Chapter II

Exploration of the Code

"What is it that this people cannot forget?"¹

James Baldwin’s novels show “the ambivalence between accepted standards in social, political, religious and moral values on the one hand and the profound personal doubts of the lonely and the bewildered individual on the other.”² Seen from this vantage point, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and *Giovanni’s Room* seem to be complementary to each other because ambivalent religious values are the hallmark of the first and the ambivalence of morality is the hallmark of the second. The all white cast of *Giovanni’s Room* made, among others, Leslie A. Fiedler “a little uneasy.”³ This judgement is in stark contrast to many critics’ view of *Go Tell It on the Mountain* as a ‘raceless’ novel. Both these novels have a narrow range of social setting. *Go Tell It on the Mountain* is concerned with the life of characters almost always within the restricted environment of Harlem or deep South, and *Giovanni’s Room* with their life in Paris or South of France. But in both the novels even this limited setting has been relegated to the background because character analysis has been made more important through the introspective flashbacks.
Critical opinion on *Go Tell It on the Mountain,* emphasizes the role of salvation (Gibson)\(^4\), hypocrisy of religion (Margolies)\(^5\), symbolism of religion (Shirley S. Allen)\(^6\), mythic quest of the hero for an everlasting father (Michael F. Lynch)\(^7\), negation of the religion of inclusion (Dalan Hubbard)\(^8\), protagonist's acceptance of blackness (Robert Bone\(^9\), David Foster\(^10\) and Albert Ge'rand\(^11\)), cultural criticism (Fred L. Standley)\(^12\) fear of God and despair of love within the theological or psychological context of morality based on fear, guilt, and corruption (George E. Bell).\(^13\) This emphasis on religion and love calls for an examination of characters against their psychosocial-religious context where the relations among the characters are realized in the novel.

The novel is divided into three parts. The action of part I and III takes place in Harlem, captured through a dual perspective -- the all knowing omniscient author's and the protagonist, John Grimes', on his fourteenth birthday. Part II consists of three prayers of Florence, Gabriel and Elizabeth and takes the action back not only to their own past but also to the historical past of Slavery. These three characters, reminisce about their personal lives in their respective flashbacks.

Harlem is full of drugs, prostitutes, violence, indifferent people, drinking, loud noise and dilapidated buildings. The street where Grimes
family lives is an example of extreme poverty, unemployment and racial segregation. Church and home, the twin institutions around which the whole ghetto life is woven, are also full of dirt and dust. This filth permeates every nook and corner and chokes people to death both physically and symbolically. In contrast New York which exists beyond the ghetto is clean and beautiful. The human fall out of this stifling environment is the raging passion of hate, and it infests those who have not already died of the choking conditions.

Grimes family is no exception to it and "the domestic violence in the family is in large part the result of external pressures brought to bear upon the Grimes family as a result of separate and unequal treatment in the promised land." But the main action of the novel pertains to "the more universal problem of a youth achieving maturity." Allen's use of the word 'problem' aptly sums up John's present crisis. He, in fact, has become acutely aware of it on the morning of his fourteenth birthday. John realizes that the resolution of crisis has to come through the acceptance of the church and through the negation of his father who represents the church in the novel who had "always said that his face was the face of Satan -- and was there not something . . . that bore witness to his father's words?" His father's authority gets internalized in him negatively. Though the people always said
“that John would be a preacher when he grew up just like his father” (p. 9), but it is the singing of the “saints” that makes him believe in the Lord and “he could not doubt it” (p. 13). But even this faith in the church compounds his problems because for him religion is asexual. With the onset of adolescence John’s mind is so full of sexual feelings that Ella Mae’s clothes reveal to him “the nakedness of breasts and insistent thighs” (p. 16) and even a yellow stain on the roof “transforms itself into a woman’s nakedness” (p. 17). Unable to find any outlet for his over-bearing sexuality, he starts masturbating to release his tension. But these sexual acts and fantasies induce in him self-hatred and inner guilt because he knows that the life of church “which was imminent and awaited him” (p. 17) is devoid of sexuality. To make matters worse, John develops homosexual leanings towards Elisha whose voice, lèanness, grace, strength and darkness he comes to admire. This admiration leads to a physical contact between John and Elisha on the church floor in the guise of a friendly scuffle. During the scuffle John was “filled with a strength that was almost hatred” and “wild delight” (p. 53). Here, hatred “is an emotion very much like love -- or, more precisely, eroticism”17 - - suggested by the intensely felt presence of the body, clasping and quickened ryhthm of breathing.
He feels guilty and terrified because the frame of reference that he has got is of religious origin: "the darkness of John's sin was like the darkness . . . like the silence of the church . . . like his thoughts . . . like the walls that witnessed and the placards on the walls which testified that the wages of sin was death" (p. 18). He thus feels guilty about sex. This sense of sinful guilt is further enhanced by his awareness of being proud and his propensity to doubt the power of God: "the darkness of his sin was in the hardheartedness with which he resisted God's power; in the scorn that was often his while he listened to the 'crying, breaking voices'" (p. 18). Religion and sex perceived through fear and terror of damnation and death make his life more uneasy.

John, while still reeling under the triple burden of guilt, self-hatred and terror of death, in his broodings resolves that "[h]e would not be like his father, or his father's fathers. He would have another life" (p. 18). And what he means by this 'other life' becomes clear when he envisions in his dream a life of wealth, fame, desegregation and respect in place of poverty, fear and hatred. But before the realization of his daydream may take place John has got to resolve his immediate problems. Besides the guilt for sex and religion, he also has to resolve his ambivalent relation with his father. He wants the love of his father but also "wanted to kill him" (p. 56).
Though delineated at length in Part III, the resolution of John’s problem unfolds throughout the narrative. The avenues available to John for resolution are his personal experiences and his own capability, besides the choices made available to him through the life histories of his three elders, namely, Florence, Gabriel Grimes and Elizabeth which are presented in the novel in the form of ‘prayers’.

The overall atmosphere in the novel is of religion and Gabriel is the ‘God’s anointed’ hence he is dealt with before Florence whose prayer is first. On the other extreme is Louis H. Pratt’s view that “Gabriel’s existence can only be described as lustful and selfish.”18 There is an inherent contradiction in the personality of Grimes that evokes such a varied and antithetical critical response. Rosenblatt explains it thus: “His name, Gabriel Grimes, is a contradiction of terms: the angel of faith. The name Gabriel means ‘man of god,’ and that too, is a contradiction, as Gabriel is not a man of God in any sense but the professional.”19 For him, both sex and religion are a means to exercise powers over others.

