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Gender and Racial Inequality in James Baldwin' Go Tell It on The Mountain and Claude McKay's, Home to Harlem: Comparative Study.

ABSTRACT

In both Southern African literature and African American literature, racism is a big problem. The two are different, because the former was more resolute and brave in their fight against racism, which was covered by the "apartheid" law. It was due to many years of oppression, torture, and subjugation. While the latter was more passive and suffered from an identity crisis due to the overwhelming presence of white. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the issues of gender and racial inequality in the literature of the African-American writers James Baldwin and compare the novels "Go Tell It on the Mountain" with Claude McKay's "Home to Harlem" with similar themes. The two novelists are endowed with extraordinary insight, which they use to write about the difficulties that all humans face through a keen view of the tenacious, heart-breaking dilemmas that beset individuals of all races in their respective novels. However, the writer Baldwin did not stick to the skin colour of his friends to look for a tangent between their lives and the history of racism in the United States. McKay was deeply interested in the culture of the black diaspora as a result of his strong dedication to black consciousness. McKay explores Harlem's wonder, excitement, and boundaries by recognising other places where the black community thrived in 1920s black America when he depicts black life and community concepts. Gender and Racial inequality are definitely our primary concerns. The two novels are considered as a literary depiction of the reality of an expansive African diaspora in the early 20th century.

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عدم المساواة العرقية بين الجنسين في روايات مختارة للكاتب جيمس بالدون أذهب أخبرها على الجبل
و كلود ماكي موطن هارلم دراسة مقارنة

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المستخلص :

في كل من الأدب الأفريقي الجنوبي والأدب الأفريقي الأمريكي ، تعتبر العنصرية مشكلة كبيرة. هناك العديد من أوجه التشابه بين العنصرية في أدب الجنوب الأفريقي والأدب الأفريقي الأمريكي ، لكنهما يختلفان حيث ان الأول كان أكثر تصميمًا وشجاعة في مكافحته للعنصرية ، التي كان يغطيها قانون "الفصل العنصري". في حين أن الأخير كان أكثر سلبية حيث عانوا من أزمة الهوية والقمع ،التعذيب ،القهر وهذا بسبب الوجود الساحق للبيض ، ولسنوات عديدة. الغرض من هذا البحث هو مناقشة عدم المساواة العرقية بين الجنسين في أدب الكاتب الأمريكي الأفريقي جيمس بالدون ومقارنة روايات "Go Tell It on The Mountain" مع روايات كلود ماكي "Home to Harlem" بمواضيع مماثلة. لقد وهب الروائيان البصيرة العميقة التي يكتبان بها عن المشاكل التي يواجهها جميع البشر من خلال نظرة ثاقبة للمعضلات القاسية التي تحطم القلوب والتي تعذب الناس من جميع الأجناس في رواياتهم . لم يلتزم الكاتب بالدون بلون بشرة أصدقائه ليبحث عن تماس بين حياتهم وتاريخ العنصرية في الولايات المتحدة. كان مكاي مهتمًا بعمق بثقافة شتات السود نتيجة لتفانيه الشديد في الوعي للمجتمع الأسود. يستكشف مكاي عجب وإثارة وحدود هارلم من خلال التعرف على الأماكن الأخرى التي ازدهر فيها المجتمع الأسود في أمريكا في عشرينيات القرن الماضي عندما يصور الحياة المجتمع الأفريقي الأمريكي ومفاهيمهم . من المؤكد أن عدم المساواة على أساس العرق والجنس هي اهتماماتنا الأساسية في هذا البحث العلمي . تعتبر كلتا الروايتين بمثابة تصوير أدبي لواقع الشتات الأفريقي الواسع في أوائل القرن العشرين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: دراسة مقارنة ، موطن هارلم ، أذهب أخبرها على الجبل ، عدم المساواة العرقية بين الجنسين

Introduction .1

The development of black literature in America followed a path that was indistinguishable from that of white literature. Therefore, it began with instructional verse and pedantic composition, such as slave stories and journals, and was later supplanted by poetic verse and fiction, which is also extended to portray the world. Additionally, black writing dealt with black peoples social, creative, recorded and political and socioeconomic status. The majority of African-American literature is about enslavement, culture, and who they were and what white people did to them. When African-American literature first emerged, it was primarily concerned with the topic of slavery, as depicted in one of its most prominent subgenres, slave tales. The history of the African American people was the story of their forced migration from one continent to another; it was a story of oppression, slavery, and liberation. A wide range of dimensions might be found in each circle of African-American writing. Many African-American authors' works represent African traditions and the slave trade, which prominently resulted in the loss of many Africans' freedom. Additionally, it tells the narrative of their survival, including how they suffered and were plagued during this time period, as well as how they managed to escape slavery. The African-American population was confronted with enormous difficulties, which included misery and hardship, and their only concern was how to free themselves from the injustice of

In America, citizens who live in America are aware of the ethnic and cultural enslavement, diversity of the nation. America has a variety of different races and cultures. Furthermore, Africans migrated from many sections of Africa, all of whom were persecuted by whites. Prior to the pre-revolutionary period in the second half of the 18th century, African-American writing began in North America. Prior to the American Civil War, the first issue in African-American literature was slavery. Therefore, African-American writers are concerned with an incentive dialogue with the American literary ethos.

