

Feminist Isolation in Go Tell It on The Mountain And Another Country by James Baldwin

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Abstract

James Baldwin is an African American writer; he portrayed the life style and the situation of African American's in the society. He has written six novels which he dealt with racism, sexism, love, repression, sin, religion, identity, isolation etc., most of his novels focused on isolated characters and it was dominated by female characters. Isolation means loneliness, which portrays the character of person separated from society, family, friends and their relatives. Even James Baldwin had been isolated by the society due to his race and colour and he had been insulted by the American's in America. He didn't get proper recognition for his writings and at last he migrated to France to full fill his needs. Like how he was isolated from the society, the same he portrayed in his novels through the characters. Both the genders might have come across this stage comparatively, female are facing it often in their life. Moreover, James Baldwin depicted some female characters who had been isolated themselves from the society in the mid of their life and later due to some remedy some of the characters had overcome that and led their life happily by reuniting with the society.

Keywords: *loneliness, psychological problem, tangled, stress*

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James Baldwin, twentieth century writer of African American Literature. He came across many problems during his period such as racism, financial crises, alienation, family problems, Isolation etc., not only James Baldwin all the people in the world would have faced some problems, some might have been overcome those problems some might not due to their inability. Naturally those people will be affected by psychological problem and would have been affected due to emotional violence. It shouldn't be happened in the lives of human beings, even some failures or disappointment will make the people upset and they themselves will think that they have been isolated from the people or society. From the very moment onwards they may not mingle with the society they will lead their life without any enjoyment some may be tangled. This happened mostly in women's life. Similarly James Baldwin depicted isolation in his novels *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and *Another Country* through his female characters.

As Peter commented in his article, "throughout Baldwin's work, especially the tension between the social demand that desire be controlled and the individual's need to express desire that comes unbidden, and is uncontrollable." This is proved in the novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain* there were some female characters that they have been isolated by themselves or by society due to some complications in their life. The novel divided into three parts, Part One titled as The Seventh Day, Part Two-The Prayers of the Saints and Part Three-The Threshing –Floor. The novel starts with the character John on his fourteenth birthday who felt very bad that, none of his family members including his mother remembers of his birthday. Since, all were busy with their domestic works and he was also allotted by some works. This scene portrays the influence of Isolation in this novel. Female characters Florence and Elizabeth were also been isolated. Florence and Elizabeth are female characters who suffered a lot in their life but considerably both were in the same track. Florence, aunt of John Grimes the protagonist of this novel. It was clearly exposed at the beginning of the second part of the novel that she has been isolated by herself and she didn't share her problems even with God. It depicted very clearly by stating,

This woman now returned to her, more desolate; it was herself, not knowing where to put her foot.... Her mother had taught her that the way to pray was to forget everything and everyone but Jesus.(*Go tell It on the Mountain*74)

Surprisingly, she came to the church to kneel in front of Jesus to share her secrets and she thinks about her past how she had been isolated by her mother and

brother. She felt so bad due to that. As M.K.Subashini stated in her article,

“Married women are chained and shouldered by all heavy responsibilities throughout her life. Women and work for the welfare of the family without any relaxation and rest. Their unconditional love, uncompromised care, unpolluted affection makes them pull the family chariot without any turbulence.”

The above lines crystallize the women who always dedicated their lives to their family welfare; they will look after their children, husband and parents needs. But due to some reasons their own family members neglected them and at that time they will realize that they have been separated from their family. Then they will be afflicted with psychological problems. Eventually Florence's mother always gave privilege to her son inspite of all his misbehavior. “Gabriel spent all his time getting drunk and going to prostitutes. Despite his mother's best efforts, Gabriel is unable to stop this behavior.” Florence was an affectionate and obedient girl at the beginning but later she realised that she had been Isolated in her own house, she decided to move out from her home by neglecting all her duties. “And it was leave- taking that came to stand, in Florence's latter days, and with many another witness, at her side.(*Go Tell It on the Mountain* 85) ‘Ma,’ she said, ‘I’m going. I’m going in this morning’.”(*Go Tell It on the Mountain* 86) Herewith it is analysed that James Baldwin printed his foot step through this character in this novel. Like how he migrated from America to France, Florence also moved from her home. But Baldwin went to France to continue his writing but Florence had gone in search for her Identity to full fill her desire and to come out from her loneliness. To get rid of her loneliness and longing she decided to get marry Frank. She led her life very happily at the beginning. Later on she was separated from her husband because of their misunderstanding and lack of ambition in his life. It signifies that she came out with lots of desires and longings but it all got disaster because of her husband. So, she started to hate him and she stop talking with him by stating that, “And what you want me to do, Florence? You want me to turn white?” This question always filled her with an ecstasy of hatred. She turned and faced him, and, forgetting that there was someone sitting in the parlor, shouted.”(*Go Tell It on the Mountain* 95-96). It explores why she became isolated again like her earlier part of life. “When he had left her, more than twenty years before, and after more than ten years of marriage, she had felt for that moment only an exhausted exasperation and a vast relief. (*Go Tell It in on the Mountain* 93). It depicts the depression and inequality of this character,

