage, the little white boy throws himself into his mother's arms: Mama, the nigger's going to eat me up. (86)

In the scene above, the cold may be interpreted as all the hardships black people have to face in their lives as the "inferior." Fanon trembles because of the cold, as he may not have the necessary clothes that would keep him warm. However, the little white boy does not tremble because of the cold, as his whiteness protects him from anything unpleasant including the weather. He has the clothes he needs. After all, even the winter belongs to him with its "whiteness." What is more, the Negro is "ugly" whereas the little white boy is described as "handsome." Most important of all, however, is that the Negro is trembling with cold while the little white boy thinks he is trembling with rage. This image of an angry monster who is supposed to "eat him up" not only excludes the Negro from society but also from all the human race. It is an image that robs him of his humanity and puts him in the category of animals. The interesting thing is that the classification is made by a *little* boy. On one side, there is a grown-up "Negro," on the other side, there is a little white boy. Still, the white boy is presumably superior in terms of the opportunities that protect him from the cold, the beauty, and the right to "label" the Other. It also may imply that these categorizations are so internalized that even a little child is aware of his social status vis-à-vis the "Negro."

Binary oppositions are commonly used when one side dominates the other side. Du Bois gives an explanation of the issue: "Men call the shadow prejudice, and

learnedly explain it as the natural defense of culture against barbarism, learning against ignorance, purity against crime, the 'higher' against the 'lower' races" (12). As the source of the binary opposition process, the word "prejudice" is, however, rather optimistic. If anything, it is the innocence Baldwin talks about, the deliberate innocence, the wish not to know the other, the wish not to understand so that one can have prejudices that will enable him to behave as the "superior" one. Hence, the famous "Negro problem" of the United States is not due to prejudices, but due to the "innocent" atmosphere that is created on purpose. "The problem is one is still in a kindergarten, an emotional kindergarten, and the Negro in this country operates as some weird kind of gorilla who suddenly is breaking up all the blackboards" (Baldwin, "The Artist's Struggle").

The creation of somebody that is allegedly inferior to oneself is part and parcel of the domination logic. As Fanon puts it, "The feeling of inferiority of the colonized is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority. Let us have the courage to say it outright: *It is the racist who creates his inferior*" (69, italics in the original). Fanon addresses to Europeans but we can easily apply it to Baldwin's Americans as the same logic of superiority and inferiority on the basis of race is examined by both writers. However, Baldwin challenges any hierarchical term to describe and define any group. He states that "What I think of you says more about me than it can possibly say about you" ("The Uses"). Having this logic, Baldwin attacks his countrymen with their own assumptions, own prejudices, and accusations.

Furthermore, Baldwin denies white people's whiteness. In his essay, "On Being White…and Other Lies," he asserts that no one was white before he came to America. It is, thus, not a biological but an acquired qualification. Actually, it is not a qualification but rather a "lie." It is not just a simple coincidence that the title of Baldwin's essay connects whiteness with lies. It is the most important element of the illusion Baldwin wants his countrymen to get rid of in order to be a "free" nation in every sense of the word. Besides, not only does he reject whiteness in the individual but also the whiteness of the whole nation: "This nation is not now, never has been, and now never will be a white country. There is not a white person in this country, including our President and all his friends, who can prove he's white" ("On

Language"). As the whiteness is nothing more than a lie, a self-delusion, it must be challenged, cracked, and destroyed.

The polarized world of white and black is not without its severe consequences for both sides. As Fanon clearly points out, "the white man is locked in his whiteness, the black man in his blackness" (xiv). The color of their skin, in a way, determines their social roles, their external identifications. What is more, the skin color, in other words, the external identification of a person affects also his internal part as Georgia Warnke states, "one's external identification […] affects and helps to construct an internal identity" (64). To be identified as a part of a specific race demands certain roles determined by mainstream society. Warnke examines the issue carefully:

> The same holds for identifications as black, white, Asian, and Hispanic. The ascription establishes the circumstances of one's life, one's sense of how one fits into one's society, and the life trajectory one foresees and establishes for oneself. One's racial identification thus arranges the list of possibilities one draws from in planning one's life and it shapes the way one reacts both to others and to events. (64-65)

In the case of black people, to be given a racial identity with all its negative connotations, to be defined by others rather than defining themselves, to be regarded as inferior and, in Fanon's words, to be hated by an entire race, bring out hatred. As Baldwin indicates, "it demands great resilience not to hate the hater whose foot is on your neck" ("Down"). It goes without saying that the hatred black people have is not restricted to whites only, but also to themselves. As mentioned above, Du Bois regards prejudice as shadow, and the black person, too much darkened by the shadow of prejudice, loses his ability to see himself the way he is. Rather, he begins to see himself through the eyes of the others, the superior ones whose eyes reflect nothing but criticism, hatred, or at best, pity.

As for the whites, their domination over other people, or in other words, enslaving other people in the name of civilization, dehumanizes and decivilizes the white individual. Aimé Césaire, in his *Discourse on Colonialism,* claims that "First we must study how colonization works to decivilize the colonizer, to brutalize him in the true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness, violence, race hatred, and moral relativism; and we must show that

each time a head is cut off or an eye put out in Vietnam and in France they accept the fact" (2). It may be said that this analysis is addressed to the colonizers, the Europeans. However, Césaire's attitude toward the United States is obvious as he notes that "I make no secret of my opinion that at the present time the barbarism of Western Europe has reached an incredibly high level, being only surpassed − far surpassed, it is true – by the barbarism of the United States" (8). Thus, the descriptions of the colonizers as decivilized, degraded, and violent can directly be attributed to the Americans who slaughtered Native Americans and enslaved African Americans; and made a successful and glamorous romance out of genocide and slavery ("Freaks").

As the binary oppositions that are based on a hierarchical system harm both the whites and the blacks, Baldwin rejects the term "the Negro problem." According to him, it is not a Negro problem but the problem of Americans both white and black. On the surface, it is a matter of color but indeed it implies a much more important situation: the self. In the introduction to *Nobody Knows My Name*, Baldwin asserts that "The question of color, especially in this country, operates to hide the graver questions of the self. That is precisely why what we like to call 'the Negro problem' is so tenacious in American life, and so dangerous." As what one says about the Other reveals one's own nature, the definitions made by whites regarding blacks reveal much more about whites than blacks. Thus, the so-called Negro problem is actually, as Baldwin entitles one of his essays, a white problem within the context of blacks. That is to say, the solution of the problem requires both groups not to act against each other but toward each other. As it requires mutual effort, it makes both groups equal rather than superior versus inferior, because solving a problem together requires two active sides rather than one active and one passive side.

The roots of the Negro problem, on the other hand, go back to the whites who feel a need to create the Other. However, it is one of the most important reasons to white entrapment. As whites, they are trapped because of their skin color, because of the value and importance they impose on their skin color. Baldwin makes an analysis of this situation:

> A vast amount of the energy that goes into what we call the Negro problem is produced by the white man's profound desire not to be judged by those who are

> not white, not to be seen as he is, and at the same time a vast amount of the white anguish is rooted in the white man's equally profound need to be seen as he is, to be released from the tyranny of his mirror. ("Down")

To define oneself as white means to accept living in a world of fantasy which Baldwin strongly opposes. It is the foundation of everything in United States history. To be white is, as in Hochschild's concept of success connected with virtue, to be virtuous, and in order to be able to regard the white self as virtuous, one has to deny "the bloody history" Baldwin talks about. It is a vicious circle that imprisons one both in history and in his skin color together with the implications of the color. Thus, Baldwin's point is that it is the whites not the blacks who need to be freed at first from their illusions in order to have a free nation.

Despite the burden of illusions, the reason the so-called white people insist on denying reality is to keep their sense of identity and safety. In Baldwin's essays, the concepts of illusion and safety are closely intertwined. They are stuck in "the sunlit prison of the American dream," because it is easier to live with the known, the seen, the light, with everything positive ("Everybody's Protest Novel"). The unknown always poses a threat to one's safety. What is more, as Warnke puts it, the external identifications construct the internal identity. Being defined as white, in other words superior, shapes one's identity. But as it is an identity that is based on lies and illusions, sooner or later it is doomed to be challenged and changed. As Baldwin puts it, "Any upheaval in the universe is terrifying because it so profoundly attacks one's sense of one's own reality" ("The Fire"). Even the writings of Baldwin can be regarded as an upheaval to the whites, as his constant warning to reexamine United States history that is swept under the rug may inevitably rob them of their sense of reality. In other words, identity as their identity is directly based on their sense of reality, which according to Baldwin is nothing more than an illusion.

The idea that blacks actually are not sinful, inferior, beastlike, or anything negative brings out another idea: if one side of the binary opposition is an illusion, then what happens to the other side? The white and superior ones lose their legitimization. As Baldwin puts it, "If I am not what I've been told I am, then it means that you're not what you thought you were either! And that is the crisis" ("A Talk"). By accepting the equality of the blacks, regarding them as equals, the whites

would be giving up their superiority and safety. It is this fear of the chaos that will come after the acceptance of history the way it is, the fear of the unknown, the fear of losing one's identity that causes the whites to insist on living with an invented reality. That is why it requires courage to face the reality, and that is why Baldwin constantly calls for a bloodless revolution, a revolution not made in the fields but in the souls and minds of his countrymen whose national anthem regards them as "brave."

Giving up one's identity and one's sense of self is constantly deferred, because once a person accepts that his identity is constructed, not fixed, that everything shaping his identity may be a series of lies rather than truths, it brings out a world that has completely turned upside down. Once one accepts that everything – love, hatred, prejudices, and ideas – that has shaped one's identity is illusion, a painful process awaits him. As Baldwin indicates, "I imagine that one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, that they will be forced to deal with pain" ("Journey"). That is to say, if the white man stops hating the black man, there remains no justification, no relief when he faces the racist structure of his history. That is why United States history has to be disguised. Once the memories of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and segregation are revealed, without any hatred in the heart, it is impossible to bear the burden. A world that is out of order may be the hardest thing to bear, but it is also impossible to create order without first admitting one's out-of-orderness. Hence, Baldwin willingly demands this burden in order to create a truly free nation, to make the American dream really available to everyone.

As a writer who accepts life as it is together with its so-called negative sides, the unknown and unseen parts, Baldwin never undermines its undeniably important role in the transition from childhood to maturity, or to put it in Baldwin's words, from American innocence to maturity. Especially in his fiction, he focuses on the concept of suffering and how Americans use it. Rather than using the pain in a destructive way to the individual or to the society, Baldwin, out of pain, finds an opportunity to connect all his people, white and black. Pain, for him, is not a way of isolating people from each other. On the contrary, it is what makes them understand and love each other, and it can be used to rebuild a free nation of which America is so proud.

In his essay, "The Artist's Struggle for Integrity," Baldwin first touches on the destructive nature of suffering and the psychology of a person who is terribly hurt inside. It makes one feel that nobody has ever been hurt that much before. This idea of "nobody" makes the individual feel different from the others and gradually alienates him. However, according to Baldwin it can be used positively. The trick is to see the universality of suffering, to see that not only the self but also everybody is, in some way or another, hurt. Baldwin explains what to do with one's suffering: "You must understand that your pain is trivial except insofar as you can use it to connect with other people's pain; and insofar as you can do that with your pain, you can be released from it, and then hopefully it works the other way around too; insofar as I can tell you what it is to suffer, perhaps I can help you to suffer less."

Another way and most probably the most important way for Baldwin to solve the Negro problem and the white problem is the concept of love. Both in his fiction and nonfiction, Baldwin focuses on the need to love the self and the others as a prerequisite to be freed from the nightmare of history and from the prison of the self. In an interview with Richard Goldstein in 1984, Baldwin explains that his books *Giovanni's Room* which deals with homosexuality on the surface and *Go Tell It on the Mountain* which focuses on the church are not actually about homosexuality and the church, but "it's about what happens to you if you're afraid to love anybody" (qtd in. Holland 287). However, he makes a distinction between the American concept of love and his own. There is a huge difference between the two as he explains, clearly, "I use the word 'love' here not merely in the personal sense but as a state of being, or a state of grace — not in the infantile American sense of being made happy but in the tough and universal sense of quest and daring and growth" ("Down"). Thus, Baldwin's concept of love is, in every sense of the word, a search for identity. Like suffering, it is not easy to include love in one's life because it requires courage to ask oneself questions that have been deferred so long. These are questions that lead one to the unseen and unknown part of life, which is to say, one's real self. Through Baldwinian love, one finds out who one really is and thus who "the Other" is. One is afraid to love, because in order to be able to love anyone, one first needs to love oneself. And in order to be able to love oneself, one needs to first find out who one is. It is a search for both the pleasant and unpleasant truths about one's nature.

After one struggles in pain, struggles for love, in other words, for one's identity, one needs to accept the result. It is necessary to accept one's weaknesses along with one's strengths, to accept one's bad memories along with the good ones. Most importantly, it is crucial to accept one's "other" side which has been projected onto the stranger for so long. As mentioned earlier, the white man is as enslaved as the black man. The latter is enslaved by the former, but the former is enslaved by his own image which he has created as the superior and perfect one. Nobody is perfect and nobody is superior to anyone, only by accepting this equality can the nation be free for Baldwin. Americans need to get rid of their superiority, which is their illusion, in order to free themselves of the heavy burden of not being able to be human. This is because to be human is to have weaknesses and to accept them as natural.

The concept of Baldwinian acceptance, however, includes the complexity of human nature in more general terms. Baldwin, in all his writing, denies simple definitions, simple categorizations, and binary oppositions. Life is not divided into two polarized parts as white and black. Nothing is completely white, and nothing is completely black. Likewise, nothing is completely good, and nothing is completely bad. Every human being carries in himself all the aspects of human nature. As the easiest way to categorize people, the binary opposition is an essentialist outlook. Baldwin strongly opposes this view. In his book *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said observes that "The difficulty with theories of essentialism and exclusiveness, or with barriers and sides, is that they give rise to polarizations that absolve and forgive ignorance and demagogy more than they enable knowledge" (31). Thus, essentialism, or stereotyping, far from helping the creation of a free and peaceful nation, is the very root of prejudices and hatred. By creating two polarized worlds of whites and blacks, knowledge of these groups is not gained. On the contrary, ignorance is encouraged. This ignorance Said mentions is closely related to the American innocence Baldwin strongly criticizes. A world that forgives ignorance or innocence is not a world that reflects the American dream. The way to freedom is, according to Baldwin, to be released from the tyranny of ignorance and to accept the complexity of human nature.

Baldwin's attack on the simple categorizations of people is most obvious when he criticizes the protest fiction, a criticism that is not one-sided. Baldwin especially attacks those who are supposed to fight for their race but are imprisoned in the narrowly defined categorizations of the society. In his famous essay, "Everybody's Protest Novel," Baldwin criticizes Richard Wright's representation of black people through the character of Bigger Thomas whose character is shaped by the racist atmosphere he lives in. These novels, says Baldwin, imply that socially constructed categorizations of people cannot be transcended. Denying this simple outlook, Baldwin calls for the acceptance of the complexity of the human nature:

> For Bigger's tragedy is not that he is cold or black or hungry, not even that he is American, black; but that he has accepted a theology that denies him life, that he admits the possibility of his being sub-human and feels constrained, therefore, to battle for his humanity according to those brutal criteria bequeathed him at his birth. But our humanity is our burden, our life; we need not battle for it; we need only to do what is infinitely more difficult — that is, accept it.

Baldwin criticizes Bigger's inability to transcend the category chosen for him by the society, because "defining one's identity so narrowly, one also risked defining narrowly the authority deriving from that identity. To define identity solely through what is most characteristic on the surface is to limit identity to that surface" (Ross 27). What Baldwin demands is to reject all the narrowly defined categorizations and to face the "ugly" truths that await one when he deconstructs these categorizations.

In everything that is related to United States racial history, there is this desire for categorizations. As Baldwin points out, "Our passion for categorization […] has led to an unforeseen, paradoxical distress; a breakdown of meaning. Those categories which were meant to define and control the world for us have boomeranged us into chaos; in which limbo we whirl, clutching the straws of our definitions" ("Everybody's Protest Novel"). This chaos Baldwin talks about is the other side of the coin of the American dream and must be examined, challenged, deconstructed, and changed.

1.3. Sexuality and Otherness

Race, as one of the most limiting identity categorization elements, is not the only one for which Baldwin blames his countrymen. It is not the only oppression and imprisonment people are exposed to, and not the only field where the ideals of the United States are violated. Another important element is sexuality. However, sexuality is not to be examined apart from race, but rather, together with it. As both race and sexuality are used as a justification to dominate the Other through the strictly defined hierarchical categorizations, their separation may inevitably cause to undermine their huge and undeniable role in the creation of imprisoned identities in the land of the free.

One has to be aware of the "deeper reality" of the United States sexual history in order to understand how sexuality and race are used to create a hierarchical social system in a country that is regarded as a world of dreams. First of all, when Europeans came to America, the Native Americans who were a different race and naturally had a different culture were regarded and treated as the Other because of their "uncivilized" manners such as polygamy, nudity, and cross-dressing, all of which were associated with sin. In their book *Intimate Matters*: *A History of Sexuality in America*, John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman state that "whites stereotyped other groups as negative images of their own ideals. By labeling them sexual savages, whites reassured themselves that their own race was indeed the civilized one it aspired to be." Thus, through the sexual difference among groups, Europeans who would soon become Americans created a system of hierarchy. Rather than creating an atmosphere of diversity, a nation of variegated cultures, Europeans used the differences as an opportunity to create a polarized world where white meant civilization whereas black meant savagery. In other words, a world where sexual and racial differences either led to superiority or inferiority. It was the same with the Africans who were also different and thus, inferior. bell hooks clarifies white culture's obsession with domination: "Since sexuality in the West has been linked to fantasies of domination from its inception (the domination of nature, of women) African people in the so-called new world were automatically entering a setting where the sexual script was encoded with sadomasochistic rituals of domination, of power and play" (*We Real Cool* 65).

The domination of the white race through sexuality is apparent mostly in the interracial relationships especially in the South where the "Southern whites and blacks, slavery and the culture that supported it generated a unique moral system" (D'Emilio and Freedman). Actually, slavery became a form of sexual exploitation for white men who enjoyed extreme sexual privilege. Since African Americans were accepted as sexual savages, white people used them for their "economic need to human property and psychological need to dominate" with impunity. In short, white men, through the binary opposition, gained control over blacks in terms of economic, psychological and sexual exploitation. In the slavery period, black women were available to white men whenever they wanted, as black women were seen as the property of the "master" rather than human beings. Not only in slavery, but also in the Reconstruction era and in the following generation, white men enjoyed total domination over black women. John Dollard states that white Southern males "began their sexual experience with Negro girls, usually around the ages of fifteen and sixteen" (qtd. in D'Emilio and Freedman). The justification was always ready for white men's actions: "If black women were raped in slavery it was because they were licentious and seductive or so white men told themselves" (hooks, *We Real Cool* 63). This treatment of black women as properties or objects brings into mind Césaire's equation of "colonization = thingification" (6). Likewise, black women were thingificated. As colonization was justified by the inferiority of some races, the sexual exploitation of black women was justified by their inferiority regarding their lack of "morality." They were immoral and lustful savages, so the sexual relationships between white men and black women, far from classified as rape or exploitation, was nothing more than black women's willingness to be with white men (D'Emilio and Freedman).

Part of the reason black women were treated as immoral beings is that in the slavery period, black people were not able to marry whenever they wanted. Rather, it was their master's decision whether to let the slaves marry or not. Once they were married, it was not guaranteed that they would not be separated. Whenever the master moved to another farm, he could simply ignore the marriage of his slave and take the slave with him without his wife or her husband (D'Emilio and Freedman). It was a vicious circle: blacks were enslaved because they were inferior, uncivilized,

and sexual savages; and they were again criticized and regarded as immoral because of the life conditions they were exposed to during slavery. After slavery, black women kept bearing children out of wedlock, which strengthened the negative image. However, it was mostly not due to immorality as the popular view claimed. Du Bois deconstructs the image of immoral black people:

> In those days Sam, with his master's consent, "took up" with Mary. No ceremony was necessary, and in the busy life of the great plantations of the Black Belt it was usually dispensed with. If now the master needed Sam's work in another plantation or in another part of the same plantation, or if he took a notion to sell the slave, Sam's married life with Mary was usually unceremoniously broken, and then it was clearly to the master's interest to have both of them take new mates. This widespread custom of two centuries has not been eradicated in thirty years. Today Sam's grandson "takes up" with a woman without license or ceremony; they live together decently and honestly, and are, to all intents and purposes, man and wife. (98)

Thus, rather than immorality, or prostitution, the relationship among black people was a matter of easy marriage and easy separation; a long tradition and culture that emerged out of slavery.

Living in a patriarchal and racist society, black women were at the bottom of the social ladder both because of their race and gender. As D'Emilio and Freedman point out, "We are also beginning to understand far better than before how racial thought influenced gender identity throughout our history. African American women, whatever their class, did not enjoy the privileges of 'womanhood,' a term that connoted sexual respectability and carried a modicum of protection from insult or violence." Likewise, so many years after these discussions, hooks examines the social status of black women and asks her students about it in the class. Confronted with reactions such as "we have gone beyond these problems," hooks asks her students what they would want to be if they were to be born again. "The number of response for each category usually follows the lines of the existing social order: white male, white female, black male, black female. Usually no one, even black females, chooses to return as a black female" (*We Real Cool* 126). That is to say, at

the bottom of the racial and sexual hierarchy, black women were among the first who reflected the other side of the coin of the American dream.

The sexual relationships between white men and black women bring into mind the problem of offspring. After all, the superiority of the whites was secured through their race. In a society where white men had extreme sexual freedom with black women, how would the racial purity, thus, racial superiority be maintained? First of all, white men rejected their desires for black flesh. It was because of black women's seductiveness and willingness that they had sexual relationships with the blacks, not because of their own desires. This projection of white desire onto black individual paved the way for the denial of the offspring of these unions. Race became something to be measured and "different states employed different standards to decide the issue. Some insisted that one was black if one-fourth of one's total 'blood' was of African descent, while others were satisfied with one-sixteenth of one's blood" (Warnke 50). What is more, after the end of the slavery, it became even worse as whites now might not exclude the blacks as personal properties. Thus, in order to be able distinguish between whites and blacks together with the offspring of white men and black women, the "one-drop rule" became valid. According to the rule, anyone who had one African ancestor was counted as a black person (Warnke 55). Denying all the privileges of the whites from the mulattos, white men both rejected their sexual relationships with black women and kept their racial "purity."

The portrayal of black women as available, lustful, and immoral; the denial of the "whiteness" in their offspring; the deprivation of womanhood and its respectability they experienced all resulted from the same reason: sex, together with race, is used as a means of power, domination, and politics. As Said claims, essentialism forgives ignorance. Even though they stereotyped black female sexuality, white men were forgiven for their ignorance. However, it was a deliberate ignorance in order to dominate an entire race, in order to keep the white race pure and superior. Besides, the exploitation of black women was not just an attack on the black female identity, but also an attack on black male masculinity. In the slavery period, witnessing the sexual relationships of his master and his own wife, black man, who was already made inferior because of his race, was deprived of his "manhood" in a society based on patriarchal values. Thus, the whole control of black female sexuality was a direct

assault on black masculinity, an assault that helped white men keep his superior position in social hierarchy. Baldwin examines the hierarchical relationship between the white and black men, and points out that “the white man's masculinity depends on a denial of the masculinity of the blacks” (“Down”). That is to say, by doing whatever they wanted to do with black women regardless of their husbands, fathers, and sons, white men denied and dominated black masculinity.

The sexual history of the United States is a history of projections and domination. The projections were not limited to black women, but, on the contrary, extremely applied to black men. As Fanon defines it “the sexual myth — the quest for white flesh — perpetuated by alienated psyches” was always a part of the American myths and illusions that Baldwin regards as entrapments for both whites and blacks (60). The popular image of the black man was that of a beastlike, violent, immoral creature. As hooks indicates,

> Prior to the black power movement of the sixties, black men worked overtime to counter racist sexist stereotypes that represented them as beasts, monsters, demons. Indeed, many of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century racist sexist stereotypes attributed to black males are traits that are today considered to be the mark of psychopaths. (We Real Cool 44)

As happened in the sexual relationship between white men and black women, the sexual relationship between white women and black men was determined by the ultimate power: white men. Treated as “psychopaths,” black men were seen as a big threat to the idealized white female purity. It was, again, a binary opposition and underneath, a hierarchy. There was a deep contrast between the role of white women and black women in society. Like in the case of manhood in which white men’s manhood depended on the denial of black men’s, white women’s womanhood, or in other words, purity was highly contrasted with black women’s availability and immorality, that is to say, the freedom of white men to have sexual relationship with a black woman was completely denied to black men regarding white women. It became a symbol of power and domination, rather than a matter of personal choice. By creating a taboo, white men dominated black women as, unlike white women, they were regarded as available and “impure;” dominated black men as, while they had the freedom to do everything with the black race, black men were deprived of

this opportunity; and dominated white women as, while they had sexual relationships with the other race, white women were to be kept pure, that is to say, kept under control.

To say it in Fanon's words, "the sexual myth, the quest for white flesh" enabled white men to accuse black men of raping white women. As D'Emilio and Freedman point out, "Probably the rarest form of interracial union, but the most symbolically charged, was the rape of a white woman by a black man." First of all, it was because black men wished for the white flesh; it was whiteness that black people wanted. Phillip Alexander Bruce, a white historian, claimed that black men found "something strangely alluring and seductive … in the appearance of the white women; they are aroused and stimulated by its foreignness to their experience of sexual pleasures, and it moves them to gratify their lust at any cost and in spite of every obstacle" (qtd. in D'Emilio and Freedman). Secondly, it was defined as "rape," because the only way for white women to have a sexual relationship with a black man was by force. No white women could have it willingly. The popular outlook condemned the black flesh while glorifying the white one. hooks explains the image of the black male rapist as "The history of the black male body begins in the United States with projections, with the imposition onto that body of white racist sexist pornographic sexual fantasies. Central to this fantasy is the idea of the black male rapist" (*We Real Cool* 63). When one was accused of raping a woman, one's race was the determining factor. If a black woman accused a white man of rape, nothing happened. But, when a white woman or a white man accused a black man of raping a white woman, without any need for proof, the result was very harsh. Actually, "the harshest penalties for sexual assault applied to blacks who attacked white women" (D'Emilio and Freedman).