During the era of slavery, great efforts were made to define the enigmas of black people. As a result, African-American literature is filled with fluid delicacy and social consciousness, being an expressive estimation of American identification and history. White people in the United States appeared to be ignorant of black history, culture, and so on. According to Ishmael Reed, he exposes that – "Westerners usually are not aware of the African cultural tradition" (Reed, 1995: p.208).

The majority of commentators believe that "The New Negro Movement" successfully laid a foundation for the long-standing African-American arts legacy. Others, though, believe the Renaissance was a failure. Artistic expressions of the Black Arts Movement dealt with issues such as love, beauty, ugliness and racial unfairness, and issues of identity, blackness and shame. In this regard, Bernard W. Bell notes that African-American literary art can be described as:

a hybrid narrative whose particular lineage and energy are rooted mostly from the deranged indigenous origins of black American folklore and Western literary genres (Bell, 1989: p. xii).

Black life in America began to evolve gradually with the development of black art, and this is a positive sign of the influence of black art in the past years. However, the Black writers believe that their problem cannot be solved. Therefore, they focused on their writings and the art of literary works. According to Pauline Hopkins, the art is:

Many people find it important to keep their traditions and manners alive. This is true for any people, whether they are religious, politically or socially different from each other. It is a record of growth and development from generation to generation. No one will do this for us; we must ourselves develop the men and women who will faithfully portray the inmost thoughts and feeling of the Negro . . . (Smith, 1998: p.52).

The black writer's goal is not to minimize or criticize white writers simply because they are white. However, the primary goal of their artistic and literary work is to draw attention to the fact of white racial discrimination, oppression, and injustice.

2. Historical Background

Gender and racial equality are crucial for long-term peace, and a growing body of evidence demonstrates that higher levels of gender inequality are associated with an increase in the probability of internal conflict. The examination of masculinity and femininity across cultures and its implications on behavior, health, social communication, and psychological processes is known as gender psychology. Gender psychology began as a study of biological sex differences between men and women, but it has now expanded to include the study of gender social construction as well. In the United States, racial inequality refers to the social inequities, advantages, and disadvantages that exist between distinct races in the United States. These can be viewed as the outcome of systemic oppression, inequity in inheritance, or bigotry and prejudice, particularly against minority populations. Racial disparities in American society have manifested themselves in many of ways, such as financial inequities, poverty levels, bankruptcy, housing patterns, educational opportunities, unemployment levels. To analysis a word of gender and racial inequality, it is critical to understand the idea of 'gender.' According to the World Development Report (WDR) 2012, gender is described as "socially constructed norms and beliefs that determine men's and women's behaviour and activities"(Charlebois, 2010). Gender is a significant consideration in growth. It is a strategy of investigating how social norms and power structures affect the lives and options available to distinct groups of men and women. On the other hand the definition of,

racial inequality in social science, racial inequality is often defined as "disparity in the distribution of power, economic resources, and opportunities. Racial inequalities have shown themselves in American society in a variety of ways, including racial differences in wealth, poverty rates, bankruptcy, housing patterns, educational possibilities, unemployment rates, and incarceration rates(*Shapiro, P 33*).

Many similarities exist between the treatment of race in Southern Africa's literature and African Americans, but there are also significant differences. Southern Africans were more resilient and valiant in their fight against racism, covered by 'apartheid' law,. At the same time African Americans were less combative and suffered from an identity crisis due to the overwhelming presence of whites in American society. Apartheid in Afrikaans was a system of law that enforced segregationist practices against non-white South African residents. When South Africans National Party came to power in 1948, its all whites government instantly started imposing existing racial segregation rules(Repeal, 2018). They (African-Americans) came to accept their helplessness until the activists' attempted to liberate them. African – American writers have always been preoccupied with racial themes and cultural legacies. Racism has existed in the lives of black Americans, irrespective of sex. This is due to their history of enslavement and colonization. The race is still a major element in determining how people relate to one another around the world. Race is a social phenomenon that has been produced and institutionalized by people. It has been around since the dawn of time. Few black American writers have had a more profound impact on Black American culture than James Baldwin. Claudius McKay, (1889 – 1948) is a Jamaican writer and poet. He is a seminal figure in Harlem renaissance. James Baldwin and Claude McKay, both gifted, are known for their complex and rebellious personalities. Baldwin does not like categorizations, whether racial or sexual, in his essay,

Here Be Dragons, which is quite autobiographical. Emma Cleary, shows how Baldwin's "treatment of class, sexuality, and race betrays an indelible preoccupation with the operations of American power structures." (Cleary 133). While protest novels (which gained fame) featured only black characters subjected to racial violence throughout the story. These novels served as a vehicle for black writers to denounce and protest racism, which disproportionately affected African Americans.