Gabriel’s approach to life does not find favour with Baldwin because it is full of ego-centricity, self-aggrandisment, deceptions and betrayals. The craving to exercise power over others in any form is rejected by Baldwin as an unviable attitude to life. Sex for Baldwin is the sustaining force of life,
which, if denied, leads to severe distortions in one’s personality. Though Gabriel had enjoyed sex before coming to the church, even then it was not a natural act for him, rather, it was a means to exercise power over others which is very much evident in the description of one of his sex-acts:

In proud conquest, he thought of her, of her smell, the heat of her body beneath his hands, of her voice, and her tongue, like the tongue of a cat, and her teeth, and her swelling breasts, and how she moved for him, and held him, and labored with him, and how they fell, trembling and groaning, and locked together, into the world again (p. 106).

The sex-act for Gabriel is to go into the other world, and hence closely parallels his religion. It is also an opportunity for him to conquer, to have power over the other person because as it is she who moves for him and not Gabriel who moves for her. When he got religion he travelled to ‘the other world’ of religion and “shouted into silence” (p. 106), and gave a lonely cry in a wilderness, where “nothing prevailed save the mercy of God” (p. 107), he was saved. He thinks that he has been forgiven for all his past sins and “this was the beginning of his life as a man” (p. 108).

Failing to be a master through the sex act he now turns to religion so that he could exercise authority over others. Gabriel’s motive to come to religion is clear: “He wanted power -- he wanted to know himself to be the God’s anointed, he wanted to be master, to speak with that authority
which could only come from God” (p. 104). Earlier he could be master through the sex-act but now enjoys power that his position as preacher gives him and he could curse the “betraying lust” (p. 106) in others. The duplicity of Gabriel’s character is reinforced by Baldwin when after a life of womanising and drinking, he starts cursing the ‘betraying lust’ from the elevated pulpit of the church. His decision to marry “sexless” (p. 109) Deborah is influenced by his selfish motives of reinforcing his religiosity as well as to satisfy his ever burgeoning ego of being called ‘Reverend’ by her. Her sexlessness and barrenness causes frustration in him which leads him to ‘fall’ for Esther, his co-worker. This self-proclaimed ‘uplifter’ of human soul makes her pregnant, disowns the pregnancy and leaves her alone to fend for herself. Gabriel tries very hard to bury his past and for this reason he hates his sisters Florence because she is a testimony to his sinful past and he looks at her “in astonished triumph that his sister should be humbled” (p. 71). He has unmitigated hatred not only for Florence but also for Elizabeth, his second wife because of her past. Gabriel hates his step-son, John, for his sexual maturity which he will attain alongwith his salvation: “his father’s eye stripped him naked, and hated what they saw” (p. 223).

Gabriel fails as a preacher, father, husband, lover and brother. He never shows any compassion, forgiveness and love to anyone. He time and
again asks for forgiveness in his prayers but remains an unchanged man at 
the end of the novel. Florence’s observation towards the end of the novel is 
very pertinent to understand Gabriel’s character:

“I ain’t changed. You ain’t changed neither. You still promising 
the Lord you going to do better -- and you think whatever you 
done already, however doing right at that minute, don’t count. 
Of all the men I ever knew, you’s the man who ought to be 
hoping the Bible’s all lie -- ’cause if that trumpet ever sounds, 
you going to spend eternity talking.” (p. 245).

Gabriel represents “the religious sense of being a hypocrite” and uses 
religion “as a weapon to keep people feeling guilty and to maintain his 
superiority over them.” George E. Bell sums up Gabriel’s life and its 
implications for him and others in the novel:

As God’s representative, Gabriel brings a heavenly message of 
man’s sinfulness, of God’s abiding hatred for sinners, and of 
eternal punishment in hell for the unregenerate. To be one of 
God’s elect, to be saved from damnation, a man must humble 
himself before this fearful God of power and vengeance and 
praised him and forsake the ‘world.’ The God of Gabriel is not 
a God of compassion, joy and love. In such a scheme, the 
notion of responsible freedom is alien. This theology of hate, 
fear and guilt -- of man’s basic corruption before an omnipotent 
God -- mutilates the attempted love relationships of those who 
try to function within it. God’s anointed, Gabriel is himself the 
chief case in point: he is not capable for love. His influence as 
husband or ‘lover’, father and brother, and church leader is 
poisonous and pervasively so.
What could be the bigger irony of the fallacy of Baldwin criticism than George E. Kent’s observation that Grimes is “a man of titanic drives . . . a sufficient metaphor for man in a grim strugle with the forces of universe.” Since the novel suggests that these forces are created more by him than by God whom he serves with such fierceness.

The importance of sex in Gabriel’s life is also shown twice in the novel through his chance meeting with his bastard son Royal. As a child, Royal refers to the size of Gabriel’s penis without knowing that he is the living proof of it. The second meeting between them occurs on the deserted street of the town where a riot had taken place after the discovery of the lynched body of a black soldier. By this time Gabriel had been a preacher for many years and his mother had “taught him to pray, for loving kindness; yet he dreamed of the feel of a white man’s forehead against his shoe’ again and again, until the head wobbled on the broken-neck and his foot encountered nothing but the rushing blood” (p. 162). Religion could not purge Gabriel of the racial hatred.

He thinks that forgiveness for what he did to Esther has come to him through Elizabeth. He again marries a fallen woman who has a bastard son of her own. He promises to love Johnny “as though he were his own flesh. And
he had kept the letter of the promise . . . but the spirit was not there" (p. 200). But he hates John as he is a bastard and constantly reminds him of his own bastard son. He also hates him because he is afraid that John will become ‘elect’ of the church and his own son Roy would never, because Roy had already cursed Gabriel by calling him ‘bastard’. Gabriel not only does not help John on the ‘threshing floor’ but is also angry: “I’m going to beat sin out of him. I’m going to beat it out of him” (p.224).

It is true that he cared for his mother in her last days, provides for Deborah and except for the ‘nine day affair’ with Esther remains faithful to her till her death. He also doesn’t leave Elizabeth and tries very hard to feed the big family. He weeps at the death of Royal. But Colin McInness, talking about the presence of love, stretches it a bit when he says that “even that poor Gabriel yearns for dead Royal and living Roy.”

The bond between John and his aunt, Florence, is cemented by their common sense of independence and pride and their hatred for Gabriel. Florence has been led to the church neither by “love nor humility has led her to the alter, but only fear” (p. 72). She hated Gabriel because it was he, the male, for whom all the meagre economic resources of the family have been reserved and her ambition of education and other comforts of life have been thwarted because of this. What lends her credibility is that her character is
“in direct opposition to Gabriel” and her hatred for him is final. She not only sees through his religious hypocrisy but also takes a stand against him unlike other characters in the novel. She also threatens Gabriel with Deborah’s letter informing about his adulterous relations with Esther and his bastard son born to her.