The harshest penalties for the accusation of raping a white woman were lynching and castration. In the name of protecting the idealized white female purity, black men were lynched and castrated. It was because even the possibility of a sexual relationship between a black man and white woman challenged the very roots of the racial hierarchy of the South. In order to keep the power, white men deprived black men of their manhood with the practice of castration. As D'Emilio and Freedman point out, "the concept of 'white manhood' − constructed an opposition to an image

of sexually degenerate black men − added racial power to male gender identity." It was a system in which the white women became a symbol of power. As the power was taken from the whiteness, it was to be kept pure. If there were no white and black people because of these sexual relationships, then, who would be the powerful and the superior? That is why the intercourse between white women and black men was so desperately resisted and feared.

Besides, most of the time the reason behind the accusations of rape was to keep the black men in their place. hooks states that "Most black men were lynched as retaliation for their assaults on white men. However, in the public imagination both in the past and in the present, lynching is associated with sexuality" (*We Real Cool* 64). Another reason was the exploitation of black women by white men. The black men, who reacted against those sexual assaults, or sometimes murdered the man who assaulted the girl, were lynched in the name of protecting white women. What is more, as the economically better black men posed a threat to the power of white men, they were also accused of rape. "In some cases, the victim was a successful shopkeeper or businessman. His execution served as a grisly reminder to Southern blacks to stay in their place" (D'Emilio and Freedman). In short, with the excuse of protecting white women from the "beastlike" black men, white men found a way to keep their superiority and power over the black race.

However, race is not the only excuse for white men to dominate others. Within the same race, the Other is the other sex – the women. As hooks points out, "All of us, female and male, have been socialized from birth on to accept sexist thought and action" (*Feminism* viii). Living in a patriarchal country, white women were also regarded as inferior when compared to white men. It is true that white women did not suffer from the negative image of womanhood like black women. They were not regarded as lustful or sexually available. On the contrary, especially in the South, white womanhood was idealized and defined as pure. However, just as the inferiority of black women caused their imprisonment within the stereotypes of immoral and lustful image; the superiority of white women also caused their imprisonment in a narrowly defined identity chosen for them by the patriarchal society. To be pure and virtuous meant to have no freedom over one's acts. Whereas since the time of slavery white men enjoyed sexual relationships outside marriage, the role of white women

was restricted to wifehood and motherhood. As in the issue of race, the superiority of white men over women was strengthened by scientists and society. As D'Emilio and Freedman explain, "Just as Enlightenment views about individual happiness applied primarily to men, so too did medical ideas increasingly differentiate by gender, encouraging men, but not women, to seek sexual pleasure." Sexual pleasure was something sought by men, not by women − at least not by virtuous women. Whereas sex was a way of "pursuit of happiness" for men, it was just a means, an obligation for women in order to be mothers. "Also, men: active, aggressive and sexually insistent, and easily excited, while women, if not quite passive, needed the attention and stimulus of the male to be aroused" (D'Emilio and Freedman). This concept of active and passive created a world of hierarchy even among people within the same race.

Baldwin examines the American attitude toward women in the mass culture and states that "The woman, in these energetic works, is the unknown quantity, the incarnation of sexual evil, the smiler with the knife. It is the man, who, for all his tommy-guns and rhetoric, is the innocent, inexplicably, compulsively and perpetually betrayed" ("Preservation"). Thus, women are "the sexual evil" whereas men are innocent. It is this innocence that Baldwin always attacks and wants to destroy, because the preservation of innocence also means the creation and existence of an external evil. Baldwin examines this innocence versus evil ideology of the American view of sexuality: "The American ideal of […] sexuality appears to be rooted in the American ideal of masculinity. This ideal has created cowboys and Indians, good guys and bad guys, punks and studs, tough guys and softies, butch and faggot, black and white" ("Freaks"). All of these binary oppositions imply a system of hierarchy where the evil in oneself is projected upon the Other. According to Baldwin, however, in order to be truly free, one has to accept the evil within rather than always creating an evil on the bodies and souls of other people. As Baldwin observes, "It has always been much easier (because it has always seemed much safer) to give a name to the evil without than to locate the terror within" ("Nothing Personal"). He calls for the courage of his countrymen to get out of their safety, which is to say their so-called innocence, and to accept their nature the way it is rather than projecting their fears on the Other.

Another important group that has been excluded from mainstream society in Baldwin's writings is the homosexuals. At the beginning of the New World, homosexuality was defined in the worst way possible. Native Americans were condemned for their cross-dressing and sodomy practices. As same-sex relationships threatened the stability of the American families and the traditional morality which provided the maintenance of the heterosexual hierarchy, Native Americans were seen as "unnatural" and "immoral" (Dievler 167). The proof of the unnaturalness of same-sex relationships was that the intercourse did not serve to the main aim of human beings, that is to say, reproduction. Religion was also used to condemn and exclude the homosexuals as sodomy is forbidden in Christianity (D'Emilio and Freedman). That is to say, homosexuals were regarded as moral perverts by the church, and as sexual perverts by the medical writers of the nineteenth century and even in the twentieth century, in the Cold War period, homosexuals did not enjoy sexual freedom but were rather labeled as the sexual Other, or similar to women compared to men, sexual evils "without." In 1952, "The American Psychiatric Association categorized homosexuality as a 'psychiatric personality disorder'" (Reumann 174). Thus, through science and other means, mainstream society attacked even the personality of the homosexuals apart from their sexual orientation. Like the other deviants such as immoral and lustful black women, violent and beastlike black men, homosexuals took their place in the category of the Other and thus in the category of inferior. D'Emilio and Freedman touch on this issue while discussing the sexual liberation: "It celebrated the erotic, but tried to keep it within a heterosexual framework of long-term, monogamous relationships. Sex need not be confined to marriage, but it was expected to lead in that direction. Homosexual men and women, and young black mothers who failed to marry, violated that requirement, as did the rapist and the prostitute."

According to Reumann, Americans in the postwar period feared that modern America was becoming lazy and sensual; and those fears all coalesced around the figure of the homosexual (188). To put it another way, homosexuals became the mirror of the fear of Americans regarding their sexual character. Difference, again, became a negative experience. As Baldwin claims, there is no tolerance for differences in terms of race and sexual orientation in America. The ideology of the

pursuit of happiness, as one of the great ideals of the American nation, does not embrace those who are outside mainstream values. Regarding the lack of tolerance for difference, Baldwin claims that "The American ideal, after all, is that everyone should be as much alike as possible" ("Harlem").

Aside from the lack of tolerance for others, the real problem for Baldwin that poses a threat to the freedom of the United States is that people who belong to the dominant group reject their humanity by rejecting homosexuality. According to Baldwin, homosexuality has nothing to do with abnormality, but rather, it is about human nature and the human potential for love. He says, "Love is where you find it" and, as with all the contrasting situations, he looks for an opportunity to connect people with each other ("To Crush"). Love can be found in a same-sex relationship, love can be found in the body and soul of another race. The unwillingness of Americans to accept homosexuality as a sexual potential for everyone results from their unwillingness to change, to be out of order, to lose their safety, and to find out who they really are.

> And that argument, for example, as to whether or not homosexuality is natural seems to me completely pointless — pointless because I really do not see what difference the answer makes. It seems clear, in any case, at least in the world we know, that no matter what encyclopedias of physiological and scientific knowledge are brought to bear the answer never can be Yes. And one of the reasons for this is that it would rob the normal — who are simply the many — of their very necessary sense of security and order, of their sense, perhaps, that the race is and should be devoted to outwitting oblivion — and will surely manage to do so. (Baldwin, "The Male Prison")

This fear of losing one's security and order, according to Baldwin, leads Americans to reject anything that has the potential to remind them of the deeper reality of their history and identities, to destroy their illusions about themselves and about the racial and sexual Other. By insisting on security and order which is based on a hierarchy, Americans simply do not want to be free in the sense of Baldwinian freedom which demands responsibility for one's actions both in the past and present.

All in all, Baldwin examines and criticizes his society that is so proud of being the land of the free and the home of the brave. He examines how all kinds of oppression

are intertwined with each other, how race and sexuality are used to create a hierarchy, and how desperately his countrymen are imprisoned in the categorizations they created themselves. Besides, he regards the American dream and American democratic principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as illusions and fantasies; and he reveals the bitter truths of American history and national identity. History, for him, is not the past but the present, and unless one accepts his history, he simply cannot be released from it. Americans should accept the destructive effects of their mistakes in history both on their excluded members and on themselves. His countrymen are reluctant to be released from illusion because facing the facts means losing everything that is gained through the illusion of the happy America. Once a person, or a whole nation, admits the mistakes and face the denials, nothing will be in order. Everything that has been fixed, believed, and beloved will be cracked, will be changed, will be out of order. One's idea of one's past and practices is directly related to one's identity. Thus, facing illusion means that Americans, as a nation, will be robbed of their identites. However, that is the exact thing Baldwin demands.

To be released from socially and narrowly constructed identities, and then to create an identity in which conflicting elements can live in peace together rather than divide the individual into separate parts, one should first understand human nature and its potential to connect with the other human beings who are, on the surface, different from them. As Michelle M. Wright nicely puts it, according to Baldwin, American identity should be "a series of negotiations, both loving and painful, whose greatest telos is understanding at the price of comfort" (222). It is understanding one's own pain and the other's pain no matter what their content is and creating a bridge between the binary oppositions of black and white; women and men; homosexual and heterosexual. Only in this way can Americans be free from the history and their own identity categories as part of the national myth.

CHAPTER 2

RACE AND SEXUALITY IN *GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN*

We smile, but oh great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile,
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask!
− *Paul Laurence Dunbar, "*We Wear the Mask*"*

As Baldwin's first published novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* holds an important place in understanding Baldwin's views on race and sexuality, and how these two seemingly different parts of one's identity are closely intertwined with each other in shaping the self in specific and shaping society in general as in all his other novels. However, his first novel is differentiated from the others because, in *Go Tell*, Baldwin focuses on only the black characters rather than both blacks and whites, and examines the devastating effects of racism, misogyny, and homophobia within the context of the black church, one of the most influential and essential African American institutions. That is to say, in *Go Tell*, Baldwin examines the lives of his black characters, both men and women, who are trapped not only by the hostile white world they live in but never can be fully a part of, but also by their own black community and the standards the black community imposes on its members regarding their racial and sexual identities in the context of Christianity.

2.1. A World of Salvation and Damnation: "Platonized Christianity"

The characters in the novel get confused at certain moments in their lives due to the clash of the two parts of their identities. African and American. Du Bois explains the psychology of being both black and American:

> After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, — a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other

> world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at the self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (8)

Rather than being able to negotiate these two with each other, the black characters in the novel, no matter which part they choose, are trapped and wounded at the end. Only one of the characters, John Grimes, whose racial and sexual identity are not wholly constructed yet, may overcome the hardships of being a black person in a white world and go farther than his family from his tyrannical stepfather to loving mother. However, it is not an easy task to do in a world where everything is polarized and where no compromise is possible. John's world is formed through "warring" contradictions: black versus white, men versus women, heterosexual versus homosexual, soul versus flesh, and salvation versus damnation. The borders of his society are strictly defined and to be accepted without question. Besides, no matter which side the characters choose between these "warring" polarities, none of them win in the end, as can be understood from all the characters in the novel who choose different ways but who are all hurt in one way or another and who are trapped in their personal histories.

In order to fully understand the construction of John's racial and sexual identity, one needs to be aware of African American history. At the center of this history is one of the most important African American institutions, the black church, which Baldwin uses as a tool for shedding light on the destructive effects of American history on his black characters. In all the lives of his characters, the values and the restrictions the black church imposes on them play a great role. Albert J. Raboteau, in his book *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" of the Antebellum South*, defines the black church as "the center of social, economic, educational, and political activity" and also "a source of continuity and identity for the black community" (320). Du Bois also focuses on the originality of the black church by reminding us of slave history and how black people transformed the white religion and made it a black experience. It was "adapted, changed, and intensified by the tragic soul-life of

the slave, until, under the stress of law and whip, it became the one expression of a people's sorrow, despair, and hope" (Du Bois 129). At the center of their lives, the black church gave them strength to bear the devastating life conditions of slavery, later on Jim Crow laws, and even then racial inequalities. In a world where they were treated as inferior human beings if not property, the church gave them a sense of self-worth by recognizing their humanity and enabling the existence of God, a power higher than a human that can destroy all the inequalities of their harsh lives in America. As Miriam Sivan points out, "It was here that black Americans could find purpose, a sense of worth in their lives and in themselves. Here they were reminded that they were not beasts of labor but human beings, with rights, dignity, and a wealth of aspirations and goals" (31).

This union of black community with Christianity is ironic in a way when the historical background of the religion and all the things done under the name of it are taken into consideration. Slavery, which is the main reason of black suffering and the most insulting black experience in American history, was justified with Christianity and was far from being a hope for black people. As Frederick Douglass states clearly:

> What I have said respecting and against religion, I mean strictly to apply to the slaveholding religion of this land, and with no possible reference to Christianity proper; for, between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of Christ, I recognize the widest possible difference — so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure, and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt, and wicked. (75)

Likewise, Baldwin himself defines "Jesus Christ and his Father" as white and thus exclusive ("Crush"). This dilemma of Christianity, its being both the justification of racism for whites and being a weapon against it for blacks, is reflected throughout the novel with both John's self-questioning attitude and the rebellion of his real father, Richard.

As Baldwin rejects easy categorizations based on binary oppositions and emphasizes the necessity of correlating all kinds of oppression subjected to human beings with each other, it is crucial to understand how racism and sexuality affect the characters in the novel, how these two forms of oppression make their imprisonment

even deeper, and how it is swept under the rug of Christianity. Sexuality, in *Go Tell*, is closely connected to the concept of sin, just like wealth and worldly pleasures of the whites. Anthony B. Pinn explains the Christian attitude toward the body and its sexual desires with the Apostle Paul's remark:

> For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God". (1)

This view that sexual desire is sinful and leads one to be distanced from God is another way of imprisoning the characters in *Go Tell* in a world of salvation and damnation, a world of morality and immorality along with the polarized world of white and black.

Furthermore, Kelly Brown Douglas defines this theology as "platonized Christianity" that creates a distinction between the material and immaterial worlds as the former one implies flesh and its desires whereas the latter indicates soul, spirit, and reason (351). Rather than negotiating with each other, these worlds of body and soul are in an antagonistic relationship. The problem is that it is not just an antagonistic relationship but also a hierarchical one. In other words, it is not just an idea applied only to individuals but also to a whole race to justify their subjugation. Thus, spirituality is politicized. Douglas combines this so-called religious attitude with the white culture's sense of superiority. "It is primarily through Evangelical Protestantism that *platonized* Christianity and white culture come together. As a result of this dubious connection, *platonized* Christianity provided a 'sacred canopy' for the white cultural attack upon Black bodies" (353, italics in the original). Projecting their own desires on the blacks, white people keep their superiority through religion.

Again, ironically, black people accepted the white norms of sin in relation to one's body. That is to say, "A people whose African religious heritage suggested the sanctity and goodness of human sexuality, now adopted a religious belief that claimed it wicked and evil" (Douglas 355). However, the black attitude toward the body as sinful is not just a matter of being close to God. More than a religious issue,

regarding the body and its natural desires as sinful and something to be avoided is a way for black people to escape from the white culture's fantasies of the hyper-sexualized black body. It is the black body, not the white, that is associated with desire and sensuality, and thus, with sin. Douglas examines the black attitude toward these fantasies:

> What we too often find in relation to Black Church people is, in fact, a twofold sexualized condemnation of their humanity. In this regard, the interaction between white culture and *platonized* Christianity is almost lethal. For at stake, is not simply the sinfulness of the body, but also the vileness of Blackness. This double burden of sin fundamentally forces Black women and men to develop an intransigent attitude toward sexuality, all in an effort at least to sever the tie between it and their blackness. (356, italics in the original)

Thus, Du Bois' double-consciousness in daily black life takes the form of "double burden" in the religious context. Put it another way, race, sexuality, and Christianity in American life are closely interrelated in shaping one's identity, and it is these polarities and hierarchical categorizations that Baldwin opposes and tries to deconstruct through reflecting the painful lives of his characters.

Within this religious context, the novel begins with the morning of John's fourteenth birthday, and John is introduced to the reader as a black boy who seeks a community to fit into, who is divided between the fascinating white world with its appealing offers, and the imprisoning black world which is even more darkened by the tyranny of his stepfather, Gabriel. Being the son of a preacher, John's already restricted life due to his blackness becomes even more restricted through the polarized worlds he is exposed to. In his "religious" family, the world is divided into two as saved ones and lost ones, which is to say, the world of the blacks and the world of the whites. The racial difference is deepened and enforced through religion. John, even though he is just fourteen, is torn between these two warring worlds.

Charles Scruggs examines the contrast between the worlds of blacks and whites under the title of religion and regards these two different and opposing worlds as the heavenly and earthly cities, a concept he borrows from Saint Augustine who says, "the true Christian is only a pilgrim in this life but a citizen in the next" (2). The problem is that John wants to be a citizen in his own country, not in Heaven.

However, as a black person, to be a citizen in the white world is not easy if not impossible. According to John's parents, one either goes to church or jail in America if one is black. Being a citizen is not even among the possibilities. His brother Roy challenges the narrow and polarized view of his parents: "I ain't looking to go to no jail. You think that's all that's in the world is jails and churches? You ought to know better than that, Ma." Likewise, John, as an adolescent, begins to think about how he is to participate in the society, what his future is. Even though his future seems to be already chosen both by his hostile white country that deprives him of his rights and by his own black community that tries to keep him imprisoned, which is their way of protecting him from the "evilness" of the white world, his American side, or earthly side resists the fate waiting for him. "For he had made his decision. He would not be like his father, or his father's fathers. He would have another life." Rejecting his father's life does not only mean that he rejects religion. It also implies that John rejects the restrictions imposed on him because of his skin color, and through his dreams and ambitions, he challenges both worlds.

In his essay, "Down at the Cross," Baldwin, revealing his own religious experience when he was fourteen, emphasizes the need for a black boy in 1930s Harlem to find a "gimmick" to lift him out. John, who is filled with the desire of the white world's opportunities, regards his intelligence as his gimmick. His success in school leads him to a dream in which the world becomes a place "where people did not live in the *darkness* of his father's house, did not pray to Jesus in the *darkness* of his father's church, where he would eat good food, and wear fine clothes, and go to the movies as often as he wished" (italics added). Also, in his dreams, "He was a poet, or a college president, or a movie star; he drank expensive whisky, and he smoked Lucky Strike cigarettes in the green package." His dreams of having a good life in contrast to the darkness his father and the church of his father hold show the vast difference between the two worlds.

The two options are always visible in John's life even in the "darkness" of his father's house. When he cleans the mantelpiece, as his duty on Sunday mornings, the mantelpiece holds "in *brave* confusion, photographs, greeting cards, flowered mottoes, two silver candlesticks that held no candles, and a green metal serpent, poised to strike" (italics added). With all the items above it, the mantelpiece is like a

representation of John's mind. It is regarded as brave because even the possibility of, with Scruggs' words, the earthly city requires courage. As John reads one of the flowered mottoes, which starts with a constant call: "*Come in the evening, or come in the morning, / Come when you are looked for, or come without warning*" (italics in the original). After reading these lines, cleaning the dusty house becomes harder for John, because it invites him to a secular world, a world wholly different from the dark, "candleless" house of his father. Then, he comes across another card on the mantelpiece on which is written, "*whosoever should believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (italics in the original). Whereas the first writing is an earthly call, the second one is from the Bible and calls John to an "everlasting life" which, according to the black community, can only be gained through the rejection of the world and its pleasures that contain the serpent which is "poised to strike."

Besides these two contradictions reflected in the mantelpiece, photographs of his family and himself are arranged "against the mirror, like a procession." John regards them as "the true antiques of the family." Even the photographs of the children belong to a distant past, to their infancy, "a time and a condition that the children could not remember." Among the photographs, John examines his aunt Florence, his mother Elizabeth, and his father Gabriel. Florence's photograph is taken when she comes North whereas Elizabeth's photo belongs to the time when she has just married Gabriel. On the other hand, Gabriel's photo is older, taken in the South when he is married to Deborah. John especially focuses on Gabriel's past in the South when he tells Deborah, "Listen, God is talking." All these photographs reflect the turning point of each character's life. The time of each photograph hints at the cruel past the elders, Gabriel, Florence, and Elizabeth, do not want to remember and the children are unaware of. Elizabeth's marriage with Gabriel reveals all the suffering she has endured, and Florence's migration to the North is the result of her oppression. Also, the focus on Deborah and especially the day Gabriel says, "Listen, God is talking," reminds us of Gabriel's great mistakes as the dialogue belongs to the day he confesses his secret relationship with Esther and his son Royal. These photographs are arranged against the mirror where one can see himself. Baldwin here ironically touches on the necessity to evaluate one's past in creating one's sense of

self. John is unaware of the history behind these photographs, and thus is not able to create a sense of self. Besides, the earthly invitation, the Bible, and the family history are inevitably connected with each other and in a way that shows how worldly desires, religious ideals, and collective histories and sufferings of the characters are mixed at the present time of the novel; and John is just another individual to take his own part in these struggles.

Unaware of his painful family history that is shaped by racism, of the reality that he is a fatherless child, and of how and why it comes about, John values white standards and wishes to be loved by white people. He believes in his intelligence just because his teachers, who are white, tell him so. "It was not only colored people who praised John, since they could not, John felt, in any case really know; but white people also said it, in fact had said it first and said it still." John rejects the evaluation of black people of his intelligence, but rather, wants the white culture's acceptance. Contrary to his father who regards white people as demons, John admires them, admires their power and the opportunities they have. Thus, his search for belonging first leads to the American or the earthly side of the coin: "They [whites] were kind − he was sure that they were kind − and on the day that he would bring himself to their attention they would surely love and honor him." Resisting his father's remarks full of hatred regarding the whites, John wants to fit into mainstream society.

Nowhere in the novel is John's desire to be a part of American society and his fears about it more apparent than the scene in the Central Park. Feeling a sudden power in himself, he runs up a hill, "willing to throw himself headlong into the city that glowed before him." The phrases Baldwin prefers to use in describing John's feelings when he is on the hill are worth examining. The narrator defines John as "a giant who might crumble this city with his anger," also as a "tyrant who might crush this city beneath his heel," and as a "long-awaited conqueror." These definitions all reflect John's ambivalent attitude toward New York, or to say it more clearly, the white society. The word "tyrant" implies John's anger toward a society that excludes him and deprives him of his rights. On the other hand, "giant" reflects his desire for power, the power that white people have over blacks. However, most important of all, John's dream of being a long-awaited "conqueror" implies his need for acceptance. His main problem is his need for acceptance and to be loved by people;

that is why in the same paragraph, Baldwin describes John's dream of being "the most beloved." It is love that John seeks deeply but he cannot find it either in his own community whose only offering is Heaven, or in the white community who has the real world but only to itself.

Furthermore, Baldwin challenges the American ideals through John's innocent thoughts: "For it was his; the inhabitants of the city had told him it was his; he had but to run down, crying, and they would take him to their hearts and show him wonders his eyes had never seen." This irony is deepened with the reality of the city. John remembers the people in the city who hold "no love for him" and how he is a stranger there. To put it in Hochschild's words, "the American dream" is not his dream even though he is an American.

When John witnesses both the attractiveness of the white world and his exclusion from it, he remembers that "his father and his mother, and all the arms stretched out to hold him back, to save him from this city where, his soul would find perdition." Being deprived of the pleasures of the white world, John is exposed to the hope of Heaven and the racialized religion of his community. Heaven is valued so much because it is the only possibility and hope of his own people. It is because the black characters cannot reach the worldly pleasures that "all that was in the world was sin" (Baldwin, "The Death of a Prophet"). Besides, like white people who regard blacks as sensual and immoral within the context of Christianity, for the black characters, whiteness is synonymous with sin. John questions this relationship with whiteness and sin when examining the wealth and the glamorous life of the whites.

> What church did they go to? And what were their houses like in the evening they took off these coats, and these silk dresses, and put their jewelery in a box, and leaned back in soft beds to think for a moment before they slept of the day gone by? Did they read a verse from the Bible every night and fall on their knees to pray? But no, for their thoughts were not of God, and their way was not God's way. They were in the world, and of the world, and their feet laid on Hell.

Confused with the pleasures and freedom of the white world and its association with damnation by his own people, John is not able to "accept either view of the earthly city: a place of liberation or a place of damnation" (Scruggs 5). Part of the reason of

John's ambivalence toward the white world is his father's racialized religion. Rather than uniting all people with love, Gabriel's religion is exclusive and based on a hierarchy, which places black people at the top and brings the whites down as much as possible. Actually, what makes "Heaven" so attractive to his black community and especially to his stepfather, is that it takes revenge on white people's inequalities and throws them into Hell. As Baldwin points out, "the vision people hold of the world to come is but a reflection, with predictable wishful distortions, of the world in which they live" ("Down"). Thus, according to the black community, Heaven is just like the earth with the exchange of roles between the whites and blacks. Rather than blaming this logic, Baldwin complicates the matter as he goes on "And this did not apply only to Negroes, who were no more 'simple' or 'spontaneous' or 'Christian' than anybody else–who were merely more oppressed" ("Down").

2.2. Racialized Sexuality and Sexualized Race

It is not only the darkness of his father's house and church, not only the poverty and misery resulting from his racial identity that makes John feel like a stranger in his own country, and in his own black community. As an adolescent, he is now not only a boy but a male with sexual desires. In Baldwin's words, John's body becomes "a malevolently unpredictable enemy" especially within the religious context of his black community ("Crush"). The association of carnal desires with sin, so to speak, the binary opposition of the holiness and sexual desires, is reflected clearly in John's thinking that "His mother and father, who went to church on Sundays, they did it too." The church defines his parents and it is despite the church that "they did it." Yet, unlike his stepfather Gabriel, John's sexual desires cannot even be uttered as they have no name, and thus, no place in his heterosexual society. "He had sinned with his hands a sin that was hard to forgive. In the school lavatory, alone, thinking of the boys, older, bigger, braver ... he had watched in himself a transformation of which he would never dare to speak." His sin does not simply result from sexual desires, but also from the object of his desires – the boys.

John cannot dare to speak his desires because his black church based on the denial of the black flesh and its desires does not have the possibility of accepting his same-sex tendencies. As Douglas puts it, "Just as white culture sexualizes the Black

community so to subjugate it, the Black Church does the same to the gay and lesbian community" (358). The carnal desires of heterosexuality are at least allowed in marriage. However, homosexual desire cannot be allowed and tolerated in any form of relationship. This is because it raises the possibility that the current law and order of the church is insufficient to answer the needs of human beings (Powers 797). That is to say, just as John is controlled by the white world with the excuse of black skin, he is also controlled and restricted by the black community with the excuse of his desires. He cannot be an American because he is black; and he cannot be holy because he is homosexual. John, so to speak, is trapped between the external world and his inner world.