James Baldwin distinguished himself from an early age as a novelist, essayist, poet, and playwright, but, along with that, he distinguished himself as one of the most influential voices in the civil rights movement, having been the first African-American artist to appear on the cover of Time magazine. He fought this struggle in life and writing, having published more than 20 books until his death, including essays, novels, short stories, poems and plays. Afraid of human categorizations, Baldwin's (1985) personality is complex and sometimes contradictory. Baldwin lived his French experience in two distinct stages. First, Baldwin lived in Paris between 1948 and 1952, then an author propelled to literary glory by his first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, who returned to live in Paris between 1953 and 1957, after a brief stint in New York amid of McCarthyism. During four-year stays, he shared the daily life of the Algerians of Belleville, whose situation in mainland France he compared with that of his community of origin the Harlem ghetto. In his writings, Baldwin explored the articulation between racial thought and political thought, particularly in the essay and the autobiographical story, published in 1972 under the title "No Name in the Street." but which were written between 1967 and 1971 in New York, San Francisco, Hollywood, London, Istanbul, and Saint-Paul de-Vence, where Baldwin ended up taking up residence in order to be able to divide his time between his country of birth and France. He then acquired a more refined understanding of the racial relationship inscribed in another singular history and in a context different from Harlem. This is the police violence inflicted on those who, despite their French citizenship, are treated in metropolitan France with the brutality enshrined in the Code of the Indignant. This research aims is to advance the theoretical of expressions the comparative literature of *Gender and Racial inequality* with special references to two prominent novelists' novels James Baldwin *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and Claude McKay *Home to Harlem* and their combat.

3.Review of Literature

In the late 1970s, and throughout the 1980s, there was a new wave of studies dealing directly or indirectly with the subject, which seems to be the result of both new trends in studies on race relations and movements in education. Pinto suggests the emergence of reproductive theories in sociology:

Though some of these studies don't always explain the theoretical line that backs them up, it can be seen that all of them are based on reproductive theories in some way, thus emphasizing the role of the school as a reproducer of existing discriminations in society against certain ethnic-racial categories. (Pinto, 1992, p. 42)

In this set, the theme of racism can be treated in a subsidiary, or more centrally. During this period, that the black movement also began to show its interest in the subject. Campbell explains,

“[Baldwin] believed himself to be ugly because his father told him so and called him 'frog eyes'. Equally hurtful, he thought his mother was ugly too, again because David Baldwin said so” (Campbell 7).

Go Tell It on the Mountain, the first novel of Baldwin's, features this man extensively, yet he is virtually absent from his writings. He was the one who shattered Baldwin's perception of his attractiveness. DuBois (1928) claims that "In Harlem, for the most part, I feel sick to my stomach, and after walking through the grittier areas of the neighbourhood, I'm ready for a bath. [...] If McKay's goal is to satisfy the licentious need of white people to see the absolute licentiousness that traditional culture prevents white people from enjoying—if enjoyment can be called—in Negroes, then he has succeeded " (p. 202).

In addition to Hugh, Jarett.(2011) pointed out in his essay, *Black Masculinities as Marronage: Claude McKay's Representation of Black Male Subjectivities in Metropolitan Spaces* stated that study sought to uncover masculine queerness vocabulary in black and African American texts. This article continues the topic of sex ideas from the early twentieth century and how African American writers employed them. This essay examines gender inversion in Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem* (1928). It was believed that same-sex attraction was caused by having the mentality or soul of the opposite gender. This essay, examine how McKay used gender inversion to become a cultural and racial leader.

Maguire Laura (2018), in an article titled "*James Baldwin and Racial Justice*," stated that it is hard to understand how white Americans who don't actively work to deconstruct racist systems of oppression deserve black Americans' affection and acceptance. In saying, "I'm not your negro," Baldwin indicates that he rejects the negro depicted by white supremacists, a negro incapable of love and respect, as he is. With this attitude, he places the task of transformation squarely on the shoulders of his white peers. In order to stop dehumanizing others, we must first transform our hearts and minds. Must be better people and be more honest with ourselves about why we feel the need to do so. Because of these racist institutions, may learn more about ourselves than we do about the black population. *I Am Not Your Negro* seems to be aimed more at white people than black people. Baldwin wants us to think about the big question: why did we need to make "the nigger"? In Baldwin's words, this is a show of love from him. His job is to help us understand and accept our country's history of racism and white supremacy, as well as what it says about us.

3.1. Importance of the study:

It is critical to undertake research on African American literature since it strong advocate for women's rights in both Africa and the United States. Gender equality has been demonstrated to improve economic growth in countries with significant unemployment and a scarcity of job possibilities. It is critical to begin teaching children about race and equality at a young age, and literature may be quite beneficial.