which will portray feministic Isolation and she couldn't come out from that stage, even she hate God for their condition.

There is one more female character in the same novel, Elizabeth. She was a mother of protagonist who suffered a lot in her life. She lost her mother in her childhood days itself and later on she was under the control of her aunt. Her aunt put her in a secluded place there she experienced loneliness. She didn't find even a single person to share his views and thoughts, unknowingly she had been isolated but later on she found a man named Richard. She fell in love with him and enjoyed her life with him for a short duration but all of sudden he was falsely accused by police. Elizabeth got the news that he passed away. After that she realized that she had made a great mistake in not informing her pregnancy to Richard. Again she become alone and there were nobody to take care of her, she stood all alone. This depicted the isolation of the character portrayed by Baldwin. If the ladies do not have partner in her life it seems like nothing is there. As stated here,

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. And this was why God taken him from her (*Go Tell It on the Mountain* 183).

But in the second half of the life she got married with Gabriel and she was with her new family. Whatever problem rose in her life she tried to overcome those problem and she torn out the isolation by marrying Gabriel. Here author portrayed the boldness of the character as a lady she came out from isolation to lead her life.

In the next novel of James Baldwin *Another Country* there was a character Ida who was so innocent at the earlier part of the novel but after she lost her brother Rufus Scott she was been isolated. Unknowingly, her character changed gradually and at last she spoiled her name by having illicit relationship with others. The novel starts by showing Rufus Scott sitting alone in the theatre. Baldwin depicted him as been isolated person but later on, it comes to know that because of his harsh behavior, he admitted his wife to a mental hospital then he returns back in a deep depression and committed suicide by jumping off from the George Washington Bridge. Ida, sister of Rufus Scott didn't know the proper reason of her brother's death and she got vexed. It is one of the reasons she had been isolated and later on she got friendship with her brother's friend, Vivaldo. They indulged in sexual relationship but later her

mindset changed and she got an affair with Ellis. So, author exhibits from this character that the isolation will change the character of a person. Character Ida was been isolated for the short period of time after her brother passed away it made her mind set to choose a wrong way. If her brother was there she wouldn't have been in the wrong way of her life because definitely she would get guidance from her brother. It expresses that the ladies shouldn't be alone because it will spoil their life and their character.

One more character in the same novel is Cass. She was an affectionate mother for two children and good wife of her husband Richard. She was one who encourages her husband in his writing and he was very much busy in his work. So, he missed to take care of his wife and family. At that particular period Cass felt like she had been isolated and she need somebody to share his life. As M.K.Subashini analysed "the stories of the noble women in the cruel hands of mismatched husbands in a realistic way." It is explored in Cass's life though she was neglected by her husband she got an illicit relationship with her friend Eric. If her husband would have taken care of her well, she wouldn't choose that way. To solve out her isolation problem she got relationship with her friend. It will not happen if the people know how to balance their life with both their goals and family. They shouldn't give hundred percentage priorities to their career and leave out their family. First they should learn to balance both career and family. If it would have happened in Richard's life Cass wouldn't feel like been isolated and she would enjoyed her life with Richard. Baldwin exposes that; isolated people may be tangled in their life.

Conclusion:

The characters of Florence, Elizabeth in *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and Ida, Cass in *Another Country* exhibit what is isolation and the problem raised due to isolation. Earlier scene of both the novels portrays the dominance of Isolation and the protagonists been isolated. It also provoked the significance of feministic isolation and the psychological problems tormented by people. If somebody is not there to take care of us or if we have been isolated, ultimately the life will be projected with some problems. So, all should try to overcome all the problems and we should try to guard our life from four thundering storms such as disappointment, frustration, unfairness and Isolation so that we can enjoy our life with full spark. If isolation enters in our life the next minute our spark will fade. So avoid isolation and be happy.

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