John's relationship with his stepfather can be regarded as a symbol of his relationship to the black church community with Gabriel's heterosexual, patriarchal, cruel, abusive, and exclusive manners. As the embodiment of the internalization of the racial and sexual categories, Gabriel regards John as the Devil's son. The white world may also call him Devil, because with his same-sex desires and his black body, John's existence is a challenge and threat to both the white and black communities. As mentioned above, it raises the possibility of the insufficiency of the current social order and thus the possibility of change in that very order. Yet, rather than challenge it, John himself is about to internalize the strictly defined identity limits, and begins to doubt his own value. Self-doubt leads to self-hatred. So John starts a "secret war" with his body that leads him to alienation in order to fit into the black community if not in the white one ("Crush").

It is necessary to understand John's family history, which goes back to slavery through flashbacks, before one examines his conversion, since only with the bitter experiences of his family does his struggle for creating a negotiating identity make sense. Baldwin himself, after revealing the contradictions and binary oppositions of John's world with regard to race in the first part of the novel, examines the lives of the other black characters who are part and parcel of the African American dilemma with which John struggles. The second part is called "the prayer of the saints," which implies John's family: Gabriel, Elizabeth, and Florence. This prayer turns out to be the Biblical verse Baldwin uses as an epigraph:

> And they cried with a loud voice,

saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true,
dost thou not judge and avenge
our blood on them that dwell on the earth…

The Biblical verse gives voice to those whose souls "were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (*The King James Version*, Rev. 6:9). Regarding his black characters as martyrs, Baldwin reveals the logic of the black church concerning the racial history of America. Those characters live for the day that the revenge of their blood will be taken. This idea of the blood can be associated with the Biblical story of Cain and Abel in a racialized form as Baldwin suggests: "In the same way that we, for white people, were the descendants of Ham, and were cursed forever, white people were, for us, the descendants of Cain" ("Down"). Thus, Christianity for these characters becomes a shelter that can rescue them from the cruelty of racism.

To begin with, Florence is one of the black characters whose life sheds light on Du Bois' concept of double-consciousness. Her situation can even be called as triple-consciousness because she is not only black and American, but also a woman. Being the daughter of an old freed slave, Florence is determined not to live like her mother. Living in the harsh conditions of the South, she has only one ambition: to walk out of the house and go to the North where she can live a better and freer life. It is not just racism that makes her escape from the South but her triple-consciousness, though. In order to understand what makes her escape, it is necessary to first analyze her mother, Rachel. Two characteristics of Rachel are emphasized in the novel: her slavery past and her devotion to Christianity, two aspects that are born out of each other.

As Rachel is a strong and tall woman, she works on the plantations as a field-worker. However, her exploitation is not restricted to the labor force. Her family is not left to her. One of her husbands is buried; however, ironically, the narrator tells that "her master gave her another." As for her children, they are taken from her "one by sickness and two by auction; and one, whom she had not been allowed to call her own, had been raised in the master's house." The last one indicates her sexual relationship with her master. As analyzed in the first chapter, Rachel's life can be regarded as a symbol of the treatment of black women in the slavery period in terms

of both racial oppression and sexual exploitation. Slavery does not only deny her womanhood, but also violates "the sanctity of the black family" as tragically reflected through her losses (M'Baye 169). Likewise, Babacar M'Baye defines Rachel as "the prime victim in a system in which black women were positioned at the nexus of race, class, sex, and gender oppression and exploitation" (170).

As a result of all the oppression, Rachel as a slave clings to religion. Like most of the characters in the novel, Christianity becomes her shelter and safety from the cruelties of the racist and sexist world. Identifying herself with the suffering people in the Bible, she finds the necessary strength to go on and waits for the day "deliverance" will come. From the day she was born, she lives with "the story of the Hebrew children who had been held in bondage in the land of Egypt; and how the Lord had heard their groaning, and how His heart was moved; and how He bid them wait but a little season till He should send deliverance." With the Civil War, Rachel becomes "free" as her friend screams in joy: "Rise up, rise up, Sister Rachel, and see the Lord's deliverance! He done brought us out of Egypt, just like He promised and we's free at last!" Even though Rachel is satisfied with what she calls freedom and is happy with what she calls religion, Florence is not satisfied with her life. As Andrew O'Hagan claims in his introduction to *Go Tell*, the remark "Free at last!" expresses a deeper meaning for Florence who, unlike many characters including her mother, does not wish for Heaven: she does not want a religion that is "particularly fitted for slaves" (Rabeteau 290). Rather, she wants to be a real citizen in her own country.

In his engrossing essay, "Confessions of a Recovering Misogynist," Kevin Powell defines American society as a male-dominated society in general but also the black community by focusing on the limited opportunities of power and control in the lives of black men. According to him, patriarchy is "where we [black men] can have our versions of power within this very oppressive society. Who would want to even consider giving that up?" (558). As part of a black family that is based on patriarchal norms, Florence not only has to bear the racial inequalities and poverty of her life in the South, but also the inequalities practiced in her home where she is not loved and valued. "With the birth of Gabriel, which occurred when she was five, her future was swallowed up. There was only one future in that house, and it was Gabriel's — to which, since Gabriel was a man-child, all else must be sacrificed." Besides, the rarely

found good food such as meat and fine clothes are also offered to Gabriel as the only future of the house in which Florence is apparently excluded.

Carol E. Henderson indicates that Rachel's favoritism toward Gabriel results from the losses she endured in the slavery period (156). According to Henderson, it is because of the limited opportunities that are available to the black family that the mother has to choose between her children and favors her son rather than her daughter. It may be true of economic and social limitations. However, Rachel's favoritism of Gabriel reaches far beyond the material world. Even though she also tells Florence to pray as well, Rachel is obsessed with her son's salvation. It is only the day when Deborah, their sixteen-year-old neighbor, is raped by white men that Rachel gives priority to her daughter: "This was the first prayer Florence heard, the only prayer she was ever to hear in which her mother demanded the protection of God more passionately for her daughter than she demanded it for her son." Throughout the novel, Florence makes her dislike for Gabriel obvious; she even hates him for his hypocrisy and brutality. However, Scruggs suggests that Gabriel is just "a target at which to vent her frustration and rage" (8). In this case, her hatred does not result from Gabriel's unjust attitudes toward others, but from the inequalities she has personally suffered because of his existence.

The last reason of her departure is that the white man in whose house Florence works offers her to be his concubine. Just as her mother's body is exploited, Florence's body is threatened. Rather than trying to bear all the hardships under the name of religion and being satisfied with the poor conditions of her life in the South, Florence decides to go North and to leave her mother behind on her deathbed. Obviously, love does not exist in their home as the narrator highlights when describing Florence's departure: "She put down her bag in the center of the *hateful* room" (italics added). Thus, Florence not only escapes from racism, but also from sexism and the lovelessness of her family, the illusionary and passive religion of her mother, and the sexual exploitation she may be exposed to by both white and black men. With her ambitious and challenging nature, she also rejects the poverty of the black South as the narrator points out: "If you ever see me again, I won't be wearing rags like yours." The North, or in other words, New York becomes "her private symbol of freedom and a promise of earthly happiness" (Scruggs 8).

All the characters in *Go Tell*, as black people in a so-called white country, are in need of safety. Rejecting the black church as a refuge, Florence has to focus on the "earthly city" and its white citizens for security. E. Frances White states that "During the few short years that James Baldwin taught in western Massachusetts, I often heard him say, 'White is a metaphor for safety'" (257). Hence, Florence's rejection of everything black, the black people and the black church, is closely related to her desire to be a white person. To be a white person in the United States of America means, for Florence, to be a real citizen, to be safe and equal. That is why she uses skin whitening creams. In a society where skin color determines one's social status, Florence tries to rise above her social status as a black woman. She wants to be an American, to live without the veil of blackness; to be American, she has to be white. "The construction of whiteness in terms of privilege has created anxieties in the American psyche; it has also led to the continuous perception of blacks as less than human and blacks' attempts to prove whites wrong through imitation" (M'Baye 182). Thus, by conforming to white norms regarding her racial identity, Florence internalizes the view that blacks are less than human, and by rejecting black culture, she tries to prove that she is different.

Throughout the novel, Florence condemns most of the blacks as "common niggers." Even Gabriel and Deborah discuss this issue and Deborah asks, "I wonder if she ever going to find a man good enough for her. She so proud — look like she just won't let anybody come near her." Her pride and ill treatment of the blacks can be a sign of not only hatred for her people but also self-hatred. Fanon explains the psychology of the inferiority complex Florence apparently has: "The more the colonized has assimilated the cultural values of the metropolis, the more he will have escaped the bush. The more he rejects his blackness and the bush, the whiter he will become" (2-3). In a way, she wants to wear a white mask on her black skin because of, in Fanon's words, "the internalization — or, better, the epidermalization — of this inferiority" (4). However, as Fanon states clearly, it is not just Florence's fault to feel inferior and try to make up for her blackness:

> If he is overwhelmed to such a degree by the wish to be white, it is because he lives in a society that makes his inferiority complex possible, in a society that derives its stability from the perpetuation of this complex, in a society that

> proclaims the superiority of one race; to the identical degree to which that society creates difficulties for him, he will find himself thrust into a neurotic situation. (74)

Florence's desire to be a white American also affects her marriage with Frank, a marriage that cannot escape from the hazardous effects of racism. Although there are so many personality differences between the two, the most important one is about how to live in a white world as a black person. Frank is described as singing the blues, a distinct African American music that Baldwin, in his essay, "The Uses of the Blues," describes as the acceptance of anguish and the expression of it. On one side, there is Frank who accepts his blackness, saying, "black's a mighty pretty color," and accepts himself the way he is; and on the other side, there is Florence who, far from accepting her blackness, demands Frank to behave like herself as well.

In one of the scenes, the contrast between the two becomes clear. During their quarrel, Florence implies that she is mistaken to think of him as a man who does not "just want to stay on the bottom all his life" and also defines his friends as dirty niggers. Frank's answer is very meaningful: he understands the hidden wishes of Florence underneath her anger. "And what you want me to do, Florence? You want me to turn white?" If not whiteness, Florence apparently wants the power and opportunities that whiteness brings and even Frank's death in France does not make her change her mind as she thinks about him: "It had not been her fault that Frank was the way he was, determined to live and die a common nigger." Hence, even the smallest unit of the society – one's family – is affected if not shaped by the racist context; even among people of the same race, polarities and hierarchy exist.

At the present time of the novel, the reader is informed that all the ambitions and dreams of Florence have come to nothing. She questions herself: "Had she been wrong to fight so hard? Now she was an old woman, and all alone, and she was going to die. And she had nothing for all her battles." The dream of whiteness remains a distant memory. In her sick and poor condition, everything is even worse, with no loving family and husband, and Frank's remark hints at the futility and impossibility of her desire of whiteness: "You as black now as the day you was born." Rejected by the white world, she does not know where to "put her foot." Not knowing what to do, she goes to church. "That long road, her life, which she had

followed for sixty groaning years, had led her at last to her mother's starting-place, the altar of the Lord." However, it is not love or humility that leads her to church. Rather, as a person who may die at any moment, she goes to church because of her fear of death.

Yet, in the church, she mocks the black people who cry and pray aloud, as common niggers. She still thinks of taking revenge on Gabriel with Deborah's letter. That is to say, she is still the bitter and proud Florence who chooses to hate rather than love. She is unable to transcend the strictly defined categorizations of race and goes to an "either/or" process rather than "both/and." However, she is also a victim of the oppressive society she lives in, the racist and sexist society that offers her only the inferior side of a hierarchical polarity rather than the freedom famously stated in her country's ideals.

Moreover, Gabriel Grimes, as a black preacher migrating from the South to the North, is one of the most important characters in the novel, who affects all the other characters negatively and makes their already too hard life even harder. Reflected through flashbacks, Gabriel's construction of his racial identity and masculinity is essential to understand the racial and sexual identities of the other characters. As explained in Florence's life, Gabriel, in the old South, lives in a patriarchal society. As Powell states clearly black men "held tightly to white patriarchal notions of manhood − that is, the way to be a man is to have power" (558). Hence, Gabriel's masculinity depends completely on this association of power with men. However, as he lives in the South, areas that enable him power are limited. As a result, he seeks power, the freedom to have power, in the only area possible: sexual affairs with black women. Before his conversion, he is known for the frequency of his affairs. bell hooks examines this psychology: "Sex becomes the ultimate playing field, where the quest for freedom can be pursued in a world that denies black males access to other forms of liberating power" (69).

However, for several reasons, Gabriel is forced to leave his desires behind and become a religious man. The most concrete reason is his mother's insistence on her son's salvation in a world where black people hold no power. Her mother simply wants her son to have power in the eyes of God. Gabriel, who is inclined to pursue his desires, has to accept her request because after all her losses because of racism,

he is the only child left to her. He "must make amends for all the pain that she had borne, and sweeten her last moments with all his proofs of love." Thus, behind Gabriel's sudden conversion lie the wounds of her mother that result from the racial and sexual exploitation of her past.

More important than this reason for his conversion, is to have power through religion. The sexual affairs give him a sense of domination and power over one person only. However, being a preacher, he is to "impose law and order" to all his black community ("Crush"). It is this illusionary sense of keeping power in his hands despite the oppressive white society that makes his conversion possible and even inevitable. "For he desired in his soul, with fear and trembling, all the glories that his mother prayed he should find. Yes, he wanted power — he wanted to know himself to be the Lord's anointed." Like his sister Florence, he has a sense of superiority over the other blacks and wants to be "the master." Rather than being a sincere devotion to God, Gabriel's faith is deeply rooted in his need to feel superior. As in one of the scenes where Gabriel is invited to the Twenty-Four Elders Revival Meeting as the youngest preacher, it is obvious that Gabriel believes that he is the chosen. When he is with the elders, who are respected by the black community, Gabriel feels irritated because it is "difficult for him to accept them as his elders and betters in faith."

Gabriel's superiority is not without its price. The price he has to pay for his "holiness" is to reject his body and its desires, and to accept the Christian view of the sinfulness of the flesh. Aside from holiness, the denial of the body and its desires becomes a protection for Gabriel. He uses this view of Christianity for his own advantage. As a black male in the Old South where the lynching and castration of black male bodies are daily events, Gabriel desperately needs to reject his hyper-sexualized black male body:

> There had been found that morning, just outside the town, the dead body of a soldier, his uniform shredded where he had been flogged, and, turned upward through the black skin, raw, red meat. He lay face downward at the base of a tree, his fingernails digging into the scuffed earth. When he was turned over, his eyeballs stared upward in amazement and horror, his mouth was locked open wide; his trousers, soaked with blood, were torn open, and exposed to the

> cold, white air of morning the thick hairs of his groin, matted together, black and rust-red, and the wound that seemed to be throbbing still.

However, the same white men who do not hesitate to lynch and castrate the black soldiers, tolerate Gabriel. When he passes by, they whisper that he is, after all, a "good nigger," causing no trouble. The term "good nigger" is closely connected with his role in the society as a preacher who deals with the problems of Heaven and Hell rather than earthly pleasures, which is to say, rather than demanding any rights. Hence, the black church, even though it gives him a shelter to be protected from the violence of the white world, also leads to passivity. This attack on his humanity by the white men who first spit on the pavement at his feet, and then regard him as "good nigger," undoubtedly creates a wound in Gabriel's masculinity, a wound which he will make the women around him pay for.

Another reason for Gabriel's repression of his sexual desires is that he fears that white people, in creating a hyper-sexualized image of black men, can be right. The burden of this self-doubt and of this internalization of the racialized and sexualized image of his own body can be lifted through the rejection of his body and its inevitable desires. Baldwin, talking about his departure from the black church, claims that "I did not want my fear of my own desires to transform itself to power" ("Crush"). However, Gabriel's fear of his own desires, which make the over-sexualized black male image of the racist white culture possible, leads him to have power in the only area that is available to him: the black church.

Gabriel's need to prove his superiority to others can be analyzed best in his relationship to women over whom he already has power because of the patriarchal nature of his community. Rather than trying to love a woman, Gabriel prefers a marriage that makes him holier and more superior. He marries Deborah, who is raped by white men who take her away into the fields when she is sixteen and is alienated even by her own community. It is important to note Deborah's situation in the society in order to understand Gabriel's motives in marrying her. After her rape by white men, Deborah becomes just a symbol of an "unlovely and violated body." From that time on, Deborah is deprived of everything that makes a woman a woman. The only future that may be possible for her "at best" is to be a prostitute and to "acted out that rape in the field for ever." Yet, as emphasized many times in the

novel, she is not beautiful and attractive, and cannot even be a prostitute. Actually, "That night had robbed her of the right to be considered a woman. No man would approach her in honor because she was a living reproach, to herself and to all black women and to all black men." Even though she is a victim of white racial and sexual exploitation just like them, her community, even the people in the church, mock her, because she is "the living proof and witness of their daily shame." As the narrator claims, Deborah is from top to bottom shame, "unless a miracle of human love delivered her." Thus, Deborah is betrayed both by her white countrymen and her own black community, and is destined to live in shame, rather than in love.

Gabriel, in his meeting with the elders, decides to marry Deborah after one of the elders talks negatively about her sexuality. He wants to prove that he is, spiritually, better than the elders who are supposed to be his "betters" in faith. Also, one of the factors that convinces him to marry her is Deborah's faith in his holiness. She is always there to make him sure that he is a holy man. That is to say, she "bore earthly witness to his calling; and speaking, as it were, in the speech of men she lent reality to the mighty work that the Lord had appointed to Gabriel's hands." Besides, as a "holy" man he wants to lift up Deborah, a woman whose womanhood is denied by both white and black communities. He tries to undo the effects of white cruelty on the black body. As Peter Kerry Powers points out, "Gabriel's desire to rescue her ... reflects an effort to garner and sustain social power over and against the threats from white society" (800). However, he acts accordingly in order to get power, not to liberate Deborah. Last but not least, Gabriel chooses Deborah as his wife because of his obsession with having a royal child. Having a dream in which he is promised by God to have a royal child, Gabriel is sure that Deborah is the right person. This is also related to his desire for power rather than having a royal child with a beloved wife. Scruggs deconstructs Gabriel's "religious dream" which makes him believe that he is the chosen one with the holy seed as he indicates that "His religious vision is *not* religious; it is secular, a dream of power in this world" (9, italics in the original).

Taking all these factors into consideration, their marriage is not based on love. It is a marriage in which the wife, Deborah, who desperately needs to be loved by a human being in order to be freed from her cruel past of racial and sexual

exploitation, and from the shame this heart-breaking experience gives her, is used as a way of keeping Gabriel's sense of superiority over the others. Rather than blaming himself for his inability to give and take love, Gabriel blames Deborah for their loveless marriage, and his hatred toward her grows day by day. Beneath his anger and hatred toward his wife, his desires, which he is proud to give up for the sake of his holiness, are hidden. For him, like all the black community, Deborah is not a woman, she is a sexless person who is "put on earth to visit the sick, and to comfort those who wept, and to arrange the last garments of the dying." With her unattractive body, Deborah becomes a burden for him: "At length, she lay beside him like a burden laid down at evening which must be picked up once more in the morning."

Trapped between his holiness and carnal desires, Gabriel begins to have an affair with Esther, who does not conform to the Christian view on the sinfulness and evilness of the body. His sexual affair with Esther threatens his status both in the white and black communities. It is in the white man's kitchen that they have intercourse, an area where Gabriel has no power and thus is in danger. That is why he acts restlessly. Besides, as his superiority in the black community depends on his "holiness," his pursuit of carnal desires with a girl rather than his wife is too hard a blow. When Esther gets pregnant, Gabriel rejects his mistake and refuses to take responsibility for his actions. He is too afraid to lose the only power he has. Keith Byerman defines Gabriel as "a man of strong emotions torn between the demands of the flesh and those of the spirit. His tragedy (or pathos) is that he can neither reconcile those demands nor live without reconciling them. His dilemma produces, alternately, denial, rage, and projection onto others of his flaws" (190). Thus, he projects his desires onto Esther whom he associates in his mind with "the eternal fires of Hell." Her alleged evilness becomes his justification and does not take his holiness from him. As he tells Esther: "Satan tempted me and I fell. I ain't the first man been made to fall on account of a wicked woman." Witnessing Gabriel's denial of his own blood and flesh for the sake of maintaining his power, Esther, who is true to herself and does not tolerate cowardice, is disappointed, and leaves him behind to "live a lie."

Aside from the reason that he may lose his authority in the black community, Gabriel rejects his son Royal, whose name is a mockery of his life-long dream of

having a royal child, because he is the son of a “harlot.” He is the embodiment of the reality of how Gabriel has spent his “holy seed in a forbidden darkness” (Baldwin, *Go Tell*). Ironically, just like the whites who reject their mulatto children to keep their racial purity, Gabriel rejects his son to keep his spiritual and thus social purity and power. He sees Royal grow up but does not accept him because “people find it very difficult to act on what they know. To act is to be committed and to be committed is to be in danger” (Baldwin, “Fire”). To accept Royal is to be deprived of his social status as a preacher which also is inevitably to deprive him of his protection from the sexualized victimization of racism, the white men's idea of him as the "good nigger," and also the superiority he enjoys in the black community. But when Royal is killed by a white man, Gabriel weeps, which can be interpreted as a sign for his inner conflicts between his desire for power and need for his humanity.

It is also important to note that even though Gabriel rejects his mistakes and carnal desires, and rather clings to the holy image of himself, he does not act this way on purpose. As Shirley A. Allen puts it clearly, Gabriel is “an unconscious hypocrite, never capable of overt double-dealing” (49). His thoughts about himself are real to him. Thus, after his relationship with Esther and the death of Royal, he seeks forgiveness. Yet, it is ironic that for Gabriel, his sin is his sexual affair with Esther, not his rejection of the responsibility for his actions, which result in the death of both Esther and Royal. In a way, murder is not in his category of important sins. Only the sin – carnal desires – which can take his hope of having a royal child and power through him, is to be regretted and avoided.

Just as he seeks holiness through his first marriage, in his second marriage, Gabriel seeks forgiveness so that he can rise and be holy again. For this purpose, not out of love, Gabriel marries Elizabeth who, again, is a “fallen” woman who needs to be raised by the holiness of Gabriel. By accepting a fallen woman, he will rise. His acceptance of her bastard son, John, will make up for his sins and his own bastard son. In the same way that Gabriel is sure that he is the chosen one, he is also sure that Elizabeth is a sign of the acceptance of his repentance. However, just as Gabriel defines himself as a victim and Esther as wicked, he deprives Elizabeth of forgiveness even though he is forgiven for the same sin. As Elizabeth does not project her own desires onto Richard and does not reject John just because he was

born out of wedlock, Gabriel is not satisfied with her repentance. He constantly asks her: "Would you let him be born again?" a question to which Elizabeth never says no. He simply does not understand that John was not only born out of wedlock, but also out of love. That is to say, "He loses the capacity for love and calls that loss 'righteousness'" (Byerman 192).

This sense of righteousness is directly related to his sense of superiority. He looks down upon Elizabeth as she is a "sinner," and only cherishes her just because she is the mother of Roy, whom Gabriel hopes to be the child he is promised. However, Roy is interested neither in religion nor his father's dreams of him. According to Gabriel, as he is forgiven, it is due to Elizabeth's sin: "It came to him that this living son, this headlong, living Royal, might be cursed for the sin of his mother, whose sin had never been truly repented; for that the living proof of her sin, he [John] who knelt tonight, a very interloper among the saints, stood between her soul and God." Regarding John as "the son of a weak, proud woman and some careless boy," he tries to find an evil without in order to ignore the evil within. Gabriel regards John's face as the face of Satan because he is the embodiment of his denial of his so-called forgiven past. In John's face, Gabriel sees his dead son Royal's face and how he once had "fallen." John is, as Powers puts it, "the screen upon which the fantasies and fears of others are projected, especially those of his father in the face of his wife's unspoken memories of an erotic life" (801).

Aside from his relationships with black people, Gabriel's attitude toward white people is also determined by and explained through his beliefs. He divides the world into two as white and black, and defines the whites as "demons." The borders of his racialized religion are strictly defined and not to be compromised. His rage, which Horace Porter calls "Southern rage," prevents him from applying the Christian rule of forgiving others and loving everyone (61). "Everyone," for Gabriel, does not include white people who deny his humanity. Besides, by regarding them as demons, Gabriel gets an illusionary spiritual power and superiority over them. In his essay, "Here Be Dragons," Baldwin indicates that one cannot escape from the object of one's hatred, and if one does not realize this, he "risks becoming an imitation – and, therefore, a continuation – of principles one imagines oneself to despise." Ironically, Gabriel has many similarities with white people whom he calls demons. Similar to

them, he also creates a world of binary oppositions that are based on a hierarchy, a hierarchy at the top of which is Gabriel. Just like whites who have power through creating the Other, Gabriel creates an Other. Besides, similar to white people who reject their historical mistakes and blindly regard themselves as the countrymen of the land of the free, Gabriel rejects his own mistakes in the past. Both, as they create the Other, have justifications of their own for their mistakes. According to Baldwin, white people not only ignore their history but also are inclined to reject the darker side of life, that is to say, the human weaknesses or desires. Likewise, Gabriel rejects his own "darker sides," his carnal desires, and lives in a mood of Baldwinian innocence. As M'Baye points out, Gabriel is the "mirror image of the contradictions in the American culture that he seeks to purify" (171).

As a victim of both the white and black communities, Elizabeth is the key figure of the novel to understand the exploitative and oppressive nature of white racism and the black church on the individual. Similar to Florence and Gabriel, she also escapes from the South where the color of her skin reduces her identity to a series of stereotypes. The blackness of her skin even affects her relationship with her mother, who is much lighter than her. "Her mother did not, however, hold Elizabeth in her arms very often. Elizabeth very quickly suspected that this was because she was so very much darker that her mother and not nearly, of course, so beautiful." Fond of her father, she says her father is dark like her. Thus, as in the one-drop rule examined in the first chapter, blackness is measured even in the black families, and the attitudes of the family members are partly determined by it. After her mother's death, Elizabeth, who is separated from her father because of his "immoral" ways, is exposed to the loveless atmosphere of her aunt's life, who possibly does not like Elizabeth because of her darker color just like her sister − Elizabeth's mother. Thus, like Florence, whose life-long ambition is to walk out the door, Elizabeth bears the racist South with the hope and determination of going away: "And it hung, this determination, like a heavy jewel between her breasts; it was written in fire on the dark sky of her mind."