She reacts strongly to Deborah’s rape and “after Deborah’s ‘accident’, hates all men” (p. 80). She also reacts strongly to the possibilities of life in the South. Her mother wanted her to marry and her white employer had offered her concubinage. Marrying a man of her mother’s choice would mean simply the change of the living quarters. She rejects the whole lifestyle of the rural South and decides to go to North for the betterment of her life in economic and social terms. Because “to stay would make Florence into a non-entity, a body defined by the functions it executes: daughter, sister, wife, mother. Leaving, though, creates an overwhelming burden of guilt and, ironically, no escape at all from the traditional roles.”

Once the decision was made, nothing could stop her, not even her mother on the death-bed, because she knows if she didn’t leave now she would never be able to leave. The economic compulsions influencing her decision can be gauged from the last words she speaks to Gabriel: “If you ever see me again” she says, “I won’t be wearing rags like yours” (p. 88).
But her fiercely independent nature and bold decision to leave South to move to North for the betterment of life are realized within the traditional framework available to a woman. She marries Frank because she wants to have the comforts of a home. It is in her relations with Frank that her true self is revealed. She wants Frank to dissociate from "common niggers" who have no social manners. She urges him to strive to buy a house of their own and change his lifestyle. She has also started using bleaching creams. All this shows that she has internalized the whites' image of a negro and she could be described as a 'white-skin syndrome' character. Sexual relations between Frank and Florence bring out her contradictory attitudes:

And, while he spoke, his hand was on her breast, and his moving lips brushed her neck. And this caused such a war in her as could scarcely be endured. She felt that everything in existence between them was part of a mighty plan for her humiliation. She did not want his touch, and yet she did: she burned with longing and froze with rage. And she felt that he knew this and inwardly smiled to see how easily, on this part of the battlefield, his victory could be assured. But at the same time she felt that his tenderness, his passion, and his love were real (p. 97).

Florence is capable of love because she "burned with longing" and knows that Frank's "passion" and "love were real". But at the same time she considers the sex-act as "battlefield" and thus thinks of it in terms of victory or defeat. This is rooted in her craving for being a master, a controller and
not the controlled: "The impression that she controlled him... had been entirely and disastrously false" (p. 90). Her fierce sense of independence, hatred for blackness, strong desire to be economically successful and craving for power smothers her natural instinct of love and compels Frank to leave her after ten years of married life. Deborah's comments about her are noteworthy: "I wonder, she ventured, if she ever going to find a man good enough for her. She is so proud -- look like she just won't let nobody come near her" (p. 111).

She cannot adhere to her mother's religion because it teaches her to be contented with the washing of white folks' clothes. She cannot love males because Gabriel, her male sibling has thwarted all possibilities of education and good things of life for her, and also because males have brutally raped her friend Deborah. She cannot live in South because it offered bleak prospects for a budding person like her. All these aspects of her character equip her with the courage to bear loneliness and maintain an aloof, 'dignified' lifestyle after Frank had left her for good. Though her dream of success has been shattered and she ultimately leaves a negative impression because she falls prey to the "white-skin syndrome."26 In spite of this negative impression we may somewhat agree with the view that her character
is developed in a manner "which makes her unflinching decisiveness, her bitterness towards men, and her religious disbelief believable."^27 

Florence realizes that she has failed as a daughter and as a wife and feels guilty. She also realizes the futility of her prayer because she has come to church not out of genuine religious feelings but out of fear of death and desperation when doctors and 'spiritualists' have failed to cure her disease: "The hands of death caressed her shoulders" (p. 101).

She "is perhaps the strongest character psychologically in the novel,"^28 which explains her strong reactions towards life. Pride, self-righteousness, a rational and strong attitude towards life, "mistaken shame"^29 have rendered her "incapable of sustaining a genuine human relationship because she is unable to love."^30 Her physical disease is symbolic of her heart "corrupted by the hatred which she has nourished in her breast"^31 against her brother, her dominance by men, her sense of sexual and racial discrimination and poverty and lack of opportunities to move up the social ladder. In the end she is "alone and tragic . . . Love does not hold her back, nor does fear, but the spirit necessary to accomplish any major goal seems to have been drained from her."^32

As against Gabriel and Florence stands Eleizabeth who is "the ethical and the moral center of the book"^33 because of her capacity to love and to be
loved. Hatred has no place in Elizabeth’s approach to life. Whatever she does she does it with the conviction of her faith and belief. Where Florence goes to the church out of fear and terror and Gabriel uses it for power and self-aggrandisment, Elizabeth follows the true spirit of the religion rather than the formal aspects of it and because her faith in Christ is unflinching.

Elizabeth has known the importance of love since childhood, her father loved her and she loved him. She was deprived of this love when her mother died and she was taken away by an aunt. She “had learned to respond to aunt with a ‘cancerous’ hatred and fear. But more importantly, she had known the redemption of love.”34 Her inherent faith in love is supreme to the extent of sentimentality. She does not castigate in her prayer her father even for running a racket of prostitutes. She replaces the hatred for her aunt with love for Richard. Richard’s love was more important than the love of God and the place he occupied in her heart cannot be filled by anybody else:

From the moment he arrived until the moment of his death he had filled her life. Not even tonight, in the heart’s nearly impenetrable secret place, where the truth is hidden and where only the truth can live, could she wish that she had not known him; nor deny that, so long as he was there, the rejoicing of Heaven could have meant nothing to her -- that, being forced to choose between Richard and God, she could only, even with weeping, have turned away from God (p. 179).
She would choose Richard in place of God who had said about God “... you tell that puking bastard to kiss my big black ass” (p. 186) and she neither feels guilty nor repents for loving Richard because she had never been and was not now, even tonight, truly sorry. “Where, then, was her repentance? And how could God hear her cry?” (p. 187). Her repentence is her reaffirmation of her love and her salvation will come through John’s salvation better and higher than Gabriel’s.

She marries Gabriel not for her own sake but so that she could give a name to her son. She remains a dutiful wife to Gabriel whom she defends when Roy and John question her about their father. She knows the truth about Gabriel but would not betray her true feelings before them.