3.2. Research Methodology

The research methodology is a comparative analysis and critical examination of evidence which is based on data collected from the library. Using both quantitative and qualitative data from the same literature.

4. James Baldwin Vs. Claude McKay

Baldwin's goal was to be regarded as an American writer, not one who happened to be of African descent. James Baldwin, like other Afro-American authors like Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and Gwendolyn Brooks—to name just a few—has learned the hard way that he cannot escape his skin colour. Early on, Baldwin's criticism of black stereotypes shows that he rejects cultural representations and the physical representations of black people themselves. When he declares whiteness as the ideal beauty, his works skim over his disdain for black physical attributes. The fact that Baldwin was a black man in the United States led him to assume that he was ugly because he was black. First novel was written and shame regarding black beauty was tackled during the time he spent in Switzerland. Baldwin's rejection of black traits is discussed in "Stranger in the Village," which documents his sentiments regarding black culture as he wrote *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. It would be missing the point entirely if we just brought up the McKay argument, that he had connections with men and women.

Additionally, while the novel is set in New York City, it is ultimately a story about two cities. This helps to focus on some of the novel's core ideas, such as father-son relationships, individualism and community. *Go Tell It on the Mountain* event took place in Harlem, New York, in 1935. Gabriel and Elizabeth, though separately, come to Harlem during The Great Migration years later. Despite the optimism that life will improve, the narrative still depicts two distinct facets of the migration. While John's family is a member of the church and is somewhat well-off, the route to the church's doors is littered with drunkards and prostitutes. On other hand, Baldwin, depicted the impact of racism in the most realistic way through the two major characters, John and Gabriel. John is the principal character in the main narrative (the boy evolving physically and spiritually); Gabriel is the most prominent character in the major theme (the tragic effects of racism on a people and society). Although Baldwin's message was quite well-received by all those who dreamed that America's racial divide could be bridged, were those who thought the separation was or should be permanent; those people had nothing good to say about someone who insisted on the "brotherhood" of all Americans. He was a man to be feared by white racists, a violent and all-too-articulate representative of the internationalist movement. He continued to denounce his country for its racial hypocrisy while calling for togetherness, and gradually, even his African American adversaries learned to understand his message. The novel captures the culture and the "urban nightmare" that the Harlem Renaissance represented. Despite that the most of the novel takes place in Harlem, it is worth noting that the deep South is also revealed in some character flashbacks. Deborah is raped by several white men in the South, which is historically accurate,

Gabriel,"[...], "I been praying all these years that the Lord would touch my body, and make me like them women, all them women, you used to go with all the time." She was very calm; her face was very bitter and patient. "Look like it weren't His will. Look like I couldn't no how forget... how they done me way back there when I weren't nothing but a girl." (Baldwin, 139).

Deborah lost the right to be called a woman because she had sex with a man, right? This is her first and only statement about that in the book. This is the only one. In her heart, she wants to have sex with other people. If she were to have sex with Gabriel, she would be a real

woman the way she sees it. Even if historical tragedies are not mirrored in modern-day Harlem, the city is not without issues. Baldwin alludes to Harlem's racial tensions in schooling, leisure, and social contacts. Despite the city tours, most of the narrative takes place within The Church of the Fire-Baptized. On the other hand, the novelist McKay is the famous one in American literature and his eminent role in that era. McKay blossomed as a novelist during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s. His works critical the white authority while also honoring Jamaican culture. He also authored stories about the life of both Jamaica and the United States as a black man. McKay is free spirit as a writer and as a "vagabond," portrayals of these characters, such as Jake and Ray, or alongside the organic realms in Harlem, resulting in perplexing in some cases, extremely harmful acts in the world. Particularly striking are how these individuals challenge what McKay refers to as "systemic conceptions about identity, performance, and sex." Because McKay preferred to be known as a writer rather than a Negro writer, his novels can be more aggressive in their critiques of race and gender, ultimately, class, two divisive issues that tempered the performative gestures and political actions of many black intellectuals, political leaders, and writers during the interwar period. The men and women in McKay's work are human beings whose lives reflect the intricacies of race as a social construct and a dominant disciplinary classification. McKay's attention to the "lower frequencies" allows him to capture the contributions of disadvantaged individuals who develop narratives that become a vital part of the performance heritage of American expression through Music Literature, and Visual Art.

McKay was open about his anti-racism feelings, believing that racists were dumb, myopic, and consumed by hatred. His representations of Harlem and its lower-class residents in stories like *Home to Harlem* (1928) was initially attacked as a poor portrayal of Harlem and its lower-class citizens by notable personalities like W. E. B. DuBois. However, he was eventually praised as a literary powerhouse in the Harlem Renaissance. From the researcher's point of view, and through the extensive study, the differences between these two writers are partial, but their major works criticize the unjust of American system in the United States and the widespread inequality in society based on race and color.