Elizabeth's life in the North is intertwined with Richard's life in terms of the racial oppression of the country. These two young people have only the love of each other in the whole world. Richard, whose mother is dead and father is not to be found

anywhere, says, "Ain't nobody never took care of me. I just moved from one place to another. When one set of folks got tired of me they sent me down the line." His life in the South as a black boy consists of cruelty, poverty, hunger, hatred, and humiliation. New York is a promise for them both. Unlike all the other characters except for his son John, Richard has a thirst for knowledge and education. Contrary to Gabriel, who tries to get power through religion, Richard fights against the oppression of his racist country by educating himself. He tells Elizabeth:

> I just decided me one day that I was going to get to know everything them white bastards knew, and I was going to get to know it better than them, so could no white son-of-a-bitch nowhere never talk me down, and never make me feel like I was dirt, when I could read him the alphabet, back, front, and sideways. He weren't going to beat my arse, then. And if he tried to kill me, I'd take him with me, I swear to my mother I would.

He goes to museums with Elizabeth who feels restless for the fear that they may not be allowed to go in because they are black. In the museums, when he looks at the African statuettes, Elizabeth does not understand why he is so much interested in things "so long dead." However, these things give him a sense of identity and strength to bear the humiliations of the white world which is too determined to take away his self-respect. But it is too dangerous for a black boy to fight against the white world all alone. Elizabeth, who loves him so much and wants to protect him, thinks that "he was reaching for the moon and that he would, therefore, be dashed down against the rocks." That is to say, in a country where freedom is mentioned so much but practiced so little, Richard, who is without any shelter unlike the other characters who have religion, is on the path to destruction.

His destruction results partly from his arrestment because of a white man who, even though he does not see Richard steal, tells the police he is one of the black boys who rob his store. It is a turning point both in Richard's and Elizabeth's life. Trying so hard to educate himself despite all the hardships of being a black boy, Richard is treated as a thief: he is defined and described, and limited by the white world to a cruel stereotyping of his black skin. Along with the violence he is exposed to in the prison which is called the "Tombs," Richard understands the naivety and the impossibility of his dream to be equal with the whites through self-education. As a

black boy, he is destined to be stereotyped and never be freed from it. This deprival of social visibility despite all his efforts to be visible leads Richard to commit suicide. Rejected, humiliated, beaten, and most importantly hated, he has no reason to live in "the land of the free."

Elizabeth, left alone in a loveless world with her pregnancy, begins to hate the white world which has taken her only strength – Richard – from her. It is how her white country teaches her to hate. She realizes that the North is not very different from the South at all. On the surface, it gives more opportunities. But in depth, "what it promised it did not give, and what it gave, at length and grudgingly with one hand, it took back with the other." Baldwin emphasizes the similarity of the North and the South through the epigraph he chooses for the section called Elizabeth's prayer: "*Lord, I wish I had of died / In Egypt land*" (italics in the original). This reminds one of the Biblical verse where the Israelites complain about hunger and long for their slavery in the land of Egypt (Exodus 16:3). The South, once more, is associated with Egypt in the Bible as in the case of Rachel. Elizabeth thinks, "How could she hope, alone, and in *famine* as she was, to put herself between him [John] and this so wide and raging destruction?" (italics added). Like the Israelites who are freed from the oppression in Egypt, Elizabeth is freed from the racist South. Yet, like the Israelites who think that Egypt is better as it at least provides them bread, Elizabeth longs for the South, because in the South at least Richard was alive, and she had no hunger of love there. However, now she is in a famine of love, tolerance, and kindness in the North.

Left without the strength to hold on to the world, Elizabeth takes refuge in the only available strength for her: the black church. As Baldwin tells in an interview, the black church is "not a redemptive force but a 'bridge across troubled water'" (qtd. in Sivan 30). Through religion, she can at least find some strength by regarding Richard's death as the act of God. However, as M'Baye puts it, this is just "defeatism and a retreat into religious fatalism" (177). The refuge that the black church offers to her is just an illusion to enable her to bear the cruelties of the racist world and its psychological effects. Besides, it brings out "passivity and a sublimation of individuality" (Field 446).Since, according to her belief all the evils can only be

undone by God, in other words, there is no need for her to act and fight against racism.

However, even though the black church serves as a shelter for her, it also serves as a weapon against her. As M'Baye puts it, the black church encourages Elizabeth "to rationalize this loss [Richard's death] in religious rather than racial terms, which is a strategy of spiritual recourse against white violence" (177-78). Even worse, rather than regarding Richard's death as a consequence of racial oppression, the church regards it as a punishment for their sexual affair out of wedlock. Thus, Richard's tragic end becomes the result of Elizabeth's sin rather than the result of the racist white world. It is mostly through Gabriel that the church's attitude toward Elizabeth becomes clear. She is a woman who has fallen in love with a boy who has died because of his oppressive society. Yet, in the eyes of the church, or Gabriel, she is just a fallen woman who has sinned. This inability of the church – Gabriel – to understand and, if not appreciate at least respect love, proves that, as Baldwin points out, there is no love in the church, and it is just a mask for hatred ("Down"). Escaping from the oppression and exploitation of the world, Elizabeth is oppressed by Gabriel, the "holy" man, who always judges her and labels her as a sinner. Just like Florence who internalizes the white world's definition of her identity, Elizabeth internalizes Gabriel's view of herself as the sinner and fallen. Yet, she still values John and Richard who are the symbols of her "evilness." For this reason. Elizabeth is trapped between her own understanding of love and righteousness, and the accusations and limitations of both the white and black community.

With his discouraging family history, John's future remains an unanswered question. Yet, there are clues. In his conversion, an ironic voice tells John to get up and get out of the church, in order not to be like the other "niggers." Critics have different ideas on the identity of the ironic voice. According to Powers, it is the voice of racism regarding his community as "niggers" and leading him to hatred and self-hatred (804). For Scruggs, it is the voice of the earthly city inviting John to its glories he cannot have (13). As for Allen, it is the voice of John's unbelief (50). Yet, the ironic voice can be regarded as John's American side, one side of Du Bois' double-consciousness. In this regard, John's conversion becomes the result of a choice that his country and his black community force him to make, it is "so cruel a choice"

indeed (Baldwin, *Go Tell*). During the visions he has in his conversion, John, with a last attempt to get away from the black world and reach the white world, sees a place with golden buildings and yet, there is also a voice shouting that they will never be his. "*Not today – no, nor tomorrow, either!*" (italics in the original). Then, he goes to a visionary grave, to "the despised and rejected, the wretched and the spat upon, the earth's offscouring." The impossibility of reaching to the glamours of the racist world, and the sufferings of the rejected make John speechless, make him feel helpless, hated, and all alone in the world.

At the most bitter and disappointing moment of his visions, he is awakened with the voice who says "Go through, go through." It is this voice that differentiates John's conversion from the faiths of all the other family members. John is delivered with the help of Elisha whom he loves in a way not allowed in his society. Like his family, his desires are repressed in order to find a place in the only society available to him, that of the church. Yet, he is different from Gabriel: rather than being a hypocrite, John negotiates his racial and sexual identities with each other through the love of the other, the transforming power of love which Gabriel obviously lacks in his heart and life. Rejecting Gabriel's God, the exclusive God of polarization, of heterosexuality, of hatred, of condemnation, and of fear, John is "delivered" with the help of his same-sex desires. "He is made to feel whole and worthy of love because of the image of himself as seen in Elisha's eyes" (Griffin 774). He is not like his stepfather who clings to religion in order to get power. He is not like his aunt Florence, who goes to church for the fear of death, and he is not like his mother, who is bound to church in order to forget the miseries of her exploited and oppressed past. Even though it is true that John is led to the black church because of the rejection of the white world, he somehow finds a way of compromise, a way to enlarge the narrow categorizations. He now finds a community, is "not a stranger now" and finds it through his same-sex desires which imply "the possibility that 'forbidden' sexual desire can actually be the vehicle of religious deliverance" (Waitinas 22).

However, it is important to note that John's conversion is not an end but a beginning. It is the beginning of the struggle of a man – not a boy now – with his country and community, both white and black, regarding the construction of his identity as his last words are, "I'm on my way." Even though his conversion, his

submission to God, a God more loving than Gabreil's God: a God that lets boys like Elisha, who is both a member of the church and of "the earthly city" with his interest in basketball and mathematics, be holy, makes the Harlem street completely new now, still, John knows that "he would be in darkness again." Besides, even though the novel implies a potential for homoerotic desire in the religious context with the loving relationship between John and Elisha, it remains just a potential, not an acceptance. Actually, Baldwin changed the ending of the novel. In one of the later drafts, John's homosexual identity is explicitly revealed through Elisha's embrace in public (Powers 806). That is to say, John's country is not yet ready to accept a black boy who is both queer and "holy" and thus, at any moment, can entrap and imprison John just like the others. Thus, the end of the novel not only reveals a promise but also a threat.

All in all, Baldwin, in *Go Tell*, examines racism, misogyny, and homophobia, and how these three kinds of oppression interact with each other in shaping the identities of his black characters who are at home but not at ease. In the racist world they live in, all the characters are wounded emotionally and psychologically, and try to find a way to hold on to life. In this sense, Baldwin touches on the effects of the black church on the black individual, and how this strength can also be turned into a kind of oppression and a means of power in Gabriel's case. In a sense, Baldwin, who believes in the redemptive power of love, criticizes the loveless atmosphere of both his freedom-loving country and of the black church community through examining how these two forces imprison his characters. Unless both the white world and the black community – especially in the example of Gabriel – accept their "darker" sides and their mistakes in the past, they are doomed to live imprisoned and trapped in their illusions.

CHAPTER 3

RACE AND SEXUALITY IN *ANOTHER COUNTRY*

Ah, we should have a land of joy,
Of love and joy and wine and song,
And not this land where joy is wrong.
Oh, sweet away.
Ah, my beloved one, away!
− Langston Hughes, "Our Land" (33)

Baldwin's third novel, *Another Country*, poses a different scene and different characters from *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. Unlike *Go Tell*, *Another Country* includes white characters and thus offers interracial relationships in a secular atmosphere within the context of the Greenwich Village of the late 1950s. In his third novel, Baldwin examines the lives of several American characters who are divided between the polarizations of white and black; homosexual and heterosexual; and, male and female, all of which are restricting identity categories and make the characters "at home but not at ease." In 1964, two years after the publication of *Another Country*, Baldwin wrote his essay "What Price Freedom?" and focused on the term "freedom." According to Baldwin, to be free is to know who you are, knowing the darker sides of life and accepting them all honestly. The ultimate goal of an individual, according to him, should be to become oneself at the expense of suffering and losing the illusionary safety. Similarly, exploring the psychology of his characters who are trapped in the racial and sexual roles American society imposes on them, Baldwin opens the path for "freedom" and understanding for his characters through the universal experience of love and suffering.

3.1. The Sexual Battleground

As Trudier Harris points out, "Though Baldwin's novel treats the distance between white males and white females, between Americans and Frenchmen, and between heterosexuals and homosexuals, the greatest distance he explores is that between blacks and whites" (99). Taking this into consideration, Rufus Scott, the only black male character in the novel, has an important role in understanding

Baldwin's remarks on the great distance between the American dream and the American practices. As he is the one who is affected most by the racial and sexual oppression, Rufus can be regarded as the embodiment of the devastating effects of the categorical nature of his country. Through flashbacks, Baldwin brings his destruction process to light step by step. The reader is informed that, once Rufus is beloved and respected by his black friends who are mostly jazz musicians like him, popular among the girls, and seems to be happy with his life at least on the surface. Yet, later on, Rufus ends up committing suicide due to "the psychic and social damages of American racial inequality" (James 46).

Rufus' interracial relationships are shaped by the stereotypical racial and sexual images of American culture. As mentioned in the first chapter, "the white man is locked in his whiteness, the black man in his blackness" (Fanon xiv). Vivaldo, a white character, is regarded as Rufus' best friend many times in the novel. He is actually the only friend Rufus trusts. Yet, these two young men, black and white, cannot escape from the internalized values of their society. Even though they are friends, their masculinities bring out competition not in an innocent way. In his essay, "The Black Boy Looks at the White Boy," Baldwin defines this competition as "sexual battleground." As long as it is described as a battleground, there needs to be a winner and a loser, which makes it an issue of power and domination. It is mentioned in the novel that both run after the same girl many times. One day, Rufus even tells Vivaldo: "You better *quit* trying to compete with me" (italics in the original). Stefanie Dunning analyzes their relationship in terms of seeking power: "They [Rufus and Vivaldo] are, in essence, fighting for the right to be *the man*. It is a battle of patriarchies: it is two nationalisms fighting for primacy" (170, italics in the original).

Even though both Rufus and Vivaldo try to keep their friendship away from the racist atmosphere of New York, their position in the society is not the same, and they are constantly reminded of this situation especially when Vivaldo's white girlfriend Jane is around. When one day the three of them are in a bar, Rufus' insecure position and the inequality between them become clear. Rufus teases Jane as usual, and Jane who has the advantage of being white in a white bar in a white country shouts at him, which results in a big fight. As a black man teasing a white woman, Rufus inevitably

becomes the target of the white men in the bar. It is important that it is Jane's question “Are you threatening me?” that starts the violent fight. Rufus, who has no right to have an equal status with a white woman like Jane in the de facto segregation of New York, is beaten by the white men so that he gets to know his place in the society.

The hidden realities of American history are implied also in the scene when Rufus cannot go to the hospital with Vivaldo who is badly injured during the fight. He cannot go because the image of a black man together with an injured white man in a hospital where the doctors and nurses are all white simply means suicide. Later in the novel, the narrator claims that “Somewhere in his heart the black boy hated the white boy because he was white. Somewhere in his heart Vivaldo hated and feared Rufus because he was black.” It is worth noting that even though Rufus hates Vivaldo only because of his whiteness, of the advantages he has over Rufus, Vivaldo not just hates but also fears Rufus, which brings into mind the monstrous image of the stereotypical black man. It also implies that Vivaldo is aware of the inequalities between them, and how these inequalities can make Rufus somebody to be feared even though they are “best friends.” So, though they seem to be best friends who love each other on the surface, racism along with the sexual stereotypes is at work at the background.

Besides, even though Vivaldo is known for his sexual affairs with black whores in Harlem, he does not completely approve of Rufus’ relationship with Leona, a white girl. The first time Vivaldo sees Leona, Rufus watches his reaction with delight and thinks: “Let the liberal white bastard squirm.” Again, the unequal social status of Rufus and Vivaldo becomes clear to the reader. Vivaldo, as he is white and has the right to do whatever he pleases in his sexual affairs with black women, is not criticized for his trips to Harlem. Yet, when Rufus has an affair with a white girl, he cannot be cool about it. He cannot differentiate his own judgments from the sexual taboos of his country. They are indistinguishably mixed, which is a way to say, he has internalized the racist views of sexuality even though he is a “liberal.” Yet, suddenly Vivaldo remembers one of his trips to a Harlem bar where he is about to have an intercourse with a black whore but cannot because a black man comes into the room and forces Vivaldo to imagine the scene with the exchange of roles. The

black man later hints at the lynching and castration of black men by saying "If I catch your ass up here again, I'll show you what happened to a nigger I know when Mr. Charlie caught him with Miss Anne."

Vivaldo's uneasiness with this interracial love affair is disguised by his worry for Rufus' safety in a "big" and punishing world that does not and cannot forgive love between a black man and a white woman. Vivaldo says: "Trouble is, I feel too paternal toward you, you son of a bitch." Yet, the word "paternal" covertly implies power on the side of Vivaldo and powerlessness on the side of Rufus. Being aware of it, Rufus replies: "That's the trouble with all you white bastards." That is to say, Rufus rejects Vivaldo's so-called protection which somehow emasculates him. Without being totally aware of it, Vivaldo acts the "paternal" role the society imposes on him as a white man. Rufus, on the other hand, clings to Leona in an effort to claim his masculinity that has long been threatened by the white society through the sexual taboos.

3.2. Interracial Love and Stereotypes

In *Another Country*, Baldwin examines love affairs between the characters as a way to discover the person they love, and to discover themselves through the journey to that person, to "another country." Each character is a country to be conquered through love. Yet, it is not as easy as it sounds. The relationship between Rufus and Leona makes it hard to have a journey because of the traumatic past they share in American culture. Rufus, as a black man, inevitably signifies a savage that yearns for the white flesh, and Leona, with her Southern origin emphasized, is the symbol of pure white womanhood that needs to be protected from the rape of black men. Taking these historical events and values into consideration, the relationship between Rufus and Leona can be regarded as the most difficult and also the most vulnerable one in the novel. From the moment they first meet, everything on their way is described in a race-conscious way, in other words, in white and black: the *white* taxi-driver, the *black* Jersey shore, the *white* elevator boy, and so on.

When they first go out together with Vivaldo, Rufus becomes extremely aware of the attitudes of the people around them. He searches for approval, but hardly finds

one. Rather, he is reminded of the world's "power to hate and destroy." As they walk, he examines a white couple:

> A young couple came toward them, carrying the Sunday papers. Rufus watched the eyes of the man as the man looked at Leona; and then both the man and the woman looked swiftly from Vivaldo to Rufus as though to decide which of the two was her lover. And, since this was the Village — the place of *liberation* — Rufus guessed, from the *swift, nearly sheepish* glance the man gave them as they passed, that he had decided that Rufus and Leona formed the couple. The face of his wife, however, simply *closed tight, like a gate*. (italics added)

In the same scene, Vivaldo leaves the two behind in "the place of liberation" and has fun with a drunk girl. Everybody in the Village tolerates them whereas on Rufus' side "Without Vivaldo, there was a difference in the eyes which watched them. Villagers, both bound and free, looked them over as though where they stood were an auction block or a stud farm." The contrast between the treatment of Vivaldo and Rufus in this scene makes the above-mentioned hidden hatred toward each other justified. Rufus is extremely aware of the disadvantage he has as a black man compared to Vivaldo who is white and thus who has the freedom to do whatever he pleases, he will, no doubt, be tolerated. Actually, Rufus thinks, "The lowest whore in Manhattan would be protected as long as she had Vivaldo on her arm." Contrarily, Leona, who is the symbol of purity when she is alone or with a white man, becomes a whore by appearing to be with Rufus. She, by accepting a black man, by letting him touch her and love her, immediately becomes an outsider and a whore who is fallen too low to the extent of being with a black man. Ironically, this evaluation is made by the Villagers who are part of the "place of liberation" and it is not difficult to imagine how Rufus and Leona would be treated if they were in the South from where Leona has escaped because of the patriarchal oppression she is exposed to there. Yet, it is also ironic that she is, like Florence and Elizabeth in *Go Tell*, again a victim of the cruel values of the patriarchy in the North as well.

The "journey" Baldwin examines in the love affairs refers to the act of sex, which is based on love and thus liberating. The first love-making scene of Rufus and Leona is, likewise, described as "the journey" and "each labored to reach a harbor." It is

also promising that they make love in a balcony which enables them to see the George Washington Bridge, a bridge named after the father of their country whose foundations are based on the equality of everyone who can pursue their happiness. Yet, both Rufus and Leona are doomed to fail reaching the harbor, reaching another country that is to make them know who they are in reality because both are driven and shaped by the racial and sexual culture of the United States. The narrator examines Rufus' lovemaking as an act of revenge rather than an act of love: "He wanted her to remember him the longest day she lived. And, shortly, nothing could have stopped him, not the white God himself nor a lynch mob arriving on wings." The words "white God" and "lynch mob" imply the historical background of the sexualized bodies of Rufus and Leona. Through his intercourse with Leona, Rufus challenges the "white" God and the mob that threatens his masculinity. As Jeffrey Geiger states, "Sexual relations with white women come to symbolize the essence of power and sexual potency" (205). That is to say, Leona becomes a means of taking revenge from the racist world that tries to emasculate and imprison Rufus. He tries to prove his humanity, equality, and desire for power through Leona.

According to James Dievler, both Rufus and Leona see each other as the world sees them, cannot go beyond "the most superficial sense of the other's identity" (174). So to speak, they are trapped in their white and black skins and cannot reach the heart and soul, the most necessary elements of knowing somebody and knowing oneself through that somebody. As a result, both Rufus and Leona remain strangers to each other as well as themselves. Their relationship goes no further than sex. The nature of their sexual affair becomes clear when the narrator claims: "It was not love he felt during these acts of love: drained and shaking, utterly unsatisfied, he fled from the raped white woman into the bars." As it does not contain love, their lovemaking leaves Rufus unsatisfied, and the "raped" white woman suggests that they play the role that are given to the each. Leona, with her Southern past, becomes the raped white woman whereas Rufus is reflected as the unsatisfied sensual savage.

The pressure of being limited to and only defined in sexual terms destroys Rufus day by day. Gradually, the image of the successful, beloved, and respected black man is transformed into a wounded animal. He is disappointed in Leona who is unable to see beyond his sexuality and race. When they have a big fight, Rufus shouts in pain

and tells Vivaldo that the only thing Leona knows about him is his sex. To say it in Baldwin's words, for Leona, Rufus becomes a "walking phallic symbol" ("The Black Boy"). This image of the hyper-sexualized black male body is strengthened when Rufus, in pain, reveals Leona how her husband in the South tells her all the time he has "the biggest thing in Dixie, black *or* white." Thus, the horrible effects of the sexual taboos of the American culture become apparent in the psyche of both the white and black man. The white man, unconsciously, fears the black man for his hyper-sexualized black body and feels a need to challenge him with his own sex as the "biggest," and the black man is burdened and imprisoned by an image that reduces his humanity to his sexuality. Inevitably, both are trapped in their whiteness and blackness.

However, it is not only Rufus who is in pain and yet treated harshly. He also treats Leona as the world treats her. Just like the people who see her with Rufus, Rufus regards her as a whore for the same reason. When Vivaldo and Leona first meet, Rufus thinks Vivaldo is too free with her. "Perhaps he was flirting with her because she seemed so simple and available: the proof of her availability being her presence in Rufus' house." With his internalized inferiority, Rufus looks down upon a white girl – Leona – who chooses him to be her partner. Leona cries in pain: "He says I'm sleeping with other colored boys behind his back and it's not true, God knows it's not true!" Besides, not just a whore, Leona also becomes a target for Rufus' anger toward the hostility of the world. As he cannot tolerate the judging eyes on them, Rufus blames Leona for encouraging people to judge them. Besides, Rufus dominates Leona through his role as a man in the patriarchal system. In his first morning together with Leona, he makes her serve him and shows off Vivaldo by saying: "Ain't she a splendid specimen of Southern womanhood? Down yonder, they teach their womenfolks to *serve."* Yet, this also can be analyzed as a consequence of the limited area of power for a black man as in the case of Gabriel in *Go Tell*. hooks also examines it as a lack of alternative manhood: "As long as black males see no alternatives to patriarchal manhood they will nurture the beast within" (*We Real Cool* 59).

The assaults of Rufus are not only psychological, though. Violence becomes the touchstone of their relationship. Yet, as Baldwin claims, it is again rooted in racism.

"The root of the violence is never examined. The root is rage. It is the rage, almost literally the howl, of a man who is being castrated" ("Alas, Poor Richard"). Thus, just as his act of raping is a way of showing his rage toward the racist system that deprives him of his manhood, deprives him of his right to be together with any woman he pleases no matter what her skin color is, his violence is also another way of showing his rage toward the white world. It becomes clear when Rufus beats Leona too bad that Vivaldo has to get Leona away from him, Rufus tells Vivaldo of his dream to go somewhere "where a man could be treated like a man." He reveals his anguish: "You got to fight with the landlord because the landlord's white! You got to fight with the elevator boy because the motherfucker's white. Any bum on the Bowery can shit all over you because maybe he can't hear, can't see, can't walk, can't fuck — but he's white!"

It is also related to the desire to be seen by the world. Vivaldo thinks about the black boys beaten in high school and now beat up white men who never "give them a thought," in order words, reject their presence. Then, the narrator connects it with Rufus' situation: Vivaldo does not associate Rufus with violence but then he remembers "how Rufus played the drums." The drums are associated with and replaced by violence. That is to say, the artistic way of self-expression takes the form of violence. Baldwin, in all his characters in *Another Country*, uses the profession as a symbol of the character's attitude toward life and himself. Rufus, who is once a successful jazz drummer, is now unable to play drums. Rather, he uses violence to express himself. hooks explains this submission to the world's definitions as: "If you are going to be seen as a beast, you may as well act like one" (*We Real Cool* 45). Yet, behaving just like the way the world expects him to do, Rufus loses his self-respect and starts hating himself. He is destroyed. Leona is destroyed as well. Rather than healing each other's souls, they prefer to be imprisoned in their social and racial roles. Rufus, unable to see how Leona is a victim of the patriarchal system through the oppression she is exposed to by her husband, tortures her through verbal and physical violence. Leona, unable to see the horrible effects of racism on Rufus' psyche, tortures him through ignorance and indifference. Both fail to reach the "harbor" of another country.

Rufus' destruction is completed when he leaves everybody behind and lives in the streets for a month after Leona is taken to a madhouse. In order to survive, however, he is exposed to the sexual oppression of homosexual white men. Actually, the novel opens with Rufus' sleeping in a movie house, later awakened by "caterpillar fingers between his thighs." Now, his image is completely changed, he is one of the "fallen." Before, his heart and soul are imprisoned by the white world, yet now the only thing left, his body is also taken from him: "Nothing of his belonged to him anymore." The sexual exploitation makes him cry: "I don't want no more hands on me, no more, no more, no more." Yet, it is not because Rufus is not a homosexual that he suffers from the touch of white men. Rather, it is the loveless touch that kills him, that humiliates him, that robs him of his manly honor.

When he is exposed to these forms of exploitation, Rufus remembers Eric, a white man who was in love with him in the past. Only after losing his popularity, masculinity, and self-respect, Rufus understands Eric's situation as a homosexual. Like Leona, Eric is from the South as well, which makes him automatically a potential target in the eyes of Rufus. The same way Rufus gets power through dominating Leona with sex and violence, he dominates Eric by attacking his manhood which is already threatened by the judgments of the heterosexual society. Rufus attacks him both with the values of the patriarchal system that imprisons and excludes him as well as it imprisons and excludes Leona and Eric. He is unable to create a bond with them for the sake of their common suffering. His suffering becomes too personalized and deep to be shared with a white man or woman, who is in his eyes the concrete form of the reason of his sufferings. That is to say, as Rufus is too hurt because of the racial and sexual oppression he is exposed to as a black man, he is beyond reach for love. Baldwin, many times in the novel, shows parallels between Rufus' relationship with Leona and with Eric:

> Eric had loved him; as he now remembered that Leona had loved him. He had despised Eric's manhood by treating him as a woman, by telling him how inferior he was to a woman, by treating him as nothing more than a hideous sexual deformity. But Leona had not been a deformity. And he had used against her the very epithets he had used against Eric, and in the very same

way, with the same roaring in his head and the same intolerable pressure in his chest.