Elizabeth’s understanding and her choice of remaining in church is maturer either than that of Florence or of Gabriel. She has been exposed to three different approaches to religion, contrary to Harris’ view that her being in church is ‘without conviction.’ She has known and reconciled with Richard’s total contempt for Christ and Christianity. Richard’s strong reaction comes when she “once timidly mentioned the love of Jesus” (p. 186). Gabriel’s religious life is the second approach that she knows too well. She feels the hollowness of Gabriel’s religion. With Gabriel’s promise to love her son broken, his obvious hate for John and his insistence for her repentence for
John's birth are enough for her to reveal the hypocritical approach of Gabriel to religion, although she never expresses it like Florence. But given her sensitivity and long association with Gabriel it can be safely assumed. Lastly, her own approach to religion, is not influenced by either of these examples and she follows the true spirit of religion and her faith remains unflinching. She never lets her faith in love disturbed even under the extreme situation of the suicide of Richard. She is a shining foil to Florence who comes to pray only because of terror of the impending death and extreme desperation.

A comparison of the religious text of Elizabeth with that of Gabriel's makes clear the difference of approach and the underlying spirit of the faith. Her contention is "Everythig works together for good for them that love the Lord" (p. 34), while Gabriel's text is "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live" (p. 67). Whereas Elizabeth's text suggests love and the coming goodness, Gabriel's text suggest disorder and the threat of death.

It is clear that both Florence and Gabriel will not get salvation though Gabriel himself is sure of his salvation. Both of them aspire for salvation and pray for it in abstract terms of heavenly abode after death. But Elizabeth prays and aspires for salvation in concrete terms. Given her knowledge of church from a broader perspective, her idea of John's salvation lies in it, being a kind of sanctuary against drugs and frustration. She wondered...
whether her son would be like “the boys who had gone to prison. . . . who stood before drugstore windows, before poolrooms, on every street corner, who whistled after her, whose lean bodies fairly rang, it seemed, with idleness, and malice, and frustration” (p. 204). And she shudders at her thoughts. She has come to pray in church not for herself but for her son John: “It was for his deliverance that she wept tonight: that he might be carried, past wrath unspeakable, into a state of grace” (p. 172). Though employing the language influenced by religion, her idea of grace is more social in orientation. The reaffirmation of her love for Richard and also her resolve not to feel guilty for John’s birth suggests that she wants her son to follow Richard, his natural father rather than Gabriel, his social father. ‘Grace’ and ‘deliverance’ in social terms are also implied in her respect for Richard for his knowledge and intellect, and intellect, no religion only is the tool with which John wants to attain a social position.

The maturity of her vision is evidenced by her perception of New York as well as her attitude towards whites. She has come to know that New York is simply over-powering: “North promised more . . . . What it promised it did not give, and what it gave, at length and grudgingly with one hand, it took back with the other” (p.186), she also knows that New York was a “nervous, hollow, ringing city” (p.186) and that she could feel it in
Richard's "muscles and heard it in his breathing" (p. 186). It brings out the
naivety of Florence's attitude to life wherein she gets duped by the false
promises and images of men and places.

Similarly, her views regarding whites are also very discerning, unlike
those of Gabriel, who perceives whites only as a race from a racist angle.
When Richard was arrested on a false charge of shop robbery, she "hated it
all -- the white city, the white world. She could not, that day, think of one
decent white person in the whole world. She sat there, and she hoped that one
day God, with tortures inconceivable, would grind them utterly into humility"
(p. 198). Since Richard was the anchor of her life, any threat to his existence
or respect demands a strong emotional reaction on her part. The hatred is
generated by a particular happening and is not her final viewpoint. She
shows capability of judging whites as individuals, not mere abstract racial
entity as a group. She appreciates the good gestures of a white person who
had bought a bottle of cod-liver oil for Johnny when he needed it badly:
"God would bless that person" (p. 38).

A comparison between Richard and Gabriel may also be made of their
responses to the racial discrimination. Richard wants to take on whites
through knowledge whereas Gabriel would like his God to punish them and he
as God’s anointed would also like to punish a few by eliminating them physically.

Third part is about the resolution of John’s problems -- yearnings to be beautiful, to be forgiven, to be loved, to be equal to his father to be saved from the fears of damnation, and to “kneel before the throne of grace without first kneeling to his father” (p. 20). John realizes that the resolution of his crisis lies first and foremost in the negation of his father. The first step that he takes in this direction is to challenge his father’s racist perception of whites. Gabriel had strong hatred for the whites which he has internalized: “he dreamed of the feel of a white man’s forehead against his shoe’ again and again, until the head wobbled on the broken neck and his foot encountered nothing but the rushing blood” (p. 162). As against this John realizes that the whites do not conform to this negative image which is projected by his father. John himself realizes that when John went to ‘Central Park’ on his way to West side on his birthday, he “nearly knocked down an old white man with white beard” but “the old man smiled” (p. 37). It was “his intelligence that he cherished” (p. 20) and “white people also said it, in fact had said it first and said it still” (p. 19). While he was walking on the market street in West side, “no one raised a hand against him” (p. 39). These are a few instances that create a dent in Gabriel’s hold over his mental make-up. His personal
experience is at variance with his father's precepts and he starts believing in his own experiences, because "he was able, as one of his teachers said, to think" (p. 32). This is also his way to be beautiful because he could become wealthy, famous and desirable through his 'intelligence' and intellect.

The second step that he takes to reject his father's authority is by equating himself with his father sexually and his subsequent replacement by Elisha in his life. When the ironic voice insists John to "get up" (p. 222), he found that "his father's eyes stripped him naked, and hated what they saw" (p. 223). The implication is that Gabriel hated the sexual maturity of John. It also implies that John can now equate himself with his father in sexual terms. If John is guilty of masturbation so is Gabriel of sexual intercourse: "I heard you [Gabriel], spitting, and groaning, and choking -- and I seen you, riding up and down, going in and out" (pp. 225-26). John reasons with himself that if Gabriel does not suffer from any guilt feelings arising out of his sexual activities, why should he? He thus tries to free himself of the feelings of guilt and sin for his sexual matters.

Georges-Michel Sarotte looks at John's salvation from the angle of homosexuality: "As part of the ritual, Elisha submits to the power of the Lord and speaks in tongues; seeing it, John too goes into a trance. For John the trance becomes the most intimate means of entering into contact with
Elisha." This explanation is convincing because in John's heart "there was a sudden yearning tenderness for holy Elisha; desire, sharp and awful as a reflecting knife, to usurp the body of 'Elisha, and lie where Elisha lay; to speak in tongues, as Elisha spoke, and with that authority, to confound his father . . . As he cursed his father, he loved Elisha" (p. 221). John is all set to replace his father with Elisha but he is be able to do so only after he had given a cry for mercy from the 'grave' and Elisha was ready to help him. In the deadly 'grave', John wanders in his delirium where all his family members are present. Unable to find any help and recognising that the world is full of darkness he whispers the name of the Lord without even knowing it. Still in delirium he hears a voice, now without maliciousness, "'go through, Go through'" (p. 230). He saw the Lord for a moment and "he was set free" (p. 232). He hears the voice of Elisha, "Bless our God forever !" and a sweetness filled John" (p. 232). Elisha stretched out his hand and helped John rise up from the floor.