5. Gender and Racial inequality in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

Go Tell It on the Mountain is James Baldwin's first and most ambitious novel, which soon became a landmark for many other writers, while earning its place as a classic in American literature, says the publisher. It is the second novel by someone who had debuted in 1953 with a narrative based on his life experience, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, a title taken from a famous gospel. The trampled classes have always sought and found refuge in the Word of God. From the plantations to the day John and his family took refuge at home so as not to be beaten by whites. Until John's Day, American society in the 1930 was marked by segregations, and until today. Until in a moment – they long for it – they will be able to say “the slaves have risen.” (Gaunt 107). These were the stories her mother told her to distract her from hunger and cold. The narrative canter is on the fourteenth birthday of John Grimes, the day when the prediction is also fulfilled that one day John would be a preacher when he grew up, just like his father (actually, his stepfather), who tells him he is ugly, the lowest of the class, the boy who has no friends.

“John, who excelled in school – but not in math or basketball like Elisha – was told he would have a great future. Who could become the Great Leader of God's People. John wasn't all that interested in his people and even less in leading them in whatever it was, but the oft-repeated phrase popped into his mind like a great iron gate that opens for him and opens onto a world where the people did not live in the darkness of their father (...)”(Henderson 22).

On a Saturday morning in March 1935, John reflects on the public admonition his friend Elisha and Ella Mae received in a Sunday sermon, accused of embodying sin among the congregation. At the moment of this public denunciation, the possibility for these two young people to continue to meet, albeit innocently, ends the possibility of meeting each other a day later under the shelter of marriage, to have children and educate them in the church. In addition, it is also on that Sunday, days before his birthday, that John realized that this was the life that awaited him – that he was aware of something not too distant, but imminent, approaching day-by day. Inspired by his own life, this story portrays the inner struggle of a young man who fears and hates his stepfather, himself an imperfect and violent man, while simultaneously seeing him as a role model. Allied to this dilemma, there is still another major cleavage, a secret still unnameable but which is already noticeable throughout this novel, but which only emerges in another work by the author. It is never expressed in an absolute and unavoidable way, but throughout this book, especially in the first part, which focuses on John's perspective, there are several homoerotic indications in the relationship between John and Elisha. John thinks of Elisha “who was tall and handsome, who played basketball and who at eleven had been saved from the unthinkable plantations of the South” (Baldwin 20). John assumes he has sinned. Despite the saints, the father and the mother, the warnings he heard from the beginning of his days. He had sinned with his hands a sin difficult to forgive. In the school bathroom, thinking of boys, older, bigger, braves, making bets with each other about who got the biggest bow of urine, and he saw a transformation take place in him that he dared not talk about. However, John's awareness of the sin that marks him, and that diminishes him in the eyes of others. Particularly his stepfather, resides him the perception that he demarcates himself from others for different reasons. Such as when, at the age of 5, the school principal sees his handwriting on the board and says to him, "John Grimes, you are a very smart boy." (Baldwin, *Go Tell It* 172). He had committed a heinous crime with his hands. A smart boy in a world of whites, where to combat injustice, such as the false charge levelled against Richard, John's biological father, Elizabeth, his mother, kept her head up, her gaze straight ahead, and she felt her skin sit on her bones as if wearing a mask.,

“He looked at the calm, sunny streets and, for the first time in his life, he hated it all – the white city, the white world. That day, he couldn't think of a single decent person in the entire world. He sat there and hoped that one day God, through inconceivable tortures, would lead them to total humiliation and let them know that the black boys and black girls, who treated them with such condescension, such disdain, and such good humor, had hearts like human beings, hearts more human than theirs.” (Baldwin, *Go Tell It* 173).

In a closed world, in which a man cannot escape isolation and the difference that the colour of his skin imposes on him, John carries yet another cross, that of loving his fellow man. *Go Tell It on the Mountain* is the name of a gospel song about the birth of Christ. here possibly

associated with John's conversion, his rebirth in Christ. Moreover, as befits a sermon, such as the Sermon on the Mount that discusses a Christian life's values and principles, James Baldwin's prose weaves symbolism and lyricism. In this case, the sexual fury of a young man about to blossom is tempered by the eroticism of the sublimation of desire. By using *Go Tell It on the Mountain* as his blueprint for novel writing, Baldwin explains how this crisis remakes racial inequality.