The parallels between his relationship with Leona and Eric also hint at the similarity between the heterosexual and homosexual relationships. Both are driven by the need to love another human being. Rufus, treating Eric as a "sexual deformity" realizes that it is not the case; Eric is not at all different from Leona who is apparently not a sexual deformity. On his last day, he wishes he could be nicer to Eric. Yet, realizing the same excuses for hurting both Eric and Leona, Rufus becomes aware of his helpless situation. He knows that the pain now will never stop. He is too wounded, too much in pain to be reached, or to reach another country. He feels "black, filthy, foolish." His self-hatred is too deep to allow anyone to love him. As Baldwin points out, it is the "American triumph" to make him despise himself to the extent of committing suicide ("A Letter to Angela Davis").

In 1946, Baldwin's best friend Eugene Worth jumps off the George Washington Bridge (Zaborowska 115). Baldwin states that "I felt then, and, to tell the truth, I feel now, that he would not have died in such a way and certainly not so soon, if he had not been black" ("The New Lost Generation"). Likewise, Rufus jumps off the same bridge for the very same reason. It is ironic that it is the "George Washington" bridge from which he jumps. Beforehand, the same bridge has served as a potential for his equality through his relationship with Leona as mentioned earlier. With this emphasis, Rufus becomes the symbol of the impossibility of the American dream and ideals that his country promises to everyone. He dies alone, hating himself as much as he hates his country. In his funeral, Reverend Fosters touches on the pain that causes Rufus to commit suicide. He says: "Be proud of him. You got a right to be proud. And that's all he ever wanted in this world." As he lives in a culture that does not allow him to be proud of himself and completely rejects him with its whiteness, he becomes a part of the "black" water, a destiny that is not unique to Rufus but common among black people as in Langston Hughes' poem "Suicide's Note": "The calm, / Cool face of the river / Asked me for a kiss" (55). Rejected, humiliated, and hated, Rufus reaches the black water which is ready to accept him, which has asked him for a kiss. Revealing the most extreme result of the racial and sexual categorizations of his country, Baldwin sheds light on the impossibility of ignoring

the effects of these forces through the following characters who are not only forced to witness and examine Rufus' life and death but also forced to examine their own lives and internalized fears.

Rufus' death, the symbolic representation of the hierarchical and exclusive nature of the identity categorizations, affects all the characters. Yet, it is most apparent in the case of Rufus' sister Ida, the only black female character of the novel. Even though it is Rufus whom the characters think and feel guilty about throughout the novel, Ida can be regarded as the protagonist of the novel when Baldwin's own explanations are taken into consideration. In his essay, "Words of a Native Son," Baldwin asserts that "Rufus was the only way that I could make the reader see what had happened to Ida and what was controlling her in all her relationships, why she was so difficult, why she was so uncertain, why she suffered so; and of course the reason she was suffering was because of what had happened to her brother, because her brother was dead." As a poor black girl left alone in a powerful white world, Ida is full of rage and hatred toward everything white and is determined to make everyone "pay dues."

Aside from the loss of a big brother, Ida is also robbed of her only hope. As through the end of the novel she tells Vivaldo, she, as a black girl, does not have a future in uptown. Rufus is her only hope; he is her American dream that can get her out of the destiny that awaits black girls in Harlem. Ironically, as the embodiment of the American dream, Rufus is dead, making Ida face up to the harsh realities of life that wait for her. Yet, Ida's vulnerability to the injustices and violence of the world does not only result from her blackness but also from her inferior position as a woman. As Vivaldo observes fifteen-year old Ida, "She stood there like a target and a prize, the natural prey of someone — somewhere — who would soon be on her trail." However, at that time, Rufus is present as her protector. His protection becomes apparent with the presence of another black girl called Willa Mae who is represented as a victim of men in the scene. Ida puts a distance between Willa Mae and herself and makes it clear that she is different; she has a different future because she has Rufus, her big brother. Yet, after the death of Rufus, Ida again becomes the target of the patriarchal world that has sexualized and racialized her body with the myth of her lasciviousness. Thus, she is on her guard against the world that has

destroyed her brother and can destroy her at any moment. The reader sees her only with the whites with whom she has rather a complex relationship. She is always aware of their whiteness and her blackness and this way creates a distance between them which has already created by the society they live in:

> Even when she was being friendly there was something in her manner, in her voice, which carried a warning; she was always waiting for the veiled insult or the lewd suggestion. And she had good reason for it, she was not being fantastical or perverse. It was the way the world treated girls with bad reputations and every colored girl had been born with one.

The interracial love affair between Rufus and Leona is acted out this time by Ida and Vivaldo. Likewise, their relationship is mostly affected by the racial memories hidden in their subconscious. Their first lovemaking scene, again, is described as an attempt to reach a country. Vivaldo realizes that Ida frustrates him, frustrates "that is, any attempt on his part to strike deeper into that *incredible country* in which, like the princess of fairy tales, sealed in a high tower and guarded by beasts, bewitched and exiled" (italics added). Because of the "bad reputation" she was born in with, Ida puts a distance between Vivaldo, her lover, the person she is supposed to share her most precious moments with, and herself. Even though their lovemaking does not include beatings, rape, and violence as in the case of Rufus and Leona, it is still obvious that what they do are not done for the sake of love. Ida, wounded by the death of her beloved brother, is not ready for such a process with a white man. Vivaldo also realizes it when Ida is asleep in their first morning together: "He felt that she had decided, long ago, precisely where the limits were, how much she could afford to give, and he had not been able to make her give a penny more."

On the side of Vivaldo, unlike Rufus, he does not make love to Ida for the sake of domination. Even though, for Rufus, a white woman is a taboo and can be regarded as a rebellion against the world that does not allow him to touch her, Vivaldo, with his social status as a white man, can easily find black women like Ida. They are already too available to him in his trips to Harlem. Yet, as the unavailability of white women has destroyed Rufus' relationship with Leona, the so-called availability of black women begins to destroy the love affair of Ida and Vivaldo. As both Ida and Rufus ironically call Vivaldo "liberal" regarding his sexual affairs in Harlem,

Vivaldo is not the liberal he seems to be. He cannot release himself from the stereotypical and exploitative view of the black female body. He regards her body as "fine, *sensual*, and free-moving" (italics added). Rather than as a lover, subconsciously, he treats Ida as a whore. After their lovemaking, Vivaldo thinks about "who had been with her before him; how many, how often, how long; what he, or they before him, had meant to her; and he wondered if her lover, or lovers, had been white or black." The situation becomes even more tragic when Vivaldo tells Ida he has been with many kinds of girls some of which are colored girls. Ida asks more about them and Vivaldo says "I paid them." All of a sudden, the image of the hyper-sexualized black female body, the myth of the lascivious black whore, becomes "the high tower" that prevents them from reaching each other's countries. Ida's reaction to Vivaldo's attitude is embedded with her experiences as a black woman. As Ida does not have a narrative voice unlike the other characters, most of the time her thoughts are revealed through the songs she sings. In his essay, "Of the Sorrow Songs: The Cross of Redemption," Baldwin examines the meaning of blues music for black people and defines it as "an exceedingly laconic description of black circumstances." Ironically, after they make love, Ida sings: "If you can't give me a dollar / Give me a lousy dime." Singing a song related to money after their lovemaking, she holds a mirror to Vivaldo's internalized view on black womanhood. This knowledge of being seen as a whore, or at least seen as having the potential to be a whore makes Ida's "high tower" impossible to penetrate, and leads her to take refuge in and get strength from the common experiences of her own people through jazz and blues.

The image of the black whore becomes Vivaldo's paranoia and poisons their relationship which is already threatened by the hostility of the outside world – from the landlord to the Villagers, from the cops to the neighbors. As a white man who is known for his affairs with black whores, Vivaldo cannot see Ida beyond her skin color and what this skin color implies in the racialized history of the United States. He simply cannot imagine her identity apart from this devastating myth. When one day they are in a party organized for Richard, the famous and successful TV producer Steve Ellis is attracted by Ida's beauty like everybody else in the novel and offers her a job. As if waiting for an insult to happen, Vivaldo becomes restless with

Ellis' "free" attitudes toward Ida. Yet, Ellis behaves her in the same way he behaves everyone, and he tells Vivaldo what the problem is with his restlessness: "I bet you wouldn't have felt that if she were a white girl." As Vivaldo sees Ida as a target, he unconsciously reacts accordingly. It is not Ellis but himself that does not respect Ida and her womanhood. In the same party, when Ida looks at Ellis, Vivaldo becomes angry and, with the hyper-sexualized image of Ida on his mind, starts blaming Ida for the situation. Harris defines Vivaldo's suspicious attitudes and his seeing a potential in Ida to use her body in order to "make it" in the world as devastating "in the freshness of their romance" (118).

Ironically, Vivaldo tells Cass that "I think she [Ida] has something to forget. I think I can help her forget it." Rather than helping her forget her blackness and the death of her beloved brother due to the same blackness, Vivaldo becomes a representation of the values and judgments of the white world. He hesitates to tell his mother about Ida because of her skin color even though they have been living in the same house for some time. Without quite knowing it, Vivaldo makes her go farther away from him and creates an unseen distance between them that is hard to destroy. Sex, which according to Baldwin can create a journey between lovers, becomes the heart of their problems. In Ida's skin color, Vivaldo sees the black whores he has been with, and in Vivaldo's eyes, Ida sees her own value. That is why when Vivaldo reminds her of the cops, she shouts at him, throws at him his own thoughts: "Yes, and when they come, I'm going to tell them you dragged me in off the streets and refused to pay me, yes, I am. You think I'm a whore, well, you treat me like a whore, goddamn your white prick, pay!"

However, it is not only Vivaldo that is trapped in the racial image created by the society. Ida also makes no distinction between Vivaldo and other white people. Even though they are lovers, Vivaldo is first of all a white person. He is not even a person; he is white "people." She never calls his name; her talks always contain stereotyping images of white people. In one of their fights, she says, "All you white boys make me sick." Vivaldo is robbed of his individuality and treated as a member of the white world in the same way he treats Ida as a whore through either insinuations or direct assaults. Their relationship is more like a fight between two races rather than two individuals who have unique personal traits of their own. Besides, not only the

“people” part, this plurality harms their relationship but also the “white” part. Vivaldo tells Ida that “You always make me feel white. Don’t you think that hurts me? You lock me out.” Vivaldo becomes the concrete version of the assaults and inequalities Ida is exposed to as a black woman. She behaves as if having a love affair with the whole white nation and attacks Vivaldo as if attacking all the white people.

Ida cannot help blaming Vivaldo for his whiteness all the time because of the deep suffering the white world to which Vivaldo belongs causes her to have. She is trapped in history just like Vivaldo is trapped. As Baldwin, in “Nothing Personal,” explains, “To be locked in the past means, in effect, that one has no past, since one can never assess it, or use it: and if one cannot use the past, one cannot function in the present, and so one can never be free.” Likewise, both Ida and Vivaldo are not free individuals; they live within the prison of the past and cannot function in the present. This imprisoning effect of the past and how Ida is torn between her conflicting feelings of love and hatred toward Vivaldo becomes clear when she tells Cass in pain: “But, imagine that he came, that man who’s your man — because you always know, and he damn sure don’t come every day — and there wasn’t any place for you to walk out of or into, because he came too late. And no matter when he arrived would have been too late — because too much had happened by the time you were born, let alone by the time you met each other.” Vivaldo with his assumptions of Ida’s desires and Ida with her assumptions of Vivaldo’s accusations of her desires are both trapped in a time when “too much had happened.”

However, it is not only Ida’s blackness that makes Vivaldo hysterical and their relationship hierarchical. As they live in a patriarchal society, Vivaldo, aside from his whiteness, is superior than and has advantages over Ida who is subjugated both by her blackness and her gender. Ida’s extraordinary beauty strokes his ego; he has, after all, has a beautiful “object” that everybody admires. When they first walk out together, Vivaldo is described by the narrator as “proud to be with her, *artlessly* proud, in the shining, overt, *male* way” (italics added). Baldwin’s word choice of artlessly is not accidental. It brings to mind the naturalness of the act, of Vivaldo’s pride of Ida. However, when it is evaluated with the “male” way, the word loses its seemingly innocent denotation and gets rather a cynical meaning. Vivaldo is not

proud of Ida's personality but of her beauty, of her physical features, and the patriarchal structure of the society takes his "male" pride as natural. Similarly, Ida's affairs with other men are a direct assault on Vivaldo's manhood, rather than on their love. When Cass tells him her own personal problems, Vivaldo is busy with his thoughts on Ida and Ellis who, according to him, accomplish "their unspeakable violations of his manhood." As Jenny M. James states, along with their racial roles that separates Ida and Vivaldo, Vivaldo's "possessive objectification" of Ida makes them even more stranger to each other, makes their journey to each other rather impossible to achieve (53).

Besides, it is not only the white man, her lover, that imprisons Ida within the patriarchal system. She is also trapped in the black community. Just like Willa Mae in her adolescence, Ida is a prey of the uptown community as much as of downtown. Her relationship with black men is revealed mostly through her career as a jazz singer. In her first performance, the musicians "played for her as though she were an old friend come home and their pride in her restored their pride in themselves." Again, Ida is reflected as an object to be proud of. She is welcomed in the group as long as she is under their control. However, when, through the end of the novel, Ida has a celebrated singing teacher and is on her way to be a real jazz singer through her relationship with Ellis – a white man – the musicians insult Ida in front of everybody. The bass player whispers to her: "You black white man's whore, don't you never let me catch you on Seventh Avenue, you hear? I'll tear your little black pussy up" and the reason for this is that he interprets Ida's efforts of becoming a jazz singer by taking advantage of a white man as the castration of black men. As Ida takes refuge in the white power, in a way, she is interpreted as emasculating the black power. She becomes a "black white man's whore." Thus, both doors – black and white – are closed to her and she tries to find a way out in this limiting world.

As criticized by both white and black communities, Ida is locked out by the world's expectations of her. Just like the world expects Rufus to be violent, the same world expects her to be a whore including Vivaldo with all his accusations. Ida's logic is uttered by Eric in the novel: "If we've got the name, we might as well have the game." Fanon examines this psychology in his book regarding the black man:

> What! When it was I who had every reason to hate, to despise, I was rejected? When I should have been begged, implored, I was denied the slightest recognition? I resolved, since it was impossible for me to get away from an inborn complex, to assert myself as a BLACK MAN. Since the other hesitated to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make myself known. (87, capital in the original)

Thus, like her brother Rufus, Ida chooses to be visible, chooses to be "known" in the only way possible for her: by becoming what she is in the eyes of other people. As Amy Reddinger suggests that, like Rufus, Ida uses sex as "a playing field upon which a certain racial power is expressed and exchanged" (125). Answering the expectations of the white world, she takes advantage of Steve Ellis who helps her in her music career. Deprived of her American dream, Ida finds an alternative way to hold on to the world with her body, in other words, she becomes an active participant of the world with the very reason of her alienation and exclusion. Her affair with Ellis becomes a way of revenge as once she tells Cass: "You've never decided that the whole world was just one big whorehouse and so the only way for you to make it was to decide to be the biggest, coolest, hardest whore around, and make the world pay you back that way." That is to say, both uptown and downtown, the only social visibility available to her is to be a whore so she chooses to be the "biggest" whore. As for her relationship with Vivaldo, Ida does not care about having two affairs at once as Vivaldo has already labeled her.

Even though Vivaldo suspects Ida's adultery all the time, he never says it directly and prefers to live in an illusionary world. Yet, it is actually the exact thing Ida blames him for doing, she hates and cannot tolerate the white ignorance regarding the black experience. He tells her he loves her just like he says he loves Rufus, yet he closes his eyes to the realities both Rufus and Ida, as black people, are exposed to. Likewise, the narrator says there is a distance between Ida and Vivaldo, and defines it as "great areas of unspoken, vast minefields." Ida challenges his love logic: "What I don't understand is how you can talk about love when you don't want to know what's happening. And that's not my fault. How can you say you loved Rufus when there was so much about him you didn't want to know? How can I believe you love me?" Even this question shows the difference between Ida's relationship with

Vivaldo and Rufus' relationship with Leona. Even though both couples are trapped in their racial and sexual roles, Ida asks for understanding. Rufus is too deeply wounded in the image the world tells him to be his that he cannot imagine to be understood. On the other hand, Ida, even though not in a calm or polite way, wants Vivaldo to see what it means to be a black girl in a patriarchal white world. She sees a potential in their relationship to make the journey to another country possible.

In Baldwinian love, one finds who one is through the interaction between one's lover and oneself. Likewise, Ida's insistence on the need to see the realities that Vivaldo is not willing to see is an attempt to make Vivaldo see who he actually is. Even though all the characters have in some way or another illusions of their own, Vivaldo is the one who is most apparently torn between who he thinks he is and who he actually is. In "Notes of a Hypothetical Novel," Baldwin touches on this issue: "This collision between one's image of oneself and what one actually is is always very painful and there are two things you can do about it, you can meet the collision head-on and try and become what you really are or you can retreat and try to remain what you thought you were, which is a fantasy, in which you will certainly perish." Likewise, Vivaldo is in a fantasy in many respects. Yet, Ida's love finally forces him to examine her life, which is another way of saying his own life. Ida hints at this reality when she tells him: "It won't be *me* you'll be finding out about." As mentioned earlier, the professions of the characters reveal where they stand in life. Vivaldo, as a writer "unpublished," is unable to finish his novel. The narrator implies that he does not seem to know enough about his characters. It is because Vivaldo does not know and does not want to know the "darker" realities, the "ugly" truths of life. "They [Vivaldo's characters] were waiting for him to find the key, press the nerve, tell the truth."

In the racial context, Vivaldo feels a need to differentiate himself from the white Americans who shape the lives of Ida and Rufus. Yet, as mentioned earlier, both Ida and Rufus call Vivaldo "liberal" in an ironic way. When on the day he commits suicide Rufus complains about white boys, Vivaldo says he is different from them. Yet, he does nothing to prevent Rufus' death. Likewise, in "The White Man's Guilt," Baldwin examines the psychology of the white liberals who claim themselves to be different from the white Americans who had the slave trade: "Do not blame me, I

was not there. *I did not do it*. My history has nothing to do with Europe or the slave trade" (italics added). On the day of Rufus' funeral, when he is together with Cass, Vivaldo utters the same words: "I didn't do it" and he tries to find a connection between Rufus' agony and himself by adding "whoever was doing it was doing it to me, too." It is true that Vivaldo also suffers from poverty; the streets of Brooklyn he grew up in are not so different from the streets of Harlem. However, there is an important difference between the two as Cass tells Vivaldo: "But it is not because you are white." Vivaldo does not want to see that the things Ida and Rufus have to face and endure are merely because of their skin color whereas the things Vivaldo suffers do not result from his whiteness.

It is not only the racial situation that Vivaldo wants to ignore, but also the sexual one. He does not want to see how vulnerable black women and black men are with their hyper-sexualized bodies. Yet, he is not totally unaware of it. He has "the white guilt" in his heart. He remembers a time in Munich when his friend, a black boy, and he open their trousers and show themselves to a girl. He realizes that it has nothing to do with the girl; rather, it is related to the question of which one is a better "man." After thinking about this memory of how the racialized sexuality common in his country has affected the collective unconscious, Vivaldo remembers his dreams where his black friend pursues him with a knife in order to take revenge. He asks himself: "Revenge for what?" Unable to give the answer that is too obvious when the history of his country that is darkened with the lynching and castration of many black men is taken into consideration, Vivaldo, just in the next paragraph, is described by the narrator as unable to write his novel, which is another way of saying that he is still not able to face the realities of life.

Vivaldo's white liberalism becomes apparently ironic in his relationships with black women who are all whores except Ida. Even though he does not admit what he does is wrong, that he exploits black female bodies through his social status as a white man, Vivaldo again has what Baldwin calls the white guilt in his heart. The narrator reflects his guilt: "However pressing may have been the load he carried uptown, he returned home with a greater one, not to be so easily discharged." Cass also shows him the great distance between the person who he thinks he is and who he actually is. When talking about his trips to uptown, she says: "What a good

American you are." The reason underneath his affairs with black women becomes clear when he sees a blonde girl and defines her as a "chick above his station." As a man from "the slums of Brooklyn," he does not see the possibility of an affair with the blonde girl. Likewise, he remembers the past when he first met Cass and how he was "flattered" that "so highborn a lady noticed such a stinking boy." He has the fear of being rejected by white women whereas in the case of black women he sees it impossible. When he thinks about his feelings for Ida, he realizes that "Perhaps it was only because she was not white that he dared to bring her the offering of himself. Perhaps he felt, somewhere, at the very bottom of himself, that she would not dare despise him." Thus, far from being liberal, Vivaldo's thoughts are mostly shaped by the values of mainstream society and these thoughts affect his relationship with Ida negatively as well as his sense of self.

Vivaldo's illusions are not limited to the race problems and how he sees them. There is also one thing that he cannot accept and admit regarding his same-sex desires. Again, his illusion about his sexual desires is associated in the novel with his ability or inability to write. When Vivaldo thinks about the great writers like Balzac, James, and Faulkner in contrast to himself, he thinks: "But perhaps they had never held in their minds the nameless things he held in his." As in *Go Tell*, Baldwin regards homosexual desire as "nameless." It is partly because mainstream society does not have a decent name for it and partly because people like Vivaldo who are obsessed with heterosexuality and who think the way of proving one's manhood is to be heterosexual are not willing to name their homosexual desires. On the day of Rufus' funeral, Vivaldo tells Cass: "You had to be a man where I come from, and you had to prove it, prove it all the time." For the sake of proving his "manhood" that is defined by the heterosexual society, Vivaldo clings to the binary oppositions of heterosexual and homosexual; one has either to be the former or the latter, and cannot be both at the same time. As Baldwin explains, "in order to become social, there are a great many other things which we must not become, and we are frightened, all of us, of those forces within us which perpetually menace our precarious security" ("The Creative Process"). So, only as a heterosexual, Vivaldo is safe, his social status is not threatened.

Yet, both as an artist and as a "free" individual, Vivaldo has to examine his terror within. His opening-up process starts when he admits his guilt about Rufus to Eric, the homosexual of the novel. Vivaldo tells Eric how Rufus needed "someone to hold him, to hold him, and that, that night, it had to be a man." Unable to accept his own same-sex desires, Vivaldo ignores Rufus' emotional and physical needs, which may hasten his death. In a way, Ida's accusations of Vivaldo lead him to admit it to Eric. It is important that the listener of his confessions is Eric who does not share the standard judgments of the world. As in Baldwinian love, or Baldwinian "journey to another country," Eric does not judge Vivaldo, he listens to his pains. This feeling of being loved, being understood, and listened makes Vivaldo feel at ease with his same-sex desires. He makes love with Eric and the narrator says: "He associated the act with the humiliation and the debasement of one male by another, the inferior male of less importance than the crumpled, cast-off handkerchief; but he did not feel this way toward Eric; and therefore he did not know what he felt." Through the act of sex which is based on love, Vivaldo feels "fantastically protected" and "liberated." Dievler defines Eric's understanding of sexuality which rejects all the categorizations and limitations as "postsexuality" (163). By stepping out of the limited sexual categorizations and experiencing "postsexuality" with Eric whom he loves and who loves him, Vivaldo begins to create a bridge between the illusionary Vivaldo and real Vivaldo. He gets rid of the dominant culture's view on the experience of homosexuality as "humiliation" and "debasement," and replaces these values with Eric's loving attitude which enables him to free himself from the devastating definitions of the "nameless" feeling. Now that it does not have a negative connotation, his same-sex desires can be faced and welcomed.

As he conquered the "wilderness" in himself, Vivaldo is released from the tyranny of his illusions and ready to have a more honest affair with Ida. As Harris points out, by accepting his same-sex desires that are not respected by the dominant culture, Vivaldo is now able to understand Ida's position as a black person "outside the mainstream of acceptability" (120). Now that Vivaldo gets rid of the fixed identity imposed on him, there remains no center to hold on to. Ida and he become equals. Ignoring her adultery for so long, he is now ready to listen to Ida's side of the story for the first time. Through her confessions, Ida completes the growing-up process of

Vivaldo which Eric has started. Telling him the truth about herself, she kills his Baldwinian innocence: "And it was she who was comforting him. Her long fingers stroked his back, and he began, slowly, with a horrible, strangling sound, to weep, for she was stroking *his innocence* out of him" (italics added).

As Vivaldo listens to Ida's sufferings that he has ignored so long and he transcends the fixed identity categories of mainstream society, he realizes that life is not simple. It is too complex and unpredictable to be controlled, to be defined and to be categorized. After all, everybody has a "wilderness" in himself. This acceptance of complexity is crucial for Baldwin's understanding of maturity. He says, "It [accepting reality] marks the death of the child and the birth of the man" ("Preservation"). Through accepting the complexity of life, he, like Eric, sets his own standards and creates an alternative manhood to the popular image of the manhood that is accepted in his society. He is not trapped in the binary oppositions of black and white like before: "He stared into his cup, noting that black coffee was not black, but deep brown. Not many things in the world were really black, not even the night, not even the mines. And the light was not white, either, even the palest light held within itself some hint of its origins, in fire." Furthermore, now that Vivaldo has accepted himself the way he is and Ida the way she is, "a detail that he needed for his novel, which he had been searching for for months, fell, neatly and vividly, like the tumblers of a lock, into place in his mind."

As for Ida, she finally realizes the destructive effects of her hatred both on her own identity and on Vivaldo's psyche. When Vivaldo and Eric talk about the nature of suffering and how admirable it is not to pay back the people who hurt you, Eric says, "Otherwise, you just get stopped with whatever it was that ruined you and you make it happen over and over again and your life has — ceased, really— because you can't move or change or love anymore." Ida, who cannot "move," "change," or "love" throughout the novel, becomes aware of the nature of hatred: it is a double-edged sword. When she hates all the people around her, she also destroys herself and makes it "happen over and over again." Released from the imprisonment of her hatred, she puts on a record by Mahalia Jackson, "In the Upper Room," a song that "begs for mercy." This intimacy Ida and Vivaldo has after a long struggle hints at the possibility of a more compassionate and race-free relationship between a white man

and a black woman. Yet, it is also ironic that whereas Baldwin creates a possibility between a white man and a black woman in the late 1950s of New York, he does not reflect the same possibility for the relationship between a black man and a white woman, Rufus and Leona who have destroyed each other.