John now comes to Gabriel to seek his blessings and "he felt in himself a stiffening, and a panic, and a blind rebellion, and a hope for peace" (p. 235). At the end of the novel when "the sun had come full awake . . . It fell over Elisha like a golden robe, and struck John's forehead, where Elisha had kissed him, like a seal inettaceable forever," (p. 253). Thus the novel seems
to end on an optimistic note that John’s sexual problems have been solved and sun had eradicated darkness.

What has been achieved by John at the end of the novel? The meaning of the novel lies in the answer to this question. "The struggle for identity i.e, for functional being, is the major issue of Baldwin’s first novel, Go Tell It on the Mountain." Thus, how John achieves this goal carries the meaning of the novel. As Bone suggests, he achieves it by "belonging to these armies of darkness and must forever share their pain." John envisions, in delirium, an army of sufferers joined by his elders accompanying sounds of black people of different walks of life. His salvation follows this experience of identification with his community and with his past. This identification justifies the second large part of the novel. Marcus Klein though views it differently; "John doesn’t really know the lives of his aunt, his stepfather, and his mother. Only the reader does. And that is a technical fault." John identifies with the black life through the bases for the resolution of his problems he derives from his elders. He imbibes the spirit of taking independent decision from his aunt Florence; intelligence, racial awareness and an ability to love from his natural father Richard; sense of inclusion in religion from Gabriel’s mother Rachel; and ‘complexity of awareness’ and faith in love from his mother Elizabeth.
John not only draws upon his elders for inspiration, he also carries forward their burden because it “is painfully, dramatically, structurally clear throughout *Go Tell It on the Mountain* that the struggle, every individual faces -- with sexuality, with guilt, with pain, with love -- are passed on, generation to generation.”

It all happens without the deliberate attempt on the part of the younger generation to do so. Craig Hansen Werner also emphasises the structural aspect of *Go Tell It on the Mountain* to draw home a similar idea: “Part one emphasizes individual perceptions, while part two emphasizes social pressures and racial history; the social and individual revolts blend in the apocalyptic imagery of Part Three.”

This structural strategy also makes clear that race and religion are two great impediments in the way of the realization of love in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. Race breeds hatred and violence and religion provides a theology of guilt, fear and terror. The novel provides several examples to this effect. Richard committed suicide when denied of his individual identity by whites. Florence has been rendered incapable of love by the internalization of stereotype image of blackness. Elizabeth is the only major character who is able to maintain her poise her commitment to love for Richard is total. Since John is drawing upon Richard and Elizabeth unconsciously there is a note of
optimism in the novel. His resolutions become tentative and provisional in the light of Richard's death and Gabriel's religion.

The feelings of guilt, sin, terror, vengeance, damnation and death originating in religion in *Go Tell It on the Mountain* give place in *Giovanni's Room* to the feelings of guilt and shame arising out of the American culture. These are the factors largely limiting the possibility and realization of love in both these novels respectively. Love is mainly manifested through sex in *Giovanni's Room*. "'Mr. Baldwin has taken a very special theme and treated it with great artistry and restraint,' writes *Saturday Review.‘” 41 The special theme is homosexuality. The novel is told from the first-person point of view of the protagonist, David. The novel is divided into two parts. First Part consisting of three chapters records David's "acceptance of his sexuality, his acceptance of Giovanni's love. Second Part, made up of five chapters is the record of his subsequent fall from acceptance, his denial of himself, his feeling, his possibility," 42 The acceptance and denial of sexuality is realized in the novel through David's homosexual and heterosexual relations falling into a pattern of one time affair with Joey (homosexual) and Sue (heterosexual) and relatively sustained affair with Hella (heterosexual) and Giovanni (homosexual). Homosexual experience produces conflicting
emotions of shame, guilt and pleasure while heterosexual experiences produces the feelings of emptiness, conformity and meaninglessness.

*Giovanni's Room*, like *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, has evoked a varied and conflicting critical opinion referred to in the first chapter: hypocrisy of morality in sexual matters (Arthur P. Davis)\(^43\), causation and implication of homosexuality (Fred L. Standley)\(^44\), inability to face reality (Charlotte Alexander)\(^45\), negative embodiment of homosexuality (Sylvander)\(^46\), implication of homosexuality in the terrified vision of theological view (Stanley Macebuh)\(^47\), failure to achieve a valid sense of self or chasm of otherness owing to cultural pressures (Emmanuel S. Nelson)\(^48\), running away from one's identity (Phyllis Rouch Klottman)\(^49\) and invincible self-hatred from which American homosexual must suffer (Georges-Michel Sarotte)\(^50\) etc. One aspect common to the majority of studies is the emphasis on the implication of homosexuality. What the critics miss is homosexuality as a means of love which leads to the flowering of the personality also observed by Louis H. Pratt: “*Giovanni's Room* is a novel which rises above the homosexual -- heterosexual framework of the action to consider the larger issue of the failure of love.”\(^51\) Difference of perspective results in emphasis on a different aspect of this human experience. Baldwin himself observed that: “David’s dilemma is the dilemma of many men of his generation, by
which I do not so much mean sexual ambivalence as a crucial lack of authority." The important phrases in the statement 'dilemma' and 'crucial lack of authority' indicate the lack of commitment either to the outer social authority of morality or to the inner emotional authority of the individual.

An interplay of both these aspects creates and qualifies the problem of David and the novel. The opening paragraph itself sets this mood which is realized fully in David's sexual relations with different characters at different stages in the novel. The problem of the novel is not homosexuality per se but the search of love. David watches his image in the window pane and what the image suggests to him establishes his identity as an American. To be American in David's mind is to be associated with virility and masculinity which comes in sharp conflict with his inclination towards homosexual. His contrary views of this Americanism and homosexuality make his life unstable and directionless and therefore, he is unable throughout his life to establish any sustaining relationship with any body he comes in contact -- be it Joey, Giovanni or Hella.