This collision between one's image of oneself and what one actually is always very painful and there are two things you can do about it, you can meet the collision head-on and try to 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. (Baldwin, 1993, p 13)

Because the intensity of the performance will destroy the real person underneath, Baldwin believes that an alienated kind of racial inequality should not pretend to blend in with the rest of society. The Racial performance follows the same rules as other forms of expression. Trying to "keep things real" will almost surely lead to falsehood, and racial disparity will eventually lose track of what is "real". Racial inequality squeezes and pretends to belong in a place that does not fit the person, not one created by the individual. According to James Baldwin, "Because I am an American writer, my subject and my material unavoidably have to be a handful of incoherent people in an incoherent country". (Moreno 186)

In writing "*Go Tell It on the Mountain*," James Baldwin not only created new possibilities for American literature, but he also allowed Americans to awaken to a new way of seeing themselves. In a letter to his country, Baldwin wrote that the United States was a model of a country that feeds hostility and, in relation to the racial issue, was fraying his identity and tearing him apart, according to Campbell (2000). As a writer, he is well-known in African-American intellectual and artistic circles. Baldwin depicts the subtle repercussions of systemic racism in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, giving us a glimpse of the second and third generations inhumanity resulting from the age of American slavery that lasted essentially from colonization to the American Civil War. As a result, the novel's characters are only a generation or two removed from their slave ancestors.

6. Gender and Racial Inequality in Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem*

Claude McKay's first novel, *Home to Harlem*, was published in 1928. It tells the story of young Jake Brown, the novel's protagonist, after he deserts the US Army and travels to London, as well as a writer who immigrates to Haiti because he can no longer bear the evils of racism in the US. Jake spends some time in London, but after witnessing a violent race riot in Harlem, he is impressed to modify his life and return to the town devoid of racial unity. During his first night in the city, he meets Felice, a young prostitute whom he spends the rest of the novel looking for hopes of one day reconnecting with her. At central core of the novel, *Home to Harlem* is about a man trying to figure out what it means to be a lower-class human (financially and racially) in a world consumed by selfishness and hyper-capitalism in the new, modern era of technology. McKay provides this novel with an unique and exciting new viewpoint on life as a young black man. African and other "primitive" folk art, as well as Jewish, Russian, and Irish literature, influenced McKay. Claude McKay was one of the first African American writers to contribute to the Harlem Renaissance. He made a significant

contribution to blacks' efforts to utilize the affirmation of black consciousness as a vehicle for awakening the repressed and exploited black race to believe in their culture, seek self-identity, and stand on an equal footing with the rest of the world. McKay was deeply concerned about the culture of the black diaspora as a result of his strong commitment to black consciousness. He was well aware of the importance of black people's racial consciousness in assisting them in surviving in the Western world. According to McKay, if blacks are to be liberated from the yoke of slavery and dependence, they must pursue their cultural roots and conventions to assert their own identity. He was dissatisfied with the attitude of some blacks who could not embrace their identities and instead sought solace in European culture. The portrayal of relationships in *Home to Harlem* is one of the ways in which the battle between stability and independence is evident. Almost all of the female characters in *Home to Harlem* are restricted to a particular location—Aunt Hattie to her restaurant, Rose, Susy, and Miss Curdy to their homes—while the male characters are nomadic. Harlem with its cabarets principally offers free (sexual) mobility for all of them, but most women, it turns out, want to lure the men out of Harlem and into their homes. Jake and Ray are the main characters in McKay's *Home to Harlem*. While Ray is an intelligent person who refuses to identify with black culture, forcing him to take a flight to Europe at the end of the novel, Jake is portrayed as bold and active enough to hate and love, but incapable of action due to insufficient knowledge from his college education. Jake Brown is McKay's ideal image of the black; he embodies black resourcefulness, instinct, spontaneity, optimism, and independence. Jake's desire to return to his homeland seems to be so strong that he is ready to accept the arduous work of a freighter stoker: "Roll on, Mister Ship and Stinks all the way as you roll. Jest take me 'long to Harlem is all I pray. I'm crazy to see again the brown skin chippies 'long Lenox Avenue. Oh boy!" (McKay 3).

What drives the novel's narrative voice to investigate the possibility of darkness is an interesting question. The answer, in my opinion, is reflected in the procedure that Ray undergoes. The researcher sees the differences from Jake on several of occasions: When it comes to racial stereotypes, Jake embodies all of them, while Ray is the polar opposite. He aspires to be more like Jake, but his European upbringing has made it difficult to understand the significance of being a black guy. Ray is the New Negro artist's alter ego who rejects his colonial upbringing:

[H]e had perception enough to realize that he had lived over the end of an era. And also he realized that his spiritual masters had not crossed with him into the new. He felt alone, hurt, neglected, cheated, almost naked. But he was a savage, even though he was a sensitive one, and did not mind nakedness. (McKay, 1987, p. 226)

Jake and Ray represent two opposing perspectives on life in general, as well as the unique challenge of being black in white America. While Jake is driven by instinct and emotion, Ray is driven by ideas and logic. Ray is dissatisfied with life, and his dissatisfaction causes him to question things in ways Jake does not:

Life burned in Ray perhaps more intensely than in Jake. Ray felt more and his range was wider and he could not be satisfied with the easy, simple things that sufficed for Jake. Sometimes he felt like a tree with roots in the soil and sap flowing out and

whispering leaves in the air. But he drank in more of life than he could distill into active animal living. Maybe that was why he felt he had to write. (p. 265)

Jake is ultimately portrayed more positively in the novel than Ray.