3.3. Intraracial Sexual Hierarchies

Even though the relationship between whites and blacks are based on the most polarized categorizations of identity in *Another Country*, Baldwin also explores the relationship among whites and how they are categorized in a hierarchical order. As the only married couple of the novel, Cass and Richard are important characters in understanding the novel's point on the "darker" sides of life. The reader is introduced to the couple in a bar where they celebrate Richard's novel. This image of happy family, the successful husband and supporting wife is very conventional. Cass, with her caring and loving spirit, her affection for her husband and children, is the embodiment of the perfect American middle-class wife. However, underneath the happy image of the American couple, Cass and Richard have serious problems in their marriage resulting from the American myth of whiteness, racial attitudes, and patriarchal structure of the country. The blessing of marriage becomes Cass' prison. Her social role as a wife and mother robs her of her individuality. Apart from her two sons and her husband, she has nothing to care for. It becomes apparent when Richard and Cass discuss the self-centered nature of human beings. When Richard tells her that she is not self-centered, Cass opposes him and says she is. She defines her care for her children and husband as self-centeredness because the concept of self implies her family rather than herself. She is too absorbed in her domestic sphere to claim her own individuality apart from her social roles. She lives a life Richard rules: "She had said No, many times, to many things, when she knew she might have said Yes, because of Richard; believed many things, because of Richard, which she was not sure she really believed."

The perfect couple image of Cass and Richard begins to be destroyed as inversely proportional to Richard's career as a writer. As all the other characters, his profession shows his connection with life. Unlike Vivaldo who cannot write, Richard writes a novel which is to be published. The problem is, he writes despite himself; writes a

second-rate murder novel. It "had been written because he was afraid, afraid of things dark, strange, dangerous, difficult, and deep." Thus, unlike Vivaldo who can write only after he faces the darker realities of life, Richard uses his profession as a way to escape from the same realities. That is why his success is so humiliating both for Cass and himself. The novel as a second-rate piece of writing comes to symbolize Richard's personality as a second-rate person who does not have a sense of self. His attitude is directly related to be an American. As mentioned in the first chapter, America and its ideals are just illusions for Baldwin, and by clinging to the standards of American society, Richard becomes one of the people living in a fantasy rather than reality. In "Black English: A Dishonest Argument," Baldwin focuses on the price of the American ticket: "The price of the ticket was to cease being Irish, cease being Greek, cease being Russian, cease being whatever you had been before, and to become 'white.'" Likewise, Richard always ignores his Polish inheritance. In one of their dialogues, Cass tells Ida that Richard has been ashamed of speaking Polish and says, "look at him now, he doesn't know who he is." Similarly, Cass tells Vivaldo the reason of Richard's obsession with being a writer no matter what kind of or in what quality his book will be: "He's a carpenter's son, the fifth son of a carpenter who came from Poland. Maybe that's why it's so important. A hundred years ago he'd have been like his father and opened a carpenter's shop. But now he's got to be a writer and help Steve Ellis sell convictions and soap."

Richard's efforts to be completely American and to forget his so-called inferior position as a Polish person in contrast to his wife, Cass, from New England are most apparent in his attitudes toward the excluded people of his country. Whereas Cass is fond of Rufus, Richard has very negative opinions about him. He says to Cass: "I didn't love Rufus, not the way you did, the way all of you did. I couldn't help feeling, anyway, that one of the reasons all of you made such a kind of—*fuss*— over him was partly just because he was colored. Which is a hell of a reason to love anybody. I just had to look on him as another guy." Yet, Richard does not show empathy toward Rufus whereas he always defends Leona. Even Rufus' suicide does not affect or soften him. He ignores Ida's remarks on the racist attitude of the police when Rufus has been missing for six weeks. He refuses to accept this view and ignorantly claims that everybody is treated equally. It is, however, obvious that

Richard does not take Ida or Rufus as his equals because of their skin color. Implying his relationship with Ida, he tells Vivaldo: "You certainly scraped the bottom of the white barrel." He is too absorbed in the idea that if he excludes people enough, if he makes a distinction between his white Americanness and other people's exclusions, he will be a part of American society, and will have a sense of self.

Richard's attempts to prove himself worsen his marriage with Cass as he starts working harder and harder. Cass, who is already imprisoned in the domestic sphere, feels like a housekeeper rather than a beloved wife. The narrator focuses on the lack of interaction between the two as Richard lives like a ghost in the house because of his studies of the novel. Cass tells Vivaldo how desperate it is to feel like a housekeeper, and how she forgets what it feels like to be touched. That is to say, Cass and Richard are deprived of the act of sex which makes the journey to another soul possible for Baldwin. As they do not touch each other's bodies, they are not able to touch each other's souls. Cass, as a married woman, is trapped in the role the patriarchal society imposes on her. Just like Ida who is treated as a whore, Cass is trapped in her white woman image. Her womanhood is constructed in opposition to black womanhood. Rather than defined in sexual terms, she is respected and not seen as a woman. Even Vivaldo who treats his own black girlfriend like a whore regards Cass as a "lady." "He had never thought of Cass carnally, as a woman, but only as a lady, and Richard's wife." Apart from "lady" which can also be seen as an implicit warning for her to behave like a lady, she is defined as "Richard's wife," her virtue comes partly from her whiteness and partly from her relation to her "husband" Richard. She has to silence her body's needs for the sake of keeping her secure position in the society. Thus, Cass' perfect image is as imprisoning and as destructive as Ida's negative image. More than Ida, she has to pay for her acts outside the acceptability of mainstream society: "Since the world's judgment, should it ever be necessary to face it, would condemn Cass yet more cruelly than Ida. For Ida was not white, nor married, nor a mother. The world assumed Ida's sins to be natural, whereas those of Cass were perverse."

The pressure on Cass' psyche becomes obvious when she tells Vivaldo: "I wish I could get drunk and go out and pick up a truck driver or a taxi driver or anybody who'd touch me and make me feel like a woman again." On one side, she wishes to

feel like a woman rather than a lady as she is too tired of the responsibilities and limitations she has for the sake of it. On the other side, she can imagine such an act only when she is drunk. Her internalized patriarchal norms would not let her do such a thing when she is sober. Likewise, the narrator defines Cass as "her mind's prisoner." However, Cass later on tells Vivaldo that she does not want to be protected anymore, which is another way of saying, she does not want her secure position in the society and if not willing, at least determined to see the darker sides of life. Just like Vivaldo, Cass goes to Eric in order to be touched with love, in order not to be judged but loved. Her relationship with Eric starts the opening-up process for her which she desperately needs and cannot find in Richard.

In contrast to her imprisoning and hierarchical relationship with Richard as wife and husband, the narrator regards Cass and Eric as equals, not in terms of their sameness but of their complementary differences: "They were oddly equal: perhaps each could teach the other, concerning love, what neither now knew." Cass, who has been trapped in a legal affair and silenced her body, gets to know a different world with Eric. Contrary to Richard who clings to the rules of the society without compromise, Eric reveals another kind of manhood to Cass, which is not hierarchical or imprisoning but rather supportive and liberating. At first, she cannot imagine herself "playing so anomalous a role." The word choice of "anomalous" implies the unconventionality of their relationship. Through Eric, Cass steps out of the normal, the standard, and the known. In contrast to Richard and her "fixed" affair with him, Eric tells Cass: "I know we have *now,* but I don't think we have much of a future." Even this uncertainty relieves Cass of the limitations of the categorical nature of the American values. Besides, like Vivaldo, their lovemaking is liberating for Cass. "She really felt that a weight had rolled away, and that she was herself again, in her own skin, for the first time in a long time." It is interesting that Cass chooses Eric to be her partner, who has the most opposite personality to Richard's. Eric's unconventional values give Cass a new way of looking at life as she is too tired of Richard's obsession with being an American. When Richard asks her why she has an affair with Eric, who is a homosexual, she says: "He has something — something I needed very badly," something which she regards as "a sense of himself."

After her affair with Eric, Cass begins to experience what it means to feel threatened in a hostile world, a feeling Ida has experienced all her life. Her uneasiness with the new situation in which she finds herself is reflected through her encounter with the police when she goes to a bar with Ida. Now that she is released from her safety and protection, she, too, is menaced like a black woman:

> She had never had to deal with a policeman in her life, and it had never entered her mind to feel menaced by one. Policemen were neither friends nor enemies; they were part of the landscape, present for the purpose of upholding law and order; and if a policeman — for she had never thought of them as being very bright — seemed to forget his place, it was easy enough to make him remember it. Easy enough if one's own place was more secure than his, and if one represented, or could bring to bear, a power greater than his own.

As she now has lost her superiority over the policeman, she feels in danger and "exposed." Yet, Cass questions her seemingly safe past and her endangered position in the present, and tries to find the truth about life: "When she had been safe and respectable, so had the world been safe and respectable; now the entire world was bitter with deceit and danger and loss; and which was the greater illusion?" What is more, when Cass realizes that she has been in a dream so long in her marriage which seems to be safe but turns out to be a prison, she asks what should be done when the dream is gone. Ida, as a black girl who is deprived of her American dream – Rufus – and who has to face the world's harsher realities all alone tells Cass that one replaces a dream with the reality. That is to say, as Harris points out, Cass' understanding of reality has been mostly constructed through her interaction with Ida (113).

Cass realizes that "Richard was her protection: not only against the evil in the world, but also against the wilderness of herself." Now that she is without Richard's protection against the wilderness in herself, she is not a lady anymore but a woman with sexual desires. So to speak, despite her *whiteness*, she is "sensual" like Ida is supposed to be. She has fallen from "grace." When she goes to a bar with Ida after her affair with Eric, she observes a boy and a girl who dance in an erotic way. With the death of her "conventional morality," she envies them, envies especially the girl because of her ginger-colored partner, and the narrator reveals her thoughts: "Had he touched her, had he insisted, he could have his way, she would have been glad." It is

also interesting that the men Cass desires are all seemingly excluded members of the society – the "ginger-colored" boy because of his race, and Eric because of his sexual orientation. Thus, Cass' acceptance of sexual desires is not just a rebellion and challenge against the patriarchal structure of her country but also an understanding of the outsiders of this culture.

The transformation of Cass' view on the world and on the people can be analyzed in the change of her attitude toward Puerto Ricans. At the beginning of the novel, Cass' ideas on them are revealed rather positively but in a remote way. They are just a group of different people who are part of her neighborhood. Even though she likes them, it is totally on the surface. She can only get to know them through observation. There is no interaction between Puerto Ricans and herself. The only interaction is implied when a Puerto Rican boy opens the door to her with a "half-smile." For Cass, it is "we" and "they" because she, as a respected woman with her social status as a married white "lady," is different from them. However, after she loses her safety, the situation changes. As she gets on a cab driven by a young Puerto Rican man, Cass becomes highly aware of "his shoulders, his untried face, his color, his soft, dark eyes." She creates a sexual tension between them by looking at the driver. Different from the stereotypical and plural image of the Puerto Ricans of her neighborhood, she is now more intimate and has a more personal interaction with one of them. Rather than "we" and "they," it becomes "I" and "you." They even talk about economic problems of the taxi driver, that is to say, Cass now can share something with a person who was once just an image for her.

After her affair with Eric, Cass sees Ida in a different light as well. Rather than regarding her as a lascivious black woman, she sees the similarities between them as both use each other as a smoke screen for their adultery. Cass goes to a bar with Ida where Ellis waits for her with some other people. When Ida and Ellis start dancing, one of the women, Mrs. Nash, says: "I wonder if his wife knows where he is." Cass' reaction is very important to understand how she feels against mainstream society which Mrs. Nash seems to represent. She thinks about her as an "evil-minded whore." Even though according to the dominant norms, it is Ida who is regarded as the whore, Cass uses the word for Mrs. Nash who seems to have nothing to do except for criticizing people, especially black people. Also, when Cass observes Ida and

Ellis who are dancing, she thinks, “They became an odd and unprecedented beauty and the beast up there.” Cass gives Ida the role of beauty with all its positive connotations whereas she associates Ellis with the beast. This inversion of the social roles, the black woman beautiful and pure and the white man sensual and lascivious, becomes a possibility for Cass as she is now outside the mainstream acceptability. This pain and suffering of the experience of the darker realities of life connect her with the other excluded people, and show her the universality of suffering.

However, Cass’ transformation cannot be regarded as a total success as she is still exposed to the patriarchal power. Richard who is wounded by the reality that he has been betrayed threatens her with taking the children away from her. Yet, it is important that Richard’s anger and agony for the betrayal are not based on love, but on his manhood. At first, he thinks that Cass has an affair with Vivaldo, and is totally destroyed by this idea because of the fact that he is competing with Vivaldo as a writer. Thus, Cass becomes an object to determine which one is the better man. When he finds out it is not Vivaldo but Eric, the situation becomes even more complex. As his wife prefers a homosexual to him, the affair becomes a direct assault on his manhood. That is to say, "Richard feels threatened by the affair because it challenges his manhood" (Corber 180). He has an obvious disrespect for Eric’s sexual orientation just like his negative attitude toward Rufus and Ida. He tells Cass: “Forgive your coarse-grained husband, but I’ve always felt that he had no sense of himself at all. He’s not even sure he knows what’s between his legs.” Yet, it is Richard who does not touch his wife and who does not have a sense of self even though he is heterosexual. Too blinded by the norms of the society, Richard is not even able to see the psychology of his wife whereas Eric realizes the change in Cass the first time he sees her after he comes to New York. He feels that “Cass was beginning to fade, to become brittle. Something icy had touched her.” Richard, as Cass’ husband, cannot see this “icy” thing because he is afraid of things unknown. Through the contrast between Richard and Eric, Baldwin suggests that “manhood” is not achieved by the gender of one’s lover but by the ability to reach the soul of the lover and to create a bridge between one’s lover and oneself.

Eric stands out in the novel in terms of his race relationships, sexual orientation, and other-country experience. Through flashbacks, the homophobia deeply rooted in

the South is revealed together with the racial context. As the only son of important and rich people in Alabama, Eric is expected to obey the rules of his society regarding both racial and sexual relationships. Even as a child, he is reflected as isolated from the society in Alabama "due to the extreme unpopularity of his racial attitudes – or, rather, as far as the world in which he moved was concerned, the lack of any responsible attitudes at all." Just like John in *Go Tell*, Eric lives in a community that excludes the other race completely. Yet, his sexual affairs are closely linked to black people. His relationship with their worker Henry is put an end by his parents both for racial and sexual reasons, and Eric in a way internalizes the values of his parents and his society. At least, he is aware of the fact that something is wrong; that there is a difference between his same-sex dreams and what the world expects him to dream. Thus, regarding his relationships with boys or men, he knows that "Everything he did was wrong in the eyes of his parents, and in the eyes of the world, and that, therefore, everything must be lived in secret."

Having a life that is torn between the seen and unseen, Eric is trapped in a way the other characters of the novel are not trapped. His social status as a white man, especially as a rich white man does not help him keep his place in the world as long as his homosexual desires are concerned. This feeling of alienation and humiliation leads Eric to go literally to "another country." It is ironic that, a citizen of the United States which is so proud of its ideals of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness does not feel at home in his own country and flees to another. In France, Eric has a unique same-sex experience with a French boy called Yves. Contrary to his homosexual affairs in his own country, Eric is able to love a man and to be loved by a man without the world's interruption. As Reddinger indicates, it is worth nothing that the affair takes place in another country, that is to say, there is no possibility for an American man – even though he is white – to have a queer or interracial affair within the bounds of the United States (122).

Catherine Whitley sheds light on the difference between the Americans and the French in terms of their attitudes toward sexuality: "Americans 'throw the beast on the other side' and refuse to acknowledge the animality of their bodies and bodily products, whereas the French are more accepting of such potential threats to human identity, realizing that they are necessary and inescapable, and are thus more

‘dishevelled and wise’” (97). Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that Eric does not feel at ease in his own country that regards “his life, passions, trials, loves” as disease at best and filth or crime at worst. His journey is not an option but a necessity for him to survive. Actually, according to Carolyn Wedin Sylvander, the key difference between Rufus’ failure and Eric’s success is the experience of another country, a country which at least does not make its citizens despise themselves for their feelings and sexual orientations (94). By going to France, Eric can have a real love affair with a man, he can be loved, his sufferings can be heard, and he can be seen as a man despite his sexual orientation. Yet, Rufus, trapped both within and without, does not have the chance to be loved and heard. So, one is saved whereas the other is dead.

However, when Eric turns back to New York, he does not feel protected or safe, contrarily, he feels threatened by the hostility and despair of New York. He feels “unbearably odd and visible, unbearably a stranger. It was not a new sensation, but he had not felt it for a long time: he felt marked, as though, presently, someone would notice him and then the entire mob would turn on him, laughing and calling him names.” Even the relationships create a contrast between his peaceful life in France with Yves and his problematic life in New York. The first day he meets Cass and Richard, he witnesses their fight, and also on the same day, he witnesses a quarrel between Ida and Vivaldo. So, he becomes aware of the misery of New York, the misery of the people who are trapped in their social roles because of their race, sexuality, and gender though “it was officially and publicly and privately denied.”

It is ironic that Baldwin prefers to make Eric an actor. As a homosexual, he is doomed to act all the time. It is mentioned several times in the novel that Eric did not work as an actor in France. Because, figuratively, he does not need to act. Contrary to other actors, Eric acts in his daily life and does not act but reveals himself while he is acting in the movies. This situation is implied when Ida, Vivaldo, Cass and Eric go to a movie in which Eric has a small part. Vivaldo thinks “It was very strange — to see more of Eric when he was acting than when he was being, as the saying goes, himself.” What Vivaldo sees in the screen and regards as Eric’s real “self” is “the face of a man, of a tormented man. Yet, in precisely the way that great music depends, ultimately, on great silence, this masculinity was defined, and made

powerful, by something which was not masculine. But it was not feminine, either, and something in Vivaldo resisted the word androgynous." So, even though only in his acting career, Eric reflects an alternative manhood to the imprisoning view of American manhood that rejects its androgynous nature.

On the whole, *Another Country* can be regarded as a challenge to the American innocence in terms of all kinds of affairs from white to black, from male to female, and from heterosexual to homosexual; and an invitation to the darker realities of life. It is an effort to show the universality and interrelated nature of all kinds of oppression – racial, sexual, and patriarchal – and how love can make these forms of oppression bearable if not make them end. All the characters, Ida, Vivaldo, Cass and Eric try to become themselves by escaping from the fixed definitions American society imposes on them. Whether they have achieved it or can achieve it or not remains a mystery. Yet, what Baldwin tries to show in the novel is that Americans are trapped in many ways by their own definitions and the only way to destroy these limitations that keep the people apart is to try to understand the pain of oneself and the pain of others through the journey called love. It is also both promising and challenging that the novel ends with Yves' coming to "another country," with the scene of the Statue of Liberty, leaving the end to the reader which can result either in a happy homosexual affair or in a bitter disappointment.

CHAPTER 4

RACE AND SEXUALITY IN *TELL ME HOW LONG THE TRAIN'S BEEN GONE*

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts.
– Shakespeare, As You Like It (124)

As Baldwin's relatively unpopular and unexamined novel compared to *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and *Another Country*, *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* can be regarded as a shift from Baldwin's earlier novels in terms of how race and sexuality are explored and how the American dream is examined since Leo Proudhammer, the narrator and protagonist of the novel, stands out as a different figure from the other Baldwinian characters in his reaction to the racist and patriarchal culture he lives in. As reflecting a new generation that is more conscious and reactive against the values of American society, Baldwin explores Leo's life which seems to be both different from and similar to his other characters of the earlier novels and how he pays for the American ticket through his interaction with his family, his job as an actor in relation to the American dream, and his interracial heterosexual and intraracial homosexual love affairs.

4.1. Race and Masculinity

In *Tell Me How Long*, Baldwin uses first person narrative and it enables the reader to cover all the periods of Leo's life from childhood to maturity and to understand his identity formation in a more direct way. Through flashbacks, the reader is informed about Leo's childhood and how he is confused as a child in a world of polarizations. He does not quite understand why he is regarded as black or the whites are regarded as white. One of the reasons of his confusion is the presence of his mother in his life. She is described by Leo as "the color of banana" and by Caleb as "almost white" yet

she lives as a black woman. Caleb, seven years older than Leo, explains Leo the reason of his mother's position in society: "Our mama is a *colored woman*. You can tell she's a colored woman because she's married to a colored man, and she's got two colored children. Now, you know ain't no *white lady* going to do a thing like that" (italics added). Even though Leo has not yet internalized the racist values of mainstream society, Caleb has. As the older one, he is aware of the society's unquestionable rules regarding the lives of black men and women. The first rule reveals both the racial and sexual discrimination of black people: a white woman cannot marry a black man. It also hints at the one-drop rule as their mother cannot be white because one has to be "all white to be white." Besides, it also hints at the objectification of women: A woman is considered white only if the "man" she is married is white. Another rule is that a black woman is just a "woman" whereas the white woman is a "lady." As opposed to Cass, in *Another Country,* who is a white lady, Leo's unnamed mother is a black "woman." Without being aware of it, even Caleb prefers to define black woman as a woman but the white woman as a lady.

The inequalities, racial and sexual oppression his family members have to endure have an undeniable effect on the formation of Leo's identity as an African American individual, or more specifically, as an African American male. As Lynn Orilla Scott points out, *Tell Me How Long* revises several figures from Baldwin's earlier novels (183). Leo's unnamed father, Mr. Proudhammer is one of the characters that have obvious similarities with a character in an earlier novel: Gabriel Grimes in *Go Tell*. Both men live in a patriarchal society that deprives them of their masculinity through racial and sexual subjugation. Similar to Gabriel, Mr. Proudhammer lives in an illusionary world to be able to bear the harshness of his life and to keep his self-esteem. He, too, is obsessed with the idea of royal blood, which can be analyzed as an attempt to claim his masculinity. However, Mr. Proudhammer's royal blood is not gained through his relationship to God, but simply related to his ancestors in Barbados. Leo describes his father's dream rather in an ironic way by comparing it with their poor life conditions:

> He came from a race which had been flourishing at the very dawn of the world — a race greater and nobler than Rome or Judea, mightier than Egypt — he

> came from a race of kings, kings who had never been taken in battle, kings who had never been slaves. He spoke to us of tribes and empires, battles, victories, and monarchs of whom we had never heard — they were not mentioned in our schoolbooks — and invested us with glories in which we felt more awkward than in the secondhand shoes we wore.

Besides, Mr. Proudhammer's nostalgia is contradicted with his daily life experiences that make him feel less than a man. He is actually treated like a slave by the policemen, storekeepers, pawnbrokers, welfare workers, and the landlord Rabinowitz whom he hates but still has to obey because of his inferior social status. Leo sheds light on the contrast between his father's pride and how he is treated by white men. "He stood before Rabinowitz, scarcely looking at him, swaying before the spittle and the tirade, sweating – looking unutterably weary." Mr. Proudhammer's masculinity, despite his stories of kings, is threatened as he obeys and does not react the way he actually wants to. Even more destructive, his sons, who are supposed to take him as their model, bear witness to his humiliation every day and in every part of their lives. Thus, Mr. Proudhammer tries to undo the humiliation through his attitude toward black men. Unable to react against the brutality of white men due to their power over him, he "would certainly have made a black man know that he was not the descendant of slaves!"

Unlike Gabriel who has power over his people through his social role as a preacher, Mr. Proudhammer rejects such a power. He even does not go to the church because he regards God as a white God, and shows his reaction to the racist world he lives in with his unbelief. Rejecting the spiritual power that would give him a sense of self-worth, he becomes completely powerless in the eyes of his son Leo who regards him as "the living example of defeat." Contrary to Gabriel who takes advantage of women and is unable to love them, Mr. Proudhammer's only strength comes from his wife. In a society that denies his masculinity, his sense of self-worth, and his authority both as a father and as a husband, Mr. Proudhammer holds on to life with the help of his wife. As Leo suggests, "what she saw save him. She saw that he was a man." The desire for domination in *Go Tell* is replaced in *Tell Me How Long* by the power of love. However, the love between his parents does not protect them from the devastating effects of racism. Whereas Mr. Proudhammer, due to

unemployment, does not earn money, his wife works in a white woman's kitchen. As the head of the family, he becomes useless, and once more, his masculinity is wounded. Both this attack on his masculinity and the hatred he has toward white people in his heart prevent him from eating the food his wife brings to home. As all the family members witness this humiliation and emasculation, their relationship with each other is affected by racism that limits their happy moments together. Leo touches on this situation: "If we had been on the island which had been witness to his birth instead of the unspeakable island of Manhattan, he felt, and I also eventually began to feel, that it would not have been so hard for us all to trust and love each other."

As Leo becomes a witness to the violation of his father's authority, he gets closer to his big brother Caleb who, with his ambitions, strength, and youth, promises a much more perfect masculine model for him. Actually, Leo describes his big brother in a completely opposite way to his father: "He was my touchstone, my model, and my only guide." Caleb is the only person Leo trusts, loves, and sees as a man. He is Leo's best friend who takes him to the movies, who protects him from the cruelties of the other older boys, and whose authority is not yet threatened by the white power. As for his sexual potency, his relationship with Dolores is a proof for Leo who immediately falls in love with her. Like Ida in *Another Country*, Leo completely depends on his brother. Yet, again like Ida, his brother is taken from him step by step by three institutions that reflect institutionalized racism and, as Scott puts it, deny black masculinity (191). Through Caleb's changing figure and his experiences in the justice system, the army and the church, all of which take Caleb away from Leo, Baldwin examines the effects of racism together with the effects of white patriarchy on the black male most clearly.

Like Richard in *Go Tell*, Caleb is accused of robbing a store he has not robbed. The difference is, however, that this time instead of a white man, a black boy – Arthur, who is one of Caleb's friends, lies and causes him to go to jail. Through Arthur, Baldwin implies the existence of the corruption among the blacks as well. What is more, Caleb, unlike Richard, cannot get out of jail immediately. The country he lives in is proud of its equality and justice, yet justice exists only for the privileged group. Before his arrestment, when Caleb and Leo have an unpleasant experience

with the white cops, Mr. Proudhammer asks them whether they get the badge number. Caleb answers angrily as if he knew what would wait for him in the future: "What for? You know a friendly judge? We got money for a lawyer? Somebody they going to listen to?" This helplessness has great effects on both Leo and Caleb regarding how they see themselves in the society and how they see the society they live in. Similar to both Elizabeth in *Go Tell*, and Ida in *Another Country*, Leo is deprived of his only strength against a cruel world. The scene after Caleb's violent arrestment reminds one of the scene where Elizabeth starts hating everything white. Leo, too, undergoes a transformation in a negative way against the white world: "Everything was new, everything was evil, every house was dangerous." It is also ironic that Leo, just a ten-year-old boy at that time, describes the prison as "an old and massive building, far, far away and set on a hill, and with green vines running up and down the walls, and with windows flashing like signals in the sunlight." The prison building is described as "set on a hill," an intentional description that mocks the so-called American myth of a Puritan world that is set upon a hill. Baldwin brings an alternative view to the American ideals by replacing the free country with a prison, as the country is nothing more than a prison for its excluded members.