David's homosexual experience with Joey as an adolescent happened naturally, as if without any design on their part. A friendly scuffle like that between John and Elisha slowly turns in to a real sex-act between them. The experience is characterized by emotional tenderness: "It was like holding in
my hand some rare, exhausted, nearly doomed bird . . . we gave each other
joy that night. It seemed, then, that a lifetime would not be long enough for
me to act with Joey the act of love” (p. 14). The joy is possible because it
comes from the raw, pure emotions without any awareness of preconceived
cultural norms. During this experience communion is of tactile reflex which
leads to the sharing of the emotion of love making the sex-act tender. David
is engaged and involved in the sex-act with the awareness of the smell and
feel of Joey’s body which David feels has “the power and the promise and
the mystery” (p. 15). A satisfying, gratifying and fulfilling sexual experience
tenderly acted out leads to innocence and trust. David watches Joey “so
innocently lying there with such perfect trust” (pp. 14-15). David, who is
oblivious of everything except the joy, pleasure, smell, feel and the body of
Joey in the night, becomes aware of the surroundings in the morning. The
realization of the physical surroundings suddenly makes him aware of the
social surroundings of “rumor, suggestion, half-heard, half-forgotten, half-
understood stories, full of dirty words” (p. 15) and he is afraid and ashamed
and cries for “shame and terror” (p. 15). David decides to leave without
telling Joey because he is afraid of his will to leave broken. David is afraid of
the society but he is also afraid of “a dreadful stirring of what so
overwhelmingly stirred in me then, great thirsty heat, . . . astounding,
intolerable pain” (p. 14). David flees away from Joey, away from shame, terror, dreadful stirring and the thirsty heat of the passion and of the body. It is a flight from his sexual identity, his own self, the truth of his being.

The physical flight takes him to Paris where he takes refuge in Hella, in heterosexuality, in conformity, in the prospective marriage (heterosexuality socialized). Before the relation could mature in marriage, Hella goes to Spain to think over it. David left alone, meets Giovanni and falls in love with him. The philosophical discussion that takes place between Giovanni and David in their first meeting about serious issues of life is symptomatic of the gravity of the relation which follows in stark contrast with David’s first meeting with Hella that starts on a casual note of having fun. David and Giovanni “hit it off” beautifully. Jacques becomes the moral preceptor of the novel. He tells David that “confusion is a luxury which only the very, very young can possibly afford and you are not that young anymore” (p. 57). David is confused about his own self because he is not ready to decide, to know, recognize and admit his sexuality, an issue related to other vital aspects of his life as a person. His confusion is reflected in his thoughts about Hella: “I did not dare to mention Hella. I could not even pretend to myself that I was sorry she was in Spain. I was glad, I was utterly, hopelessly, horribly glad” (p. 58).
David, thinking of his first meeting with Giovanni, reflects that they “connected the instant that [they] met. And remained connected still” (p. 59). He now prays to God to grant him the grace and courage to live a life of homosexual relation with other boys in whom he’d try to find Giovanni’s love.

The ‘connection’ between them becomes clearer when they go together along with Jacques and Guillaume to a cafe for breakfast. When Giovanni introduces David to the owner of the cafe, David notices that “something is burning in his eyes and it lights up all his face, it is joy and pride” (p. 71). It is not only the feeling of Giovanni but also of David: “I scarcely know why; everything is jumping up and down” (p. 71) in me. The cafe is surcharged with the meaningless conversation of homosexual prostitutes who are on the lookout for their ‘wealthy’ partners. As against these homosexuals who barter their body for money stands Jacques—for whom homosexuality is a mean to attain joy and fulfilment in the life. He succinctly puts forward the moral message of the novel. Jacques tells David: “There are so many ways of being despicable . . . but the way to be really despicable is to be contemptuous of other people’s pain” (p. 75). Jacques further tells him that sexual encounters become “shameful” when “there is no affection in them, and no joy. It’s like putting an electric plug in a dead socket. Touch, but no
contact. All touch, but no contact and no light" (p. 76). Sex without contact and sharing is not communion and sex without communion is joyless, meaningless and shameful. He exhorts him:

'Love him, . . . love him and let him love you. Do you think anything else under heaven really matters? And how long, at the best, can it last? . . . Only five minutes, . . . and most of that, hélas! in the dark. And if you think of them dirty, then they will be dirty -- they will be dirty because you will be giving nothing, you will be despising your flesh and his. But you make your time together anything but dirty; you can give each other something which will make both of you better -- forever -- if you will not be ashamed, if you will not play it safe . . . you play it safe long enough, . . . and you'll and up trapped in your own dirty body, forever and forever and forever . . . ' (p. 77).

David considers the exhortation against his moral values and tells Jacques that he had never thought that loving a 'man' was possible and natural. At this Jacques gives a final stroke of his teaching that "not many people have ever died of love. But multitudes have perished, and perishing every hour -- and in the oldest places -- for the lack of it" (79).

David finds this philosophy of love at variance with his own morality which simply does not consider the possibility of love between two men and precisely this is the reason that he has run away so far from home. After having been evicted from his room because of his inability to pay the hotel bills, he is invited by Giovanni to stay with him. He goes to Giovanni’s room
in a confused state of mind borne out of his conflict between the passion of homosexuality and its social implications of shame. The room is small, cluttered, disorderly and smells of alcohol. Once they are inside the room, David becomes afraid of the situation:

I thought, if I do not open the door at once and get out of here, I am lost. But I knew I could not open the door, I knew it was too late; soon it was too late to do anything but moan. He pulled me against him, putting himself into my arms as though he were giving me himself to carry, and slowly pulled me down with him to that bed. With everything in me screaming *No!* yet the sum of me sighed *Yes.* (p. 87)

The relation between David and Giovanni starts with this contradictory note of *No/Yes* in David’s mind and remains so till the end of their affair. David has momentarily given himself to homosexuality but “beneath the joy, of course, was anguish and beneath the amazement was fear” (p. 99). His feelings of shame and fear raise their ugly head once again because he is unable to ‘commit’ himself to Giovanni. David is afraid lest Hella should find out their relationship. This also explains his conflicting feelings towards homosexuality. He thinks homosexuality is shameful and decides that he would not allow Giovanni to touch his body again. But no sooner is the realization made than he starts rationalizing his homosexual leanings. He thinks that it is only the body that is touched in homosexual relationship but the purity of heart and soul remains intact. But in the same breath he
imagines "the touch of hands, of Giovanni's hands, or anybody's hands, hands which would have the power to crush me and make me whole again" (117). David is not so much afraid of his relation with Giovanni particularly as he is of "the itch", "a gnaw", "the beast which Giovanni had awakened" (111) in him. This is the beast of homosexuality. David becomes aware of it when he invests a boy at once with Giovanni's beauty and feels for him what he feels for Giovanni. The longing for 'wholeness' coupled with his homosexual yearnings lead to the crisis of his American 'identity'. This identity is abstract because it describes him as a 'common American', and not as an individual, as an entity in himself. He wants to be recognized as an American but resents it and also resents "resenting it," but at the same time he resents being "called not an American because it seemed to make me nothing" (p. 117). The mask of American identity has made him believe that to be an American means to be virile, heterosexual and masculine. This reinforces the feelings of shame and fear in him since he is living a homosexual life with Giovanni. A visit to American Express Office, where everybody seems to be so away from sex, intensifies his crisis. The realization of his obsession with sex and his homosexuality pains him. The sight of an American Sailor wearing his masculinity unmistakably reveals in David's unguarded eyes the "envy and desire" (p. 122). His father's letter reminds
him of home and his dilemma and the encounter with the Sailor brings this conflict to the fore. Hella’s letter informing him of her coming back from Spain jeopardizes his relation with Giovanni. He cannot commit himself fully to Giovanni, but at the same time cannot reject Hella either. The thought of Hella’s coming back compels him to restore his heterosexuality. He realizes that he “wanted to find a girl, any girl at all” (p. 126). His sexual urge for the girl is so pressing that he starts “mentally, to take off all her clothes,” (127) the moment Sue arrives. The sex that follows is mechanical, desperate, despising, ‘immoral’, “a job” (133), a performance, as it does not involve the person inside. The passion of sex is contrived, artificial and aimed at proving the physical possibility of indulging in a heterosexual intercourse -- there is ‘touch but no contact’, no sharing, no communication, nothing at all. This meaningless sex drives him to introspection and in his confusion and inability to take a bold decision he thinks of making the life meaningful in the security of conventional way of life:

I wanted children. I wanted to be inside again, with the light and safety, with my manhood unquestioned, . . . I wanted the same bed at night and the same arms and I wanted to rise in the morning, knowing where I was. I wanted a [woman] to be for me a steady ground, like the earth itself, where I could always be renewed. (p. 138)
This brooding creates a longing for home in David which Giovanni mocks at by telling him that home was a reality only as an idea. David feels cramped by the "hideous room" and the matters come to a head because Hella is about to reach Paris and David has not told Giovanni about it. They are also passing through an economic crisis after Giovanni's removal from the job.

Hella arrives in Paris with the decision to marry David. She has communicated this decision in a letter to David already. David feels everything between them "was as it had been between us, and at the same time everything was different . . . he had already divided us" (p. 160). David wants to procrastinate the oncoming of the final moment which will bind him forever with Hella. He tries to see Giovanni's image in Hella's body: "I hope to drive out fire with fire" (p. 161). This desperate effort on David's part to solve his dilemma also fails because Hella lacks that emotional intensity, involvement and commitment which he had found in Giovanni. Hella's egocentric and self-seeking nature is itself revealed in her letter to David: "And so I've decided to let two try it, this business of loving me, I mean, and see how that works out" (124). The relation between them is based on a casual approach to each other rather than mutual feelings of love or even friendship and care. Her idea of relating herself to David is based on
her approach to life which is an exact copy of David’s feelings stated earlier.

She tells David:

‘. . . I guess I just want a man to come home to me every night. I want to be able to sleep with a man without being afraid he’s going to knock me up. Hell, I want to be knocked up. I want to start having babies. In a way, it’s really all I’m good for . . . is that what you want?’

‘Yes’, I said, ‘I’ve always wanted that’.

I turned to face her, very quickly or as though strong hands on my shoulders had turned me around . . .’ (p. 163)

David is afraid that either of them would revert the decision. Hella decides in favour of marriage because she is afraid of turning into an old nymphomaniac hag like those she had seen in Spain.

David’s hesitation in admitting his love for Giovanni is his inability to face the reality of his homosexuality, his inability to live beyond the safety of middle class values of security and safety of home, wife and a routine job. To face Giovanni is to feel a “tightening in a far corner of my heart, as though a finger had touched me there” (p. 181). Giovanni tells him about the pain and suffering he had undergone in his life, makes comments about David and tells him the truth of his life. Giovanni also makes a plea asking for David’s love: “If you can not love me, I will die. Before you came I wanted to die . . . it is cruel to have me want to live only to make my death more bloody” (p. 182). But David feels only “terror and pity and a rising lust” (p.
This difference between Giovanni’s dependence and David’s ‘terror’ is borne out of their different perspectives. Giovanni tells him that he was driven to homosexual relation with Guillaume out of extreme poverty. Before coming to Paris he had a wife whom he loved but the birth of a dead son made him curse Christ and walk out of that life altogether to come to this place to be punished for his sins and to die alone. He accuses David of not leaving him for a woman and tells him that he does not love anyone:

‘. . . You never have loved anyone, I am sure you never will! you love your purity, you love your mirror . . . you walk around with your hands in front of you as though you had some precious metal . . . may be diamonds down there between you legs! you will never let anybody touch it -- man or woman, you want to be clean. You think you came here covered with soap and you think you will go out covered with soap -- and you do not want to stink, not even for five minutes, in the meantime . . . . You want to leave Giovanni because he makes you stink. You want to despise Giovanni because he is not afraid of the stink of love. You want to kill him in the name of all your lying little moralities. And you -- you are immoral. You are, by far, the most immoral man I have met in all my life. Look, look what you have done to me. Do you think you could have done this if I did not love you? Is this what you should do to love? (p. 187) Giovanni’s assessment of David compels him to take refuge in the lame argument that two men could not expect any life together, that he loved Hella and that Giovanni knew he would leave one day. David also tells that Giovanni’s love is nothing but a way to feel strong, to feel manly by keeping David as a ‘little girl’, and that was killing him, not Giovanni. David accuses
Giovanni of lacking courage to go after a girl and this is reason that he wants to keep David in this hideous room. But Giovanni cries: "You are the one who keeps talking about what I want. I want. But I have only been talking about who I want?" (p. 189). Giovanni ultimately, coolly decides to close the matter by reposing faith in his love. He tells David that he will certainly come one day back to him because "you belong with me" (p. 189).

David is frightened as he leaves Giovanni: "It had not occurred to me until that instant that, in fleeing from his body, I confirmed and perpetuated his body’s power over me" (p. 191). The only thought that crosses his mind while opening the door is: "One day I’ll weep for this. One of these days I’ll start to cry" (p. 192).

Giovanni, left alone, degenerates into the les folles, murders Guillaume and is sentenced to death. David finds himself responsible for Giovanni’s fate and this feeling of revulsion for himself ends his affair with Hella.

David is left alone to brood over his life. He looks at his “troubling sex, and wonder[s] how it can be redeemed, . . . the key to my salvation, which can not save my body, is hidden in my flesh” (p. 223). The night before Giovanni is to be executed, David resolves his dilemma and finally commits himself to Giovanni. "He looks . . . redeemed" (p. 223). David’s commitment to Giovanni suggests his final recourse to homosexuality as a
way of life and a tribute to him: "I would labor with Giovanni all night long" (p. 151). The novel ends on a positive note because the torn pieces of the blue envelope are blown back to David by the wind.