After his stay in the city, Ray complains that his "little education" has not assisted him (p. 274). On the contrary, it has simply served to highlight the emptiness of his ambitions. Ray, who describes himself as a "misfit," sees Jake as the happier of the two. "The more learn," he reflects, "the less I comprehend and enjoy life" (p. 274). Ray is drawn to Jake's lifestyle near the end of the novel and issues the white education that has robbed him and his ability to act freely. Jake is uneducated (in fact, until his friendship with Ray, he had never met an educated black person), but he is generous, patriotic, and ethical. In some ways, the contrasts between these two main characters contrast two opposing paths in the history of blacks' reactions to white racism.

Ray's struggles to make sense of his racial identity is revealed in this critical passage. As Makward (1992) describes in an incisive article on McKay's connection to race, in order to do so he must take his African history extremely while simultaneously staying "explorative and tentative, [...] always wondering, probing, questioning" (p. 102). As a result, McKay's conflict is central to the work as a whole, as he pursues a racial essence while also remaining an emotive mime. It is easy to see why DuBois, whose goal was to present black people in a positive light in white culture, do not like the idea.

One of the themes of *Home to Harlem's* portrayal of relationships is the tension between stability and independence. While the female characters in *Home to Harlem* are confined to specific locations (Aunt Hattie's restaurant, Rose, Susy, and Miss Curdy's houses), the male characters are free to roam wherever they want. The majority of women attempt to attract the men out of Harlem and into their houses, despite Harlem's cabarets providing them with freedom of movement (sexually). When Rose performs a song to Jake, it tells a lot about their relationship:

"If I had someone like you at home, I wouldn't want a go out, I wouldn't want a go out [...]. If I had someone like you at home, I'd put a padlock on the door" (McKay, 1987, p. 39).

There is a clear gendered logic at work here, since Rose wants to keep Jake confined to the family home, while Susy wants the same for Zeddy. Stability appeals to women, whereas independence appeals to males. As Michelle Ann Stephens argues, this logic is linked to nationalist beliefs, backed by the facts. (2005) It is only possible for heterosexual domesticity to flourish so long as women retain authority over their bodies. As a result, here they are in chronological order,

"for transnational male protagonists to remain mobile, either within the nation or throughout the diaspora, they must forfeit a vision of home represented by women of color, domesticity, and heterosexuality" (p. 142).

Perpetuating this gendered logic is the fight between "hustlers" and "sweet men," men who live off the money their female companions make. The following exchange between Rose and Jake demonstrates the connection between labour and masculinity;

"If you'll be mah man always, you won't have to work," she said. "Me?" responded Jake. "I've never been a sweet man yet. Never lived off no women and never will. I

always works.” “I don’t care what you do whilst you is mah man. But hard work’s no good for a sweet-loving papa.” (McKay, 1987, p. 40)

Jake is ecstatic about being self-employed since it frees him from the shackles of being dependent on women. Whenever it relates to romantic relationships, nice men risk being mocked by the other men in Harlem, as well as being labelled as "skirt-man." (McKay, 1987, p. 87). "Hustling," the part-time employment that Harlem's casual workers do, gives them financial independence, but it does not bind them: One point in Ray's storey, he considers all the guys who "worked in lovely crates: bank clerks in steel-wire cages, some in wooden cages, salespeople behind counters. All of them were neat, duty-bound, and courteous." God! How did they do it day in and day out and be so compliant and rational? (p. 265). In Edwards' words, the "hustler" or member of the Marxian Lumpenproletariat has a certain amount of agency (p. 204).

Slavery had a profound impact on African-American writers in America, as seen by the emergence of their works. Slave narratives dominated most of the first Black writing, with themes of resistance against the brutal and tortured system of the slave masters. After many decades in the United States, African-Americans with ties to the country's early years were denied citizenship and faced other forms of discrimination. As a result, their writings are contaminated by slavery and filled with the pain and suffering of their subjects. Slaves who were forced to work on plantations, do home tasks, or serve others suffered horrendous treatment, including torture, oppression, and rape. In addition to not marrying, they were also made available to the highest bidder. Despite all the hardships faced by black people, white people managed to preserve their position of dominance and superiority over the rest of the population by various means.