After years, when Caleb returns from the prison farm he is sent to, the reader faces a different Caleb. The boy who is self-confident, loving, and cheerful is gone. On the contrary, he turns back as a boy full of hatred toward both his family and the white world, a hatred that can destroy him. As he later tells everything he has experienced to Leo, the prison becomes the murderer of his masculinity and self-love. In the prison, as a black boy, he is treated like a "mule" rather than a human being. However, the most devastating effect of the prison is not physical but psychological. Like Richard in *Go Tell*, who yearns for his individuality but is denied one, Caleb is treated as if he has no individuality but only the qualifications of a whole race – the black one. When the ring-leader Martin Howell calls him Sam, Caleb refuses to answer and tells the man his own name. After the event, he simply cannot get out of trouble. It is worth analyzing because it is more than a matter of name confusion. Howell, as the superior one, thinks he has the right to define Caleb, to treat him in a stereotypical way. Yet, Caleb refuses to be defined by a white man;

he chooses to define himself and pays for it. It is why Howell gets obsessed with dominating Caleb.

Through his experiences, Caleb's manhood is threatened and his self-esteem is wounded not only by the racial oppression but also by the threat of sexual exploitation. Too obsessed with Caleb, Howell asks him when Caleb is working in the fields: "Nigger, if my balls was on your chin, where would my prick be?" This threat of rape is one of the most humiliating moments of Caleb's life on the prison farm. Howell, in a way, treats Caleb like a woman and rejects his masculinity. He even takes him from the fields and makes him work in the kitchen like a woman. Caleb expresses how Howell makes him feel: "He made me feel like I was my grandmother in the fields somewhere and this white mother-fucker rides over and decides to throw her down in the fields. Well, shit. You know. I ain't my grandmother. I'm a man. And a man can do anything he wants to do, but can't nobody make him do it. I ain't about to be raped." This strength and self-confidence of Caleb is, however, challenged to the degree of opening a wound that will never be cured. Even though he is not raped, Caleb is beaten both physically and psychologically when Howell keeps him in a cellar with rats and makes him tell that he "ain't worth shit." Humiliating himself in front of the man he hates with all his heart, Caleb loses his faith in life and tells Leo in pain: "That hurt me, hurt me more than his whip, more than his rifle butt, more than his fists. Oh. That hurt me." It is ironic that Caleb, a boy with ambitions, dreams, and love despite the white world, becomes a bitter person who never laughs and who loses the ability to love any human being in a place where, according to his country, he will be made a useful member of the society.

When Caleb is back from the prison with all his incurable wounds, he is no longer the same Caleb both in his own eyes and in the eyes of others. As they, the whole family, go to a bar after his return, Caleb steals a wine from there, and thinks he has the right to steal anything as it cannot be enough when the thing that is stolen from him is considered – which is his manhood. In a way, he becomes a thief after he goes to jail. Besides, through Leo's observations in the bar, it becomes clear that Caleb is not taken seriously by the girls with whom he dances, and who are in love with Caleb before he goes to jail. Absolutely his manhood is stolen by the white justice. The

girls regard him as a boy with "unspeakable past" and thus with an "unendurable future." Caleb now "was good to look at, good to dance with, probably good to sleep with: but he was no longer good for love." This social estrangement breaks Caleb's already broken heart and changes him in the worst way possible.

The most devastating effect of his prison experiences on his psyche is, however, the threat of rape by Howell, by a white man. Homoerotic desire, which according to Baldwin can take many forms from oppression to liberation, becomes Caleb's nightmare, and a symbol of white oppression. It implies his passiveness as a man and his inferiority to Howell who is a representation of the white power. Yet, when Leo makes love to Caleb, it becomes something else, a liberating power that if not destroys, at least diminishes the effects of racism on the black male psyche. Baldwin, with this incestuous homoerotic love, makes a distinction between the same-sex desire that results from the need to dominate, to oppress, and to exploit; and the same-sex desire that results from pure love and the need to share one's body with the loved one. As Scott has suggested, it shows "Baldwin's willingness to posit intraracial, homoerotic love as a 'solution' to the debasement of black masculinity and thereby directly challenge the homophobic discourse of Black Nationalism" (193). Another point Baldwin deconstructs regarding the assumptions on the homoerotic desire is its relation to Christianity. Leo, as a person who does not have a positive attitude toward Christianity and God, mentions and mocks God when he makes love to Caleb. He says "I hoped that God was watching. He probably was. He never did anything else." It is not just a coincidence that Leo mentions God in their lovemaking scene. Unlike *Go Tell* where homosexuality is examined rather as a sin by John, Leo rejects this view and challenges it with his homoerotic affair. He simply does not obey the rules of a God who privileges the whites over him. That is to say, rather than defining it as a means of white oppression, Leo regards the homosexual act as a reaction against it. Thus, with the incestuous homoerotic affair, Baldwin challenges both the racial and religious attitudes toward homosexuality.

Even though the brotherly intimacy between Leo and Caleb has healed Caleb's wounded masculinity to some extent, racism is not that easy to escape from. The second racist institution, the army, also has a role on Caleb's identity formation. As he joins the army in the Second World War, Caleb is again psychologically exploited

by another white man. As the army temporarily stays in Rome, Caleb faces a different world where the skin color is not valued. It is ironic that a country, a city where a war takes place does not discriminate against him and make him feel inferior as much as his home country. As a boy who is not worth loving in the eyes of the girls in the land of the free, Caleb is loved, valued, and respected by an Italian girl named Pia despite his skin color. Even his relationships with his white countrymen are restored to some extent as he becomes friends with a white boy from Boston called Frederick Hopkins. In other words, Caleb still can get along with a white man despite his experiences in the prison. He has not completely lost the ability to love yet. However, this white boy, just like white people in his country, has the desire to dominate him and to project his own sexual insecurities onto him. As the Italian women reject his masculinity and refuse to have an intercourse with him, Frederick tries to get Pia away from Caleb by confusing Pia's mind about Caleb's skin color and what his skin color means in the United States of America. Caleb's sexual potency becomes a racial competition as Frederick does not feel irritated by the potency of his white friends. Caleb, who fights for his white country, is once more taught to hate white people even though he is "five thousand miles [away] from home."

Unlike his first humiliation and subjugation, Caleb is not healed through his intercourse with Leo this time. Rather, he becomes a religious man. The liberating role of homoerotic desire is replaced by the so-called love of God. Whether this embrace of religion is a victory or a loss can be analyzed through the comparison of two different Caleb: the one before the prison and army and the one after them. The reader is informed about Caleb's previous thoughts on God when he, together with Leo, is kept by the white cops without any reason and then released because of Leo's age. After their release, Caleb shouts angrily: "Thanks, good Jesus Christ. Thanks for letting us go home. I mean, I know you didn't have to do it. You could have let us just get our brains beat out. Remind me, O Lord, to put an extra large nickel in the plate next Sunday." It is too obvious that Caleb, with his anger toward the white oppression, mocks God and does not have any faith in Him. Yet, after his interaction with the church, Caleb becomes as passive as possible, and does not think about revenge at all. He no longer struggles for his rights in the society. He tells Leo:

“You're fighting now. I know. I know how [you] fought. You're going to have to learn how not to fight, not to insist on your will but to surrender your will and find yourself in the great will, the universal will, the will of God, which created the heavens and earth and everything that is, and created you.” Through religion, Caleb learns “not to fight.” That is why Leo, who never believes in God and curses Him at every opportunity, regards his big brother who was once his only model and guide as dead. Through Caleb, Leo finds out “how many ways there were to die, and how few to live.” There is a distance that cannot be destroyed between the two brothers now as Leo points out: “The other Caleb, the raging, laughing, seeking Caleb, the Caleb who moaned and wept, the Caleb who could be lonely — that other Caleb, my brother, had been put to death and would never be seen again.”

Caleb, who is hurt too much by the harshness of the white world, needs something or somewhere to take refuge in. Just like in *Go Tell*, religion becomes a shelter for him. As the earthly things are denied to him, he has to lead himself to the other world like the characters in *Go Tell*. He is not equal to the white citizens of his country in the eyes of men. So, he tries to find equality in the eyes of God. He tells Leo this wish to be treated as an equal, to be like every man that has the right to live not as a “mule” but as a human: “He that overcometh shall receive the crown of life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. What a promise that is! And it's *for every man*, Leo. For every man” (italics added). This promise keeps him alive. Leo does not deny this fact, the fact that Caleb is at peace now and that he does not hate himself anymore. Like Gabriel in *Go Tell*, Caleb finds a way to gain his self-esteem back through religion. Yet, Leo tries to show him the contradiction, to show him that the liberating power he finds in the church is the very reason of his alienation and humiliation as a black person: “Oh, yes, yes, yes, forgive them, let them rot, let them live or die; but how can you stand in the company of our murderers, how can you kiss that monstrous cross, how can you kiss them with the kiss of love? How can you?”

However, it is not only Caleb that redeems the church and its role on his social status. Leo’s mother always fights with him because of his attempts to be an actor whereas she regards Caleb as a respected man, as a very respected man who “made something of himself out of nothing.” That is to say, whereas Caleb, who could not

bear working in the garment center before and now works as the chauffeur of a white man is respected because of his interaction with the church, Leo is seen as nothing because of his unconventional attitude toward the church. This view is also supported by white people as a policeman who tries to threaten Leo because of his attempts to be an actor tells him: "You see my point, Leo? You stay with your own people and you're sure to stay out of trouble. Why, we never have any trouble with the colored people in this town — they're just the nicest bunch of colored people you'd ever want to meet, they work hard and save their money, and go to church." It is ironic that Caleb's sentence "I'm free at last" is supported by the very people who imprison him within the color of his skin. Far from being free, Caleb, despite his rage, ambitions and dreams at the beginning, becomes a person who will always be out of trouble as he is now among "the nicest bunch of colored people."

Apart from the acceptance of passivity that is hidden in the church, Leo criticizes his brother regarding his sincerity. By becoming involved with the black church, Caleb not only becomes passive to the inequalities and injustices of the white world, but also takes advantage of the "ignorant niggers." Leo defines the church as a way of exploiting poor black people. He makes a connection between his position as an actor and his brother's position as a preacher. According to him, both of them act, one on the stage, the other on the pulpit. After all, Caleb who claims that he has reached the love of God does not love everyone. On the contrary, he criticizes people harshly and excludes them easily. As if the polarization of white and black is not enough, he divides people into two: the ones who are saved and the ones who are lost. The church becomes a mask like the mask of an actor. It is a mask for hatred, for the hatred Caleb feels toward white people for the power they hold; toward the black people for their powerlessness; and toward himself for the inferior position he has in the society once he longed to be a part of. Thus, Caleb's conversion, far from a victory, is a "psychological defeat" both in the eyes of Leo and of Baldwin (Scott 191).

Leo, as a witness to his father's pain that leads him to the illusion of royal blood in a world that not only makes it impossible but also ridiculous; to his brother's pain that turns Caleb into a ghostly figure in Leo's life where he was once the touchstone, constructs his identity in opposition to his father and brother, and as Aaron Oforlea

has suggested, rejects many of the values that are part and parcel of the Harlem community he grew up in (67). As mentioned earlier, he rejects the black church because of its complete rejection of the earthly life and because of the deeper reality underneath this rejection: that the church leads "ignorant" black people to passivity and plays an important role on the formation of African American identity created and approved by the white norms. Mr. Proudhammer is destroyed by self-hatred and hatred for white people, and Caleb is destroyed by an illusionary love of God whereas in reality it is just a mask to cover his humiliation and subjugation. Both are trapped in the essentialist categorizations of whites and blacks. Leo, on the other hand, creates an alternative world for himself where the boundaries of race are not clearly determined. Even as a little child, he observes the people and finds out how wrong it is to create polarizations: "I wondered why people called them white —t hey certainly were not white. Black people were not black either — my father was wrong." As a child, he rejects socially constructed identity categories and thereby challenges both the white view and the black view. He does not internalize the racist view that defines and limits him to a stereotype.

4.2. Blackness and the American Dream

Since the racial discrimination, inequalities, and oppression are unbelievably opposite to the utopic ideals of his country, Leo rejects the realness of the reality he is exposed to in his daily life. Rather, just like his brother Caleb who denies the existence of the "earthly" world and takes refuge in the promises of Heaven to bear the harshness of his life, Leo seeks happiness and self-worth in a fictional world – the world of movies. When he examines the faces of the actors in the movie house, he defines them as "more real than real." The attitudes of the two brothers confirm Leo's earlier view that there is a similarity between the actor and the preacher; both, dissatisfied with the opportunities the world offers them, prefer to create an illusionary world of their own. What is more, the view that the lives in the movies are more real than real brings with it the view that the life Leo has is not real, which is in a way an attempt to escape from racism. It becomes apparent when both Caleb and Leo are on their way to home at midnight. Without any reason except for walking on the street, they are kept and questioned by two white policemen. Leo, just

ten years old, overcomes the shock and fear by relating it to movies: “It may seem funny, I don't know, but I felt, at once, as though Caleb and I had conjured up a movie; that if I had not been describing a movie to him, we would not have suddenly found ourselves in the middle of one.” Ironically, the cops come the moment Leo tells Caleb how the heroine, “the good girl” is murdered by the Indians in the movie they are supposed to watch. The scene creates a huge contrast between the rhetoric of the American ideals and the practices of the white policemen. In the movie, the villains are the Indians, yet in real life, it is the white policemen that violate the rights of the American citizens – Leo and Caleb whose only “crime” is to walk through the street at midnight. Torn between these contrasts of rhetoric and practice, Leo regards the movies as real whereas defining his life as a movie.

Leo’s interest in movies, theaters, and acting is not, however, limited to the cruel experiences he has as a black boy. It becomes a way of disguising his so-called inferiority. This need to be disguised becomes inevitable in Leo’s life as he is gradually alienated from the black community to which he belongs. When Leo and Barbara go to an uptown party with the hope of getting an opportunity to talk to San-Marquand couple – Saul and Lola who can help them in their acting career, Leo realizes that the actors in the party are not actually that beautiful or handsome or tall. They are not as perfect as they seem to be. This opportunity to be seen different from what one is amazes Leo who is trapped in a world where his dreams of being treated as an equal to his white countrymen, treated as a “man” are denied because of his skin color. He is shocked to see a famous actress who seems to be quite tall in the movies as “having very narrowly missed being a dwarf.” Acting, then, can release him from the prison of his color:

> It may have been that night that I really decided to attempt to become an actor — really became committed to this impossibility; it is certain that this night brought into my mind, in an astounding way, the great question of where the boundaries of reality were truly to be found. If a dwarf could be a queen and make me believe that she was six feet tall, then why was it not possible that I, brief, wiry, dull dark He, could become an emperor — The Emperor Jones, say, why not? And I then watched everybody with this cruel intention in my mind.

Deprived of his rights, the opportunity to be powerful and respected, Leo seeks self-worth and power in a world of fiction. If he, as a black boy in a white country, cannot be what he would like to be, then he can be whatever he likes to be in a fictional world where "the boundaries of reality" are blurred.

Through Leo's attempts to be an actor, Baldwin brings out the reality that racism and the subjugation of black people are not easy to escape from. Leo, motivated by the hope that he can be another person with more opportunities, is not welcomed by the world of actors. The American dream that promises everyone to what they wish for, at least the possibility of it, becomes just a "dark dream" for Leo as his pursuit of happiness leads him to the "white way." That night, both Barbara and Leo try to make an impression on the San-Marquand couple, especially on Saul; but the attitudes of Saul reveal the racist structure of the American theater. Saul explains the young people, Leo and Barbara, black and white, that there needs to be a necessary background for them to be able to achieve the necessary discipline in the Actors' Means Workshop by "politely" implying the lack of the above-mentioned background in Leo whereas Barbara, a white Southern heiress from Kentucky, has everything necessary for the Actors' Means Workshop. It is quite clear that Saul does not see beyond Leo's skin color as when he implies the incompetency of Leo and Barbara's promising future as an actress, he does not know anything about them except that one is black and from Harlem; and the other is white and from a rich family in the South. As a "liberal" educator and director who has responsibility to "the theatrical community at large and to the American theater in particular," Saul limits Leo's chances to be an actor through his own limited view. Leo, on the other hand, is not to be fooled. He can see beyond Saul's liberalism. When Saul asks him what qualifications he thinks he has to be able to be an actor, Leo answers him mockingly "I think you're looking at them" – an answer that implies how Saul is trapped and limited to the externals, mainly to the skin color.

Saul's limited view becomes clear when Leo, outraged by Saul's humiliating comments on his background, leaves them behind and plays piano at the request of a girl at the party. Blues, a "laconic expression" of African American experience, becomes Leo's ticket to the Workshop. Saul can only evaluate Leo's skills within the context of African American heritage rather than giving him a chance to prove

himself just like Barbara. He is not an American but an African American in the eyes of Saul, "African" comes first. Yet, the use of blues at a time when Leo gives up his hopes is also important. When he leaves Saul, Lola, and Barbara behind, he looks out of the window and "stared at the stars, I watched the park, which, in the darkness, was made shapeless and grandiose, which spoke of peace and space and cooling, healing water — which seemed to speak of possibilities for the bruised, despairing spirit which might remain forever, for me, far away, a dark dream veiled in darkness." He is "bruised and despairing" because of the racist attitude hidden in Saul's words and the American dream becomes an impossible dark dream veiled in the darkness. Just like Ida, he expresses his feelings with the help of blues, a music which "was already in my [his] bones." He sings: "Blues, you're driving me crazy, what am I to do? Blues, you're driving me crazy, what am I to do? I ain't got nobody to tell my troubles to." So, blues has two functions in the novel: on the side of white Americans, it becomes a way of stereotyping black Americans and setting limits for them that cannot be overcome. On the side of black Americans, it becomes a way to make oneself seen by the white world, in a way, a ticket to the American dream.

Even though accepted to the Actors' Means Workshop, Leo's American dream is still at risk because his skin color, according to directors, limits him only to the black characters in theater. When both Barbara and Leo are to be tested by Saul, Baldwin reveals a performance – a "swarthy" student performs a scene from Othello by Shakespeare and Saul evaluates his performance. As the narrator, Leo examines the boy's incompetent performance and finds it rather embarrassing:

> The alcove was currently occupied by a swarthy youth, built big in the head and the belly and the buttocks. He was wearing sandals, and a kind of loose garment; and, at the moment he captured my attention, he was leaning forward, toward us, in great pain. His pain was so great that he could neither speak, nor do anything with his arms—which he held on either side of him, like broken plywood wings. He stumbled about in such despair that I supposed I was expected to believe that he had just been blinded, and the sandals made me think of Oedipus. But, as I couldn't hear him—yet—I wasn't sure.

Rather than as an actor, Leo describes the boy as if he were a charlatan with too exaggerated movements. He even cannot understand that the boy is acting Othello.

Rather, Leo associates the boy with Oedipus. As the only black person in the room, he can easily understand the huge gap between Othello and the boy who performs him. Ironically, the other students in the room who are all white applaud cheerfully as if they watched a great performance. Part of their cheerfulness results from the fact that Mr. Parker, the "swarthy boy," performs Othello in a way that humiliates the black character and puts him into the stereotypical image of black people. Through this unbelievably incompetent and insultingly exaggerated performance, their ignorance on the lives of black people is not challenged. Actually, it is justified. That is to say, by watching an allegedly black character that completely fits into their image of him and thus their image of themselves, the white students are relaxed and happy. After all, a character like Othello in the way Mr. Parker performs him is a very different human being and thus is not and cannot be one of them. Their sense of superiority and the inferiority of black people are confirmed. In his essay, "Theater: Negro In and Out," Baldwin touches on this issue: "The spectacle on the stage does not attempt to recreate our experience − thus helping us to deal with it. The attempt is almost always in the opposite direction: to justify our fantasies, thus locking us within them."

As Baldwin always defends the idea that art should lead to reality and wake people up from their illusions, he mocks the American theater which is both exclusive and ignorant regarding the lives of black people through the example of Actors' Means Workshop which is defined in the novel as one of the best theater workshops in the United States of America. Besides, the ignorance is not only limited to acting. When Saul asks the boy who acts Othello questions about the connection between Othello's grief and his race, he simply denies the fact that the relationship between Iago who is white and Othello who is black is affected by racism. He answers Saul rather quickly: "How so, sir?" It is quite clear that the boy does not understand or does not want to understand – as he uneasily looks at Leo – the situation Othello is in. He is far from understanding the role he performs; he even makes a connection between Othello's deep grief and his own stomachache. Yet, ironically, Saul seems to approve his performance. He praises the boy regarding his "nice progress" and his "courage." The only negative comment he makes is actually that the boy, Mr. Parker is not yet ready for classics. It is important to note that Saul

says “classics” in a universal manner; he does not criticize the boy because of his choice of a black character. The problem is rather a matter of competency rather than race.

The “classics” issue and Saul’s other comments on the swarthy student become more meaningful in understanding the effect of race on the theater when analyzed comparatively to the performance of Barbara and Leo who choose Clifford Oders’ *Waiting For Lefty*, a play that is concerned with the two lovers Sid and Florrie who cannot be together due to the harsh life conditions in the Great Depression. The “liberal” director Saul reacts in a very different way this time. He tells Leo: “Your equipment for the theater is extremely meager.” By “equipment” he implies Leo’s body, his black skin. He simply suggests that whereas an author uses a pen; a sculpture uses a chisel; an actor’s instrument or “equipment” is his body. As Leo is a black person, he should only perform black characters like Paul Robeson who has played Othello. The example of Othello brings into mind the former performance of the white student. Whereas a white man can play Othello, Leo, as a black person, cannot play anything else. As Shonni Enelow has suggested, Baldwin deconstructs the universal attitude of the American theater which is obsessed with identification. Yet, this identification “involves a power relation that only goes one way: white is universal, whereas black is always particular” (98). That is to say, whereas the white actors can play any role because of the universal values their white skin implies, black people, if achieve to be an actor, can and should only play black roles as they are not universal but a minority.

Aside from the skin color, Saul also blames Leo for not understanding the psychology of the character – Sid, a white man: “We do not think that you have entered into the problems of the young taxi driver at all. We do not think you understood them. We doubt, frankly, that you so much as considered them.” Whereas Mr. Parker is praised for his understanding of Othello’s pain by relating it to his stomachache, Leo is criticized for his “bombastic, hysterical, and self-pitying” performance. As Enelow points out, the Actors’ “Means” Workshop in the novel refers to “Method Acting” which makes it an obligation for actors to understand the inner world of the characters they play (86). Leo, patiently, tells Saul the similarities between Sid and himself as both of them are poor and “hungry.” Yet, Saul rejects

any possibility of a connection between Sid, a white character and Leo, a black boy. As accepting the similarity between the experiences of a black boy who is excluded from mainstream society because of his skin color and the experiences of a white character who is likewise alienated and wounded because of his class struggle would mean that there is not actually an indestructible boundary between the white and black people in terms of struggle, pain, and love, Saul immediately denies such a possibility. That is to say, as one of the most important directors of America in the novel, he prefers to divide rather than unite for the sake of keeping the superiority of white people, white culture, and white norms. Thus, Saul implies that Leo's dream to be an actor without exclusively black roles is a target that "will simply be impossible for you [him] ever to reach."

It is also interesting and ironic that the only thing Saul seems to approve of in Leo's performance is his dance at the end of the scene. Saul describes Leo at those moments as "joyous and boyish" in a positive manner. The association of music with Leo again is inevitable like the night they first meet. The only thing allowed to Leo is music which is just another way to confirm the stereotypical image of black people. Saul's comments all lead to the limitation of Leo's personality and skills as an actor. For Saul, he is just a black person, and has to keep his place in that minority. Music, dance, and his performance as too emotional all imply the sensuality of black people, which is the very reason of their inferiority according to the mainstream culture. Saul's positive remarks on Leo's dance performance also imply that "Leo's talent is instinctive, not learned. For Saul, Leo's ability to dance is natural as opposed to based on learned skill, a stereotype of the African American performer" (Oforlea 71). So to speak, Saul's first impression of Leo that he does not have the necessary background for the Workshop does not change even after he gets to know Leo as Saul is not willing to see beyond Leo's skin color and the social status this skin color inevitably implies. Leo, in order to escape from the racist world by which his family members are gradually destroyed, takes refuge in theater which is as racist and as cruel as the institutions he has escaped.

Like Saul has foretold in the Workshop, Leo's following years as an actor does not go beyond stereotypical black characters like waiters, porters, and butlers. He is nothing more than a decor on the stage. After all these years of struggle, he defines

himself as “a boy trapped in the wrong time, the wrong place, and with the wrong ambitions trapped in the wrong skin.” He is made to play roles that are both an insult to his “manhood” and to his “craft.” The black people, especially his family, regard him in this way too. He is a boy on “the white way” and is doomed to fail. Leo examines people’s ideas on his life: “It was now never going to happen. No one knew what was going to happen, and no one could control it. In a way, it can be said that I was the ruin of all their hopes. They had not been able to save me — my life would be like theirs.” Like Rufus, Leo’s career and life are beginning to be “an object lesson” for others. Yet, there is a huge difference between Rufus and Leo, a difference that results in one’s suicide and other’s success. Leo does not internalize the racist views on his identity, so, is not destroyed by self-hatred. When he is expected to play *In Abraham’s Bosom* by Paul Green, he does not identify with the black character who is just an affirmation of the white racist thought on black race:

> I didn't believe in his sorrows and I didn't believe in his joys and I found absolutely no way to play the scene in which the hero, having struck down a white man, loudly and sincerely repents. He sounded as though he had struck down the son of God. The white man had beaten him with a whip: why was the nigger supposed to moan because he reacted — and, at that, belatedly — as the dueling codes of Europe assume a man should act? Playing this role, for this was a role, was harder than carrying the tray.

Far from accepting the stereotypical image of himself, Leo challenges this view. He is completely aware of the motives hidden under these roles. It is directly related to the white audience’s wishes to be confirmed, to be justified for their exclusion of black people. The above-mentioned play is performed for “education” and Leo questions the white norms rather than starting to hate himself for the humiliating and passive image of the black character. The key difference between Rufus and Leo lies there: the internalization of the black humiliation and subjugation destroys Rufus, yet Leo is conscious enough to reject the views of those who behave as if they were “the son of God.”

This faith in his own humanity no matter what the others – whites – say, leads Leo to his American dream at the end not because of the “idealistic” American practices but in spite of them. It is a Greek director who has not yet adapted himself to the

racist practices of the United States that lets Leo have a role that is, at least in some way, related to the real lives of black people rather than the fantasies of the white audience. Just like Leo and Barbara who have made a connection between the racial experience and the class struggle, the Greek director Connie makes a connection between the poor white coal miners and black people in America with the play *The Corn is Green*. Yet, it is ironic that Connie is called before the House Un-American Activities Committee which is defined by Leo mockingly as "the guardians of the American safety." As a director that gives an opportunity to black people to express their feelings and their lives on the stage so that white people who are trapped in their "safety" can realize what they, as a nation, have done to their own flesh and blood, Connie is threatened by the "Americans" and labeled as "Un-American." As Leo suggests, the boundaries of reality are really blurred in theater: a director that practises the American ideals is treated as "un-American" whereas the people like Saul who cling to the racist ideology are safe in their illusionary world.