David's dilemma is whether to commit or not to commit to a love relationship. It is reflected in his sexual relations and complexly related to the problem of his sexual identity. David's inability to go beyond the given identity of a virile and heterosexual male, belonging to the race of conquerors is the problem of David and the novel. It is not a problem of awareness but the problem of 'admission' of fact known to him. It is the inability to bear the pain of living differently, of being known as a different kind of person, of being different in homosexual terms, of being socially ostracised and despised. David's sense of survival is very strong. For a long time he remains dependent upon Giovanni's money but decides to use his own money to desert Giovanni at a time when Giovanni is out of job. It reflects the unscrupulousness of his nature. This is the reason that he suppresses his sense of pleasure and enjoyment he got in his sexual experience with Joey. He never shares the truths of his life. He does not tell Giovanni about this experience with Joey, doesn't tell about Giovanni completely to Hella and doesn't tell completely about Hella to Giovanni. The fact that he suppresses his sexuality is reflected in his sexual experiences. Except his experience
with Joey which was his first experience, all other experiences are either mechanical (with Sue) or complex of joy and shame and terror and guilt (with Giovanni) or they are simply "more pretentious masturbation" (p. 10) with Hella. David was never sure of his love for Hella even when he was pretending to be in love with her and so was Hella because they considered themselves to be the invented "mooring posts" (p. 10).

David runs from his own passion, from the meaning of his own needs. He is unable to put an element of affection or honesty which would enable him to share his life with others. Since there is no sharing beyond the level of body, there is no commitment. Without affection, sharing and commitment, sex becomes shameful and sterile particularly under the burden of religion based on cultural conventions of the society which does not tolerate deviance. Both Hella and David fail in their quest for love because they cannot find the moorings of involvement and commitment and also because they are the victims and slaves of their personal and social conventions, taboos and images.

The meaning and significance of love is brought out by the characters' preoccupation with sex -- both hetero and homo. The choices and preferences the characters make speaks of their search for love, not for sex. In loving David, Giovanni is not hankering after sex, because sex with Guillaume for
him is repulsive and he is apologetic for it. David, too, is searching for love. Had this not been the case, he would not have waited this long to be engaged in a sustained relationship with Giovanni. Had he wanted homosexuality, he would have got it from the army of homosexuals among whom he moved day and night. Hella too is not after sex because she has seen the futility and horror of sex in the old women. She is in search of safety of a middle class marital life. The perspectives through which each one of these characters tackles the issue of involvement and commitment limits or delimits the possibility of love. In *Giovanni's Room*, David and Hella both manifest the perspective that the received notions of morality and the inability to share the emotions and passion of love, limits the possibility of establishing a lasting and truthful love relation. The meaning of the novel becomes clear if we read it in the light of Baldwin's own words: "If you're this self-conscious, this guilty about youself, this is the inevitable result. That you have no relationship with anybody" (p. 37). The thrust of the narrative is to find a means of maintaining human connectedness. The forms of love -- hetro or homo -- are in themselves insignificant if they cannot be turned into a successful vehicle for achieving the identity endowing reciprocity or symbiosis. The symbiosis in the final analysis lies in the resolution of
Go Tell It on the Mountain brings into focus that the societal forces like religion, race, morality and motives of power and success seriously thwart the realization of a meaningful life. Inability to be ready to know one’s self, to be able to bear the pain it may bring, and his failure to forsake the safety of the existing norms of life qualify his ability to overcome the limitations thrown by societal forces. Gabriel, Florence and David are examples of this handicap. Elizabeth and Giovanni illustrate that love is the key to transcend these forces. Love being a two way traffic, they fail to achieve this goal in their life. They just remain mere potentialities. Elizabeth and Giovanni illustrate that love is the key to transcend these forces, but even in these characters it is merely a potentiality and not a reality. Elizabeth sacrificing her own individuality for the sake of her child and her hope for the realization of a meaningful life in John for whom she prays suggests this potentiality. Her deliberate stand, i.e., not to be apologetic for John’s birth is a symbolic gesture. It exemplifies an integerative move. John has yet to start a journey of his real encounters with the life and his fragile preparedness is suggested at the end of the novel. Giovanni’s death seems to bring David to a state of confession as to his love for Giovanni and his resolution to be truthful
in his life, though symbolic, remains fragile. Giovanni's death could have been redemptive and meaningful had David learnt the message of commitment in love. It would have given a ballast to his life and would have stopped his flights from reality.

The analysis of both these novels brings into focus that societal forces like religion, races, morality and notions of power and success seriously thwart the realization of a meaningful life. To know oneself is to entail the pains of self realization, and the failure to bear this pain and to forsake the safety of the existing norms of life, qualifies one's ability to overcome the limitations thrown by societal forces. Gabriel, Florence and David are the examples of this handicap. Both these novels, thus, problematize the possibilites and potentialities inherent in love, embedding this 'code' within the dual i.e., inner and outer human-space. Both of these novels embody and analyze psycho-emotional make-up of the protagonists vis-a-vis their restrictive environment. The author explores this situation in its heterogeneous and thus expansive backdrop in novels like Another Country and Tell Me How Long The Train's Been Gone, which are taken up in the next chapter.
NOTES


10 David Foster, "'Cause my house fell down': The Theme of the Fall in Baldwin's Novels," Critique, 13, No. 2 (1971), 50-62.


13 George E. Bell, "The Dilemma of Love in *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and *Giovanni's Room,*" *CLA Journal*, 17, No. 3 (1974), 397-406.

14 Dolan Hubbard, p. 96.

15 Shirly S. Allen, p. 167.


20 Dolan Hubbard, p. 103.


22 George E. Bell, p. 398.


25 Trudier Harris, p. 35.

26 Blacks' wish to be white in all respects -- physical, mental and social owing to their beliefs in whites' negative perceptions of blacks.


29 Louis H. Pratt, p. 51.

30 ibid., p. 52.

31 ibid., p. 53.

32 Trudier Harris, p. 40.
33 George E. Kent, p. 22.

34 Louis H. Pratt, p. 55.

35 Georges -- Michel Sarotte, *Like a Brother, Like a Lover*, p. 55.

36 George E. Kent, p. 23.

37 Robert A. Bone, p. 37.


Quoted on the cover of *Giovanni's Room* (1956; rpt. New York: Dell Publishing, 1988). Subsequent references are from the same edition and page numbers are given in parantheses immediately after the quotation.

Carolyn Wedin Sylvander, p. 48.


Fred L. Standley, "James Baldwin": The Crucial Situation," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 65, No. 3 (Summer 1966), 371-381.


Carolyn Wedin Sylvander, p. 38.


50 Georges -- Michel Sarotte, pp. 52-59.

51 Louis H. Pratt, p. 64.