Fictional characters Jake and Ray are featured in McKay's *Home to Harlem*. While Ray, an intellectual who rejects black culture, must depart the country at the end of the novel, Jake is revealed to be bold and active enough to hate and love but unable to take action because of his lack of college education. Jake Brown represents all that McKay's hopes for the African-American community to be like when it comes to black people. "Roll on, Mister Ship and Stinks all the way as you roll,"(Banks 78). Jake begs the stoker on board the freighter to return to his native nation. All I ask is that you take me all the way to Harlem. I'm giddy with delight to see the brown-skinned chippies of Lenox Avenue once more. "Oh my goodness!" the third (McKay) Even in the army, there is racism towards African-Americans, which Jake joins in good faith to combat against German invaders for the sake of freedom. Instead of putting him to use in battle, they have confined him to menial tasks. He selects to desert the army to avoid involvement in the white economic and political imperialism battle. While driving home, he muses on the experience, asking himself, "Why did I ever enlist and come over here?" "What was I thinking when I threw the massif into a conflict involving white people? It's never been any of the black people's business. Whatever the case, Nigger's em are always such fools. "Always assuming they're involved in the affairs of white people."(Stephens 145)

7. A Comparative Analysis of McKay's *Home to Harlem* and "Go Tell It on the Mountain" by James Baldwin

The similarities and differences between the two texts and contexts were discovered. African American literature, which is often mentioned in Dispersal literature because it illustrates the horrific experiences of black people who were dispersed throughout the United States and the diaspora as a result of slavery, shared characteristics with Southern African literature, it was discovered. James Baldwin and Claude McKay illustrated the essentials of a new world of life and liberty in which black and white fairness will be possible and tolerated. The two books under consideration contain numerous instances of segregation. Jake, the protagonist of McKay's novel, feels a sense of shame, bitterness, and hatred as a result of unfair discrimination imposed on blacks duration of World War II, and he is resentful of how the 'whites' refer to blacks as 'darky' or 'niggers.' McKay's novel is set in the United States during World War II. When a Yankee used the word "Nigger," he meant to show hatred for the Negroes. But when he used "darky," he meant to show friendly contempt for them. Both writers are endowed with the deep insight they writes of problems all human faces through portrayal of the black victims suffering and torment in Baldwin's emotionally compelling. The two selected novels depicts the way in which racism, sexism, classism, and other ideologies of oppression are maintained, reproduced, and transmitted in the contemporary American society. This study takes on a more comprehensive, cross-sectional analysis of these works in the lines of slavery, racism and feminism. *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, James Baldwin's debut novel, does not have a strong focus on women because the narrative's protagonists are men. Despite this, class becomes more prominent in this work than it was in *Home to Harlem* in connection to race and gender. Because of his awareness of his own national and class subjugation, James Baldwin subordinates racism and capitalism to sexism in his work. Despite novel's main theme being the search for gender identity, the protagonist's main difficulty is capitalism's deafening impacts. Finally, Comparing novels like "Go Tell It on the Mountain" by James Baldwin with "*Home to Harlem*" by Claude McKay, the researcher concludes that thorough portrayal of the black victim's suffering and torment in Baldwin's storey is more vivid emotionally compelling. It is one of the best descriptions of its kind in recent American literature, probably the best. It was found that, when the two texts and contexts are compared concluded, African American literature shares characteristics with Southern African literature, which is often referred to it as Dispersal literature due to its depiction of the horrific experiences of blacks who were diffused due to slavery in the United States and abroad. According to both authors, James Baldwin and Claude McKay, black and white equality will be conceivable and permitted in the new world of liberty. As a black and a gay man when the American culture recognised neither of these identities, Baldwin penned highly personal stories in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. These writers novels reflect dissatisfaction over the social situation and express rage against social injustice. However there are differences also among these playwrights in their attitudes towards racial problems. However, they have also aroused more interest than usual in the work of great black playwrights since they and their characters spoke in a tone that matched the growing militancy in African-American communities.

Conclusion

It is difficult to say that the black American individual has obtained all the rights and opportunities available to his white counterpart. Racial inequality and racism affect every country in the world. It systematically deprives people of their human rights because of colour, race and gender. The researcher agrees that racial prejudice is the main cause of inequality in African-American society. Following these discussions, my understanding is that Baldwin avoided essentializing their existence in the question of race. Both Southern African and African American literature deals with racial discrimination. However, the two are different because African Americans were less aggressive and suffered from an identity crisis due to the overwhelming number of whites in the American setting, the Southern Africans were more resilient and bold in their fight against racism covered under 'apartheid' law. As a result, they (African-Americans) came to accept their helplessness until the activists began their liberation movement. Both James Baldwin and Claude McKay illustrated elements of a new world of life and liberty in which black and white fairness will be possible and tolerated. Finally, Compare novels like "*Go Tell It on the Mountain*" by James Baldwin with "*Home to Harlem*" by Claude McKay, the researcher concludes that thorough portrayal of the black victim's suffering and torment in Baldwin's storey is more vivid emotionally compelling. When comparing the two texts and contexts, African American literature shared characteristics with Southern African literature, which is sometimes referred to as Dispersal literature because of its portrayal of the terrible experiences of blacks who were dispersed due to slavery in the United States and abroad. According to both authors, James Baldwin and Claude McKay, black and white equality will be conceivable and permitted in the new world of liberty. These writer's novels writers reflect dissatisfaction over the social situation and express rage against social injustice. The researcher believes that no equality can be achieved in a social environment surrounded by racial discrimination and hatred.

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