It is true that Leo becomes successful and famous just like the dreams of John in *Go Tell* who wants to escape from the darkness of his father's house where only the dreams of Heaven are permitted. Leo, even though he is a black boy, fulfills John's dreams of having an important place in the earthly world. As Scott has pointed out, "John Grimes's dreams of the future become the reality of Leo Proudhammer's life" (187). Yet, even though Leo has reached his American dream, that is, he becomes a famous actor in spite of his color; the dream brings with itself a series of nightmarish facts to Leo's life. As external forces like his skin color and everybody from his own family to the white directors are against him, Leo has to work too much to reach his American dream. As examined in Hochschild's tenets of the American dream in the first chapter, as a black boy, Leo's "reasonable anticipation" does not include the possibility of a career as an actor. With his American dream, Leo goes beyond the reasonable anticipation, and in order to do this, he works so hard that at the beginning of the novel he has a heart attack due to "nervous exhaustion and overwork." In order to achieve what, say, Barbara has achieved, Leo needs to show extra effort. His conversation with the doctor shows what has happened to Leo after he has become famous, what was the price of the ticket to his American dream, and why he has become so alone:

> You do not need to push yourself so hard, you have enough money. Oh! I know we never have enough money. But it is not really money with you, anyway. It is an impertinent question — but what is it? I simply would like to know. You have been extraordinarily successful for more than a decade — you see, I know, I did not hear of you yesterday. I should guess that the odds against you were fantastic. So — indulge me, if you please? I should like to know.

As a white man, the doctor is far from understanding the reasons behind Leo's insistence on hard work. Leo's aim has never been money but to prove himself both to the white and black communities. Also, by portraying Leo differently when he is thirty nine years old, Baldwin examines the effects of Leo's long struggle to prove that he has the right to be an actor. Even though in most of the parts of the novel Leo is portrayed as a conscious black man who rejects essentialist thoughts on his black skin, after years of hard work and struggle, he is not quite the same person. "It's hard, after all, for a boy to find out who he is, or what he wants, if he is always afraid and always acting."

As he always acts both on stage and life to prove that he is not inferior to the other actors who are white, Leo gradually loses his sense of self. He does not belong to himself but to American society; he becomes a product of the very same culture that has rejected him cruelly. In other words, he stops being Leo and lives under the mask of the famous actor Leo Proudhammer, nothing is left behind the mask except for the fear of disappointing people, of losing the image he has gained so hard: "The day came when I wished to break my silence and found that I could not speak: the actor could no longer be distinguished from his role." His role has become inseparable from his identity. It becomes clear when Leo, after having a heart attack, is worried about the audience – his only life. In his dressing room, he says, "The audience would never be able to see me." That is to say, even his death has a meaning only when the audience can see him. He defines his dressing room at the theater as his only home. He has worked so much to reach his American dream that he has no life behind the curtain, and no self behind the roles he acts. His dream may have come true; but it has taken his sense of self from him: "Who was this self? Had he left

forever the house of my endeavor and my fame? Or was he merely having hard time breathing beneath the rags and the rubble of the closets I had not opened in so long?"

Part of the reason that makes Leo lose his sense of self is the fact that he is alienated from his own black community by leading himself to the "white way." Baldwin touches on the issue of narrow identity categorizations through Leo: One can either be black or an actor because a career in theater implies whiteness. That is why the people around him are almost all white. Oforlea interprets this situation as a choice between community and individuality (69). Leo, just like an American, chooses to "pursue his happiness" by leaving his community behind. Ironically, both failure and success cause isolation from the community. Like Rufus in *Another Country*, Leo is isolated and alienated; he is forever a stranger who never feels "at home in the world." His need to be a part of black people is especially apparent when he spends the summer with Barbara and Jerry and works for the Actors' Means Workshop. As the only black person among the whites, he is in a way excluded from the black people of the town. His need to have a sense of belonging leads him to treat drinks to two black men, Fowler and Matthew in the restaurant. Leo's own sentences show the extent of his loneliness and desire to be a part of the black community even though he is with the whites: "Perhaps my heart shook in my chest like the wings of a small bird, but I was incredibly happy not to have been rejected. I was happy enough, I realized, to be on the point of tears." Yet, even though he is excluded from his black community, as a man who "has made it," he is responsible for all black people. At a rally, he is expected to speak for the rights of black citizens of the country because his name can draw crowds. That is to say, even his name does not belong to him. For the black community, rather than a person, he is the living proof of the possibility of success that will destroy their estrangement from mainstream society whereas it is actually this estrangement that has led Leo to be an actor. It is a vicious circle from which they cannot be released.

It is not only the black people that exclude Leo, though. After all his struggles to be accepted by the white society, Leo, just like in the case of black people, belongs to the white society as long as he is kept away from it. Again, he is not a person, not a human being with feelings; but a living proof of American ideals, of the American dream that enables everyone no matter what his race is to pursue their happiness. On

the surface, he is admired by white people as in the case of the young nurse who looks after him: “Oh! And aren't some of the girls just sick with jealousy! Of me! Because I'm nursing Leo Proudhammer!” Behind this admiration, however, lies a distance that always reminds Leo of his blackness. As Baldwin puts it, “Even the most successful Negroes proved that one needed, in order to be free, something more than a bank account” (“Down”). The fact that he is rich and famous does not make him free at all. Baldwin examines the attitudes of white people toward successful African Americans mockingly through the conversation between Leo and Barbara’s family. The “white guilt” shows itself through the family’s exaggerated efforts to prove that they are not racist and that they belong to the land of the free. Barbara’s mother tries to show Leo how “liberal” she is: “You don't know how many colored friends we have down where we come from. If you ever get down that way, why we'd be happy to make you welcome. Why, Barbie can tell you. We don't care about the color of a person's skin — we never have done.” Yet, by that time, the reader has already been informed many times about the racist attitudes of Barbara’s family. Ironically, Leo examines Barbara’s father who would almost call him “boy.” Although he is a celebrity, Barbara’s father unconsciously feels superior to Leo and cannot help seeing him in the same way he sees African American “boys” in the South. Likewise, Leo has narrowly missed calling Barbara’s mother “ma’am.” Even though both sides seem to be released from the history of slavery and black subjugation, they are still under the influence of the racist discourse.

What is more, the family members not only try to justify themselves but also their country. They mention some black actresses like Lena Home and Pearl Bailey to imply how generous America is by letting its black citizens to become actors and actresses. Even Leo’s success is a proof of equality in the United States of America for Barbara’s family who “bathed in a bubble bath of self-congratulation.” Her brother Ken explains Leo’s success in a very self-deluded way: “He just made his own way. And anybody can make his way in this country, no matter what color he is.” That is to say, they, as a Southern family, live with the illusion that both whites and blacks live under the same conditions even though deep in their hearts, they are aware of the bitter reality. Like most of Baldwinian characters, they just do not have the courage to face up to the reality which will not only change the image of black

men like Leo on their minds but also their own images based on the privileges of whiteness which form the basis of their fixed identities.

4.3. Interracial and Same-Sex Desire

In "The Uses of Blues," Baldwin examines the relation between race and sexuality through Harry Belafonte: "People go to see Harry and stand in long lines to watch him. They love him onstage, or at a cocktail party, but they don't want him to marry their daughters." Similarly, Leo's limitations as a black person are not only related to race but also to sexuality, or to put it more clearly, his limitations are related to the interrelation of racial discrimination and sexual oppression. As he is alienated from the black community, the only girls around him are white, a situation that makes the interracial affairs inevitable. Yet, the world he lives in is not as "liberal" as it sounds to be. His sexual affairs and how the society, both white and black, sees them are revealed most clearly in the summer he works for the Actors' Means Workshop. When Leo has an intercourse with the white actress Madeleine, his staying at her house becomes a public problem rather than a personal issue. As an old couple sees him alone in Madeleine's apartment, they inform the white policemen, and Leo is arrested for being seen in a white apartment alone. The people in the town, like Saul, do not see beyond his skin; he is only a "black" image with a hyper-sexualized body. It becomes especially apparent when Leo defines the police officer's look "with a curiously *impersonal* loathing" (italics added). Both the old couple and the police officer deal with the black image in their minds rather than Leo who has a unique personality like all "human" beings.

Leo's reaction to the event is rather bitter and shows the great gap between what Americans think they are and what they actually are: "It was in vain that I told myself, Leo, this isn't the South. I knew better than to place any hope in the accidents of North American geography. This was America, America, America, and those people out there, my countrymen, had been tearing me limb from limb, like dogs, for centuries." The South is known for its injustices and the lynching of black men for the "rape" of white woman more than the North. However, Leo's unpleasant experience leads him to the reality that the bloody history of his country includes both the North and the South, without any significant difference. Ironically, the event

gives away more than racial discrimination. Leo's country offers a Darwinian world that is completely based on hierarchical relationships, a world that the powerful one always wins. As a black boy, Leo is the weak one compared to the old couple – the white citizens of the country and the white guardians of safety. However, the roles change when Lola, with her higher status, talks to the police officer: "Young man. A word of advice. I will try to put it in extremely simple language, so that you can understand it. The people standing before you are more powerful than you. I am more powerful than you, and I can break you by making a phone call."

Yet, the racist attitude regarding the sexual relationships between whites and blacks is not one-sided; Leo is also affected by the racist atmosphere which has been a part of his life so long. Even though he does not love Madeleine, he makes love to her in order to know "if my body could be despised, how much it could be despised; perhaps I had to know how much was demanded of my body to make the shameful sentence valid; or to invalidate the sentence." That is to say, he cannot be sure about his own sexuality without having an intercourse with a white woman. He is trapped between his sense of self and his image created by the dominant culture. Besides, it is not only white people that make his intercourse with a white woman impossible. Throughout the novel whenever Leo thinks about a white woman in a sexual way, or has an affair with one, he feels guilty and threatened. His guilt is mostly revealed by nightmares where he sees Caleb with warnings: "What are you doing with that white girl? What are you doing?" and then Leo says, "Caleb grabbed me, and with the great wooden Bible in his hand, he struck me." The connection between his affairs and Caleb who holds the Bible is quite important as it suggests that even though Leo rejects the Christian values, he is not completely released from its rhetoric as well as from Caleb's experiences in the racist context that eventually have emasculated him. This message is also strengthened when the nurse asks Leo whether he always has nightmares. Leo answers: "Only when I've done something bad." Unconsciously, he defines his sexual affairs with white women as "bad" because it is impossible to completely avoid internalizing the racist discourse of his country as the discourse is a part of his daily life.

The incident that takes place after the lovemaking scene of Leo and Madeleine is just a way of showing the general racist atmosphere that is hidden behind the rhetoric

of American ideals. However, the problem becomes deeper with the relationship between Leo and Barbara whch is based on love rather than on an attempt to evaluate Leo's own ideas of his sexuality as happened in the case of Madeleine. The scene where Leo, Barbara and Jerry walk together in the summer reminds one of Rufus, Vivaldo and Leona. The sight of the three of them together is tolerated to some extent by the people whereas the absence of the white man – Jerry – threatens the social order and is not to be tolerated in any way. The existence of a white man, once more, implies the fact that the white woman cannot be with the black man. The masculinity of the two boys, just like Rufus and Vivaldo, is evaluated in a competitive way. As Leo puts it, "Jerry had been proof, at least insofar as this white girl [Barbara] and this white town were concerned, of my impotence." Their identities are expected to be based on binary opposition logic, and thus they can never be equal in the eyes of their countrymen. Yet, unlike Rufus and Vivaldo, Leo and Jerry do not harm each other through "manly" competition over Barbara. Three of them walk together hand in hand, a situation which the people in the town have "no words at all." There are no words for such a scene because in the minds of the Americans in the novel, a black man and a white man cannot be friends without rivalry if there is a white woman nearby.

Once Jerry is gone, the relationship between Leo and Barbara is challenged and threatened by both the people in the town and in the theater. Even walking together in the streets becomes a matter of life and death as white people cannot stand seeing them together. It implies a possibility of inversion of the hierarchy as in a world of patriarchy the availability of a woman is related to sexual potency. With Barbara's presence, Leo challenges the idea of his impotency and the idea that as a living being less than a human, he cannot reach a white woman. Besides, it is not only dangerous for Leo but also for Barbara. By eating "the forbidden fruit," she is not white anymore. Barbara explains the logic frankly: "It [the black man] will change you forever if it ever touches you. You won't even be white any more. You'll just belong to him" and this logic is confirmed when both of them, even though not hand in hand, walk through the hostile town. Barbara is insulted as much as Leo especially by an old white woman who shouts at her: "You hussy! You nigger-lover! You low-down, common, low-class, poor white slut!" That is to say, the patriarchal world

protects the white woman as long as she does not transcend the limits it has set for her. She is seen just as a property that can either belong to a white man or a black man; but never to herself. It is also important that Barbara is excluded from the white community in the town despite her wealth. As in the case of Leo, the bank account is not as important as the color of one's skin as the latter factor is unchangeable and thus gives one who has the "right" skin color an eternal power that can neither be questioned nor challenged by those who do not fit the norms of the privileged group.

Besides, it is not only the whites that do not approve of the relationship between a white woman and a black man. When Leo and Barbara dance in a black bar, Leo feels as if they were making love in public. The presence of a white woman and a black man immediately draws the attention of the black community whose sexuality and manhood are directly defined in relation to impossibility of this scene. Leo defines the blacks in the bar as "the black audience" which implies that Leo and Barbara are not considered as individuals with unique lives but rather as stereotypes that reflect the American illusion. They perform a role that is assigned to them by the dominant culture. This role requires Leo to be "the savage" and Barbara to be "the whore." The society does not have any other words for their situation yet. This logic brings out the acceptance of inferiority: "If a white woman would sleep with one black man, then, obviously, she had no self-respect, and would sleep with an entire black regiment" (*Tell Me How Long*). As a white woman, Barbara does not have "self-respect," which is to say, even black men see themselves so inferior that only a whore can have a sexual affair with a black man if she is white. It is because, as Leo points out, the black people in the bar "saw themselves as others had seen them. They had been formed by the images made of them by those who had had the deepest necessity to despise them." That is to say, Leo and Barbara are trapped both by the whites and blacks who live in a world where only the hatred and self-hatred are real and all the other things are illusions.

As for the reactions of Leo and Barbara, they are much more conscious than Rufus and Leona who see each other as American society sees them; thus destroy each other through only focusing on the external characteristics of one another. Leo, unlike Rufus, does not see Barbara as a way of taking revenge from the white world, or as a way of getting power in the patriarchal society he lives in. Likewise, Barbara

does not see Leo as a creature to pity like Leona. They have the ability to analyze their relationship in a matter-of-fact manner without victimizing each other. According to Scott, their theatrical vocation is "both the means and symbol by which they attempt to redefine their roles as a black man and a white woman" (184). This attempt of redefinition of their social roles through acting becomes apparent when they choose to play Sid and Florrie as mentioned earlier, a choice that turns into a "terrifying challenge." By making a connection between a white couple who cannot be together because of economic problems and themselves who cannot be together because of racial struggles, they challenge the myth of the black rapist and the victimized white woman. After all, it is only love that matters; and the fictional couple Sid and Florrie can easily be identified with Leo and Barbara as long as love is concerned.

Yet, even though they can resist the internalization of the values of the dominant culture regarding their skin color and social status, both Leo and Barbara are aware of the fact that as long as they live in the United States, they cannot marry each other or have a love affair all their lives because if they do, they will "stop loving each other" at the end because of the pressures of the society. That is to say, in order not to be like Rufus and Leona, Leo and Barbara keep their distance and become sister and brother to each other. They cannot achieve a love affair that cannot be affected by the negative attitude of the people around them. So, the real difference between Leona and Rufus; and Barbara and Leo lies in their views that whereas the former couple is not aware of the costs of their love affair, the latter couple is aware of the consequences of their actions and act accordingly. Yet, neither the unawareness and internalization of the essentialist discourse of Leona and Rufus nor the consciousness and resistance of Barbara and Leo works at the end. While the couple in *Another Country* ends up in both physical and emotional suicide, Barbara and Leo avoid the destruction that is waiting for them by keeping the relationship on the level of friendship.

The most destructive effects of living in a country as a black person are revealed most clearly in the novel through the relationship between Leo and Christopher which has taken many forms like brotherly love or homoerotic love. Regarding the brotherly love, the character Christopher can be analyzed as an attempt to make up

for the losses Leo has experienced in his extremely divided life and thus as a new kind of hope toward both the future of his own life and of his country. Deprived of his beloved brother Caleb, Leo becomes Christopher's big brother. This replacement is implied in the novel through the words Leo uses to describe both Caleb and then Christopher: "both big, both black, both laughing." Ironically, these two black men, Caleb and Christopher who have many similarities as mentioned become the most different characters in the novel in terms of their reaction to the white world. They act in the most opposite way possible for the same reasons. Whereas Caleb seeks safety and peace in his church since he cannot find them in the society, Christopher rejects this safety and peace, which are for him only the means of white oppression and exploitation. As the member of a new generation, a new black male figure, Christopher regards the black church as "politically impotent" (Field 445). While Caleb pretends not to know that there are white people in the world, Christopher is completely aware of their presence, a presence which rejects his own existence every moment of his life. Rather than living like a ghost, Christopher challenges the illusions of white people. When Barbara's family ignorantly wonders why all black people have something to do with the black church in one way or another, Christopher makes them face up to the reality of their "generous" country: "You gave us Jesus. And told us it was the Lord's will that we should be toting the barges and lifting the bales while you all sat on your big, fat, white behinds, and got rich."

Even though Caleb and Christopher lead to opposite directions, Leo's relationship with his new brother traps him into helplessness in the same way his relationship with Caleb who is too wounded by the white world's cruelties traps him into misery. Once he was the little brother of a wounded man. Now, he is the big brother of an enraged boy. As an actor who has relatively a certain kind of power and as a big brother who loves him truly, Leo is expected to answer the needs of Christopher. Both his public and private role make him responsible for Christopher in whose life, in fact, he has not as much control as it seems to be due to the limitations the white world has set for him. Like in the case of Caleb, even though many years have passed, Christopher is exposed to the white world which threatens both his manhood and humanity; and the dangers Christopher is subjected to makes Leo evaluate his own life, which on the surface seems to have reached its aim yet in depth is a veiled

failure: “Not all of my endeavor, not all of the endeavor of so many for so long, had lessened his [Christopher’s] danger in any degree, or in any way at all sweetened the bitter cup.” It is a two-sided failure and disappointment. Leo, as a celebrity, becomes Christopher’s only hope but cannot answer his expectations. Likewise, Christopher is Leo’s dream of creating a completely free and happy black individual, an image apparently Christopher does not fit into.

The presence of Christopher, aside from black brotherhood that fails, also implies the failure of the racial consciousness of Leo and Barbara. On the issue of love, Leo says that the only love affair that has threatened Barbara is his homoerotic affair with Christopher. This comparison of Barbara and Christopher hints at the failure of the relationship between Leo and Barbara who resist their racial identity categorizations. Apparently, their solution to be away from each other in order to have a permanent relationship does not work the way they thought it would. That is why when Leo asks Barbara her idea about their relationship after so many years of struggle for success which is the only way of their being together even as friends, Barbara answers him: “But it isn't — is it? — exactly what we had in mind. I didn't expect to become so lonely.” Even though they love each other and see each other the way they are rather than the way American society sees them, at the end, they become too lonely and success does not make much sense as it used to be. Both seek their lost selves in Christopher. As a bisexual, Leo who is unable to find happiness in a white woman turns toward Christopher who shares both the same sex and race with him. Contrary to Barbara who, after all, has the privilege to be both white and rich all her life, Christopher is someone like him. Even their hopes and struggles are the same. When Leo gets to know Christopher, he is at a party like the party he met San-Marquand couple in his youth; and Leo, too, makes a connection between their experiences as black men: “Not so very long ago, I had stood as he now stood and had hoped as he now hoped. What had my hope come to? It had led me to this moment, here. I heard his cry because it was my own.” This sameness causes Leo to give priority to Christopher. Yet, as mentioned earlier, the relationship is burdened by Leo’s responsibility to Christopher which he cannot take because of his limitations as a black man. The failure of Leo and Barbara relationship is also deepened when Barbara, too, has an intercourse with Christopher and explains Leo

that she has done it in order to reach Leo, the lost Leo who is made to change through his struggles to be successful and famous in a white world.

Then, Christopher is not only the symbol of hope regarding Caleb, Barbara, and Leo; but also the symbol of failure of those who tried not to change, not to be wounded, and not to lose their sense of self in the world they live in. In other words, Christopher's existence implies that neither submission through church in the case of Caleb nor resistance through love and success in the case of Leo and Barbara works at the end. All of them are doomed to be trapped, and as Leo puts it, have to learn to "live in the trap." As a new solution, Christopher is portrayed with the features of Black Nationalism. Contrary to Leo and Barbara, he just deals with the lives of black people; he does not have integrationist ideas. Their failure becomes more apparent when Leo regards Christopher as a child Barbara and he gave to the world. This "symbolic child," though, excludes whiteness through Barbara and becomes the symbol of their failure to "reproduce an interracial model of political resistance" (Scott 185). No longer is love or success enough to be equal to the white citizens. Rather, Christopher finds a different solution: "Guns" he says, "We need guns." That is to say, through Christopher, Baldwin makes a shift to activism as he implies that Leo's attempts to be a part of the white society without losing his place in the black one through extremely hard work and success which has alienated him from all the people of both races are no longer a solution to the so-called Negro problem.

To sum, *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* poses a different world from *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and *Another Country* both of which end with a hope for a world where everyone can be what he is, or where every human being is redeemed equally, and where the color of one's skin, the sexual orientation, and gender do not create a system of hierarchy where only the interests of the privileged are protected. Yet, *Tell Me How Long* reflects a world in which there is not a human being who is not torn between the ideals of his country and the practices of it. Whereas the first two novels give the impression that there is a hope and possibility for the fulfillment of the American dream if one insists on aiming for it, in *Tell Me How Long*, Baldwin explores the reality of the dream through his protagonist and narrator Leo Proudhammer who, after all the years of struggle with the white world, realizes that there is no welcome table for him as both whites and blacks do not take him into

their worlds for different reasons: “I'm going to feast at the welcome table, my mother used to sing — was this the table?” Thus, from Leo to Christopher, Baldwin implies the uselessness of waiting for a day to be included to the welcome table; and the necessity to stop waiting and start acting for one’s humanity in a country where the rhetoric strongly protects it whereas the practice shamelessly denies it.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned in the first chapter, the real art and literature should lead people to reality, in a broader term to the reality of their societies; and in more specifically to their unknown selves. In this thesis, I have explored Baldwin's novels as a form of exploring reality concerning the history of race and sexuality in the United States of America. Baldwin, as a writer who believes that a writer has a responsibility to his people, examines the lives of American people in a critical way which, I believe, is not destructive but rather constructive. His novels can be analyzed as the mirrors of the "deeper" reality of his society, a situation that makes his works quite important and essential to think about Baldwin's motive when he reflects the reality underneath the happiness his country claims to have is to make his countrymen accept it and then to help them change themselves. There is a fine line between destructive and constructive criticism; and that is where Baldwin makes a distinction: he truly wants to create a better world through his writing.

As the American dream together with its ideals is quite different from the American practices, I regard Baldwin's attempts to show how oppressive society can be regarding the minorities within it as a step taken to make the dream real. When examined as a form of reaching to reality, Baldwin's first novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain* reflects a Christian black community in a way that may sound offensive to both the white and black people of his country. Yet, in order to make them change, Baldwin has to deconstruct both the American political discourse and black religious discourse. Never favoring the one over the other, Baldwin tries to show how tyrannical the church can become in controlling the feelings and actions of its people; and yet, how it is the only choice of a black person to have a sense of belonging as the white community excludes him apparently as if they were not in the land of the free. However, through John's conversion with the help of Elisha, that is to say, with the homoerotic desire and love, Baldwin hints at the possibility of creating a church that is based on love, that can love both whites and blacks; both female and male; and both heterosexual and homosexual.

In the second novel *Another Country*, Baldwin's desire to lead his readers to the reality of their lives becomes more apparent. The church in the first novel is replaced

with the possibility of love in the second. In other words, unlike *Go Tell*, Baldwin does not only show the realities of his oppressed people and oppressive society, but also demands a change both in interracial relationships; and homosexual and heterosexual dichotomies. The couple Rufus and Leona can be analyzed as a result of the essentialist views of race and sexuality. Yet, the couple Ida and Vivaldo symbolizes a shift from illusion to reality as both Ida and Vivaldo derive lessons from the destroyed couple. As they face the dangers of living in an illusion and of conforming to racial and sexual stereotypes, they feel a need to change, a phase which, according to Baldwin, is necessary for a better world. Another "unknown" and thus dangerous issue Baldwin touches on in *Another Country* is homoerotic love. I suggest that, by portraying Eric as a kind of savior to the other characters who have not yet the courage to confess their real selves, Baldwin challenges the stereotypical image of the homosexual as debased or inferior; and tries to destroy the hierarchical relationship between heterosexual and homosexual.

In the third novel *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone*, Baldwin goes a step further to the world he wants to create through his writing. Completely different from the characters in the first novel who live in a segregated world; different from the characters in the second novel who struggle to get rid of the essentialist views of race and sexuality regarding both the people around them and themselves, the characters in the third novel, mainly Leo and Barbara, pose a much more Baldwinian image of self-recognition. Just the way Baldwin yearns for, Leo and Barbara know and accept their real selves. As to give an important instance, concerning the masculinity, Leo does not escape from his homoerotic desire like other Baldwinian characters. They accept themselves the way they are rather than seeking reality in the essentialist discourse. Yet, Baldwin, who has been optimistic of his country's future, implies that people like Leo and Barbara are not enough to make the American dream real. Because the real actors are not the actors on stage but the audience, the white society that pretends to believe in the existence of the American ideals. The novel, unlike the others, ends with a gloomy atmosphere where not love or acceptance is mentioned but guns are demanded. Thus, this last novel can be regarded both as a question: What is happening to us who have bathed in self-delusion so long? and as a warning

that if the country is not willing to change, to accept it the way it is so that it can change for the better; violence will take place at the end.

All in all, through his constructive criticism and warnings, Baldwin leads all of us to accept ourselves the way we are; accept the life the way it is; accept the differences with tolerance and love rather than rejecting them in hatred so that hierarchies and binary oppositions can disappear; and if one understands the other's pain, other's humanity, other's similarity, not only the United States but also the whole world can be a better place to live in.

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