

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

Adolescence, as it always be, is the most difficult time in our life. It's a confusing and stressing period when we have to begin to learn about who exactly we are and what our wishes in life. Our future depends much on whatever decisions we are going to make in this period. It is the time when we begin to think about career possibilities and further education, and develop powerful new ways of thinking. The social status that we hold - especially to minority youth - and environmental conditions where we live and take a part mostly may sometimes give a considerable amount of contributions in making decisions. While the influence of one's family is particular, minority youth of blacks face almost the same problem in conjunction with their status within the largely white society of U.S. in which racial discrimination still exist.

America inherently is a white country : in character, in structure, in culture. Therefore, Black America create lives of their own. As a result African-Americans culture has evolved a separate heritage within the dominant white culture. Some of them establish such a small group characterized by intimate face - to - face association and cooperation which could exerts pressure on African-American adolescents. They have to deal with the dual identity of being oneself in the larger culture and also being a member of one's ethnic, racial, or religious culture. Their people were originated in Africa. They are brought to America as

slaves. After many years of painful and exhausting struggles and prayers, by citizenship and birth, they may count as an American. However, at the same time, they also realize that it is a white country which expects its inhabitants to think and act in white ways. By this if they wish to mingle into white society, they have to adapt, adjust, assimilate to a civilisation so at variance with their people's past who commonly invests them with disreputable views of whites' world. Should they conform to those expectations even if it demands denying or concealing much of themselves ?

Markedly, more than white youth, non-white young people attach importance to money, education, work, living a clean-moral life, and to traditional male and female roles and qualities. Other things to which minority youth attach substantially greater importance than white include : religion, privacy, and duty before pleasure. (Yankelovich : 132)

Furthermore, to mingle into white society is not easy because of their particular characteristic. Unlike some immigrants, who may eventually assimilate into the dominant culture more or less, they are prevented from assimilation by discrimination. Eventhough their family may have lived in this country for generations but they are still seen as non-white, whereas a German family, for example, that immigrated two generations ago is fully accepted in the dominant white culture. As a people they face boundaries and constrictions set by the majority. For almost a century after the abolition of slavery, Black Americans' population subsisted under the system of control. In the South, physical force was blatant and unabashed whims of a sheriff, an employer, even the driver of a bus,

could hold Blacks live in thrall. In the North, intimidation and oppression were less explicit but none theless real. Fear of the police obviously help to maintain this submission, for in those days precinct houses were less attentive to legal process than they seem to be today. Little attention was paid to the condition under which Black Americans lived.

African-American adolescents, thus, have learnt that race is characteristic that affects many aspects of life in the U.S. They have described as an 'endangered species' in terms of education, unemployment, delinquency, violence, homicide and suicide. They exhibit a stark statistical profile of less schooling, more unemployment, and a bleaker financial situation than their white peers. Their social views and personal values reflect their economic and emotional differences. They are substantially more troubled by their current financial situation and less optimistic than white youth about their future prospect. Part of the pessimism of non-white youth stem from their feeling that sizable obstacles confront them because of not being white in largely white America.

Go Tell It On The Mountain by James Baldwin portrays the fact well enough. He tries to give a view of young Black Americans' problem, how they have to face a number of unique issues as they cope with the transition of adolescence, through the novel central character, John Grimes. He is a fourteen - year-old boy who longs almost equally for salvation and damnation. From the tales of slavery and emancipation told by the mother of Gabriel and Florence to the restoration of white supremacy to the great migration from the southern plantation to the northern slums, the common denominators of the Blacks' social experience are

revealed to be sex, race, and religion, precisely those elements which John Grimes must come to terms if he is to achieve putative mature and self-definition. And as a minority youth he has to confront with a great dilemma in deciding which is the best for his future life in conjunction with his status and social background. In the final and climaxing scene he descends into the pit to raise again.

James Baldwin (1924 - ...) is an Afro- American writer who won critical acclaim as a leading Black novelist and essayist in the 1950s before becoming a major spokesman for his race in the civil right movement in the 1960s. He was born in New York city on Aug. 2, 1924 up in the Harlem slums. A sensitive child, he acutely felt what he called "the stigma of being Negro" . In his writings and numerous public appearances, Baldwin portrayed the Blacks as victimized by 'the guilty imagination of the white people who invest him with their hates and longings' . Go Tell It On The Mountain was Baldwin first, and is still his 'best' novel, his most perfectly achieved, most carefully structured, most tightly controlled.

B. Statement of The Problem

As a minority youth, John suffers a great dilemma in making the most important decision toward his future. The description stated previously in 1.1 leads to the following problems :

1' What dilemma that John suffers, and how does it happen ?

2. How does his social status and environmental condition support his dilemma to happen ?
3. How is John able to get rid of his dilemma ?

C. Objective of The Study

According to the Statement of The Problem, the objective of the study, thereby, can be stated as follows :

1. To learn what dilemma that John suffers and the cause of it.
2. To know how his social status and environmental condition support his dilemma to happen.
3. To know how John is able to get rid of his dilemma.

D. Significance of The Study

By studying John's dilemma, hopefully the readers will get a better insight to the condition of young black Americans as stated in the novel, especially in the 1930s when there is still a great lack of progress and opportunity to bring them closer to parity ; How they have to face and live with the fact that they might have to put off their dreams for being a black man. Thereby, we will learn a fact of life in a multiracial country such as America that a duty to make a choices in life for minorities could be harder and give a valuable knowledge about human experience and social phenomena.

Furthermore, the study may increase the readers' interest to know more about Black Americans' literature. And for the English Department readers this study may give contributions to those who want to learn about the novel further.

E. Scope and Limitation

Go Tell it on The Mountain tells us of a day in the life of several members of Harlem Fundamentalist Church. Through flashbacks we witness a saga of three generations of people. The topic, however, limit the analysis on John as the central character who has to face a great dilemma in deciding what he is going to do with his future. There will also adequate explanation of characters to whom John is closely related and therefore is a great influence to him. An illustration of his environmental condition is given to clarify the matter since the dilemma of John can not be separated from the environment around him.

F. Theoretical background

The intrinsic approach is used in analyzing John's dilemma. It will use the internal aspects of the novel that support the analysis such as character, plot, and setting that will answer the statement of the problem. And to make the analysis be more adequate and objective, both psychological and sociological approaches are necessary.

The psychological approach is used to support the analysis of John's dilemma, while the sociological approach is used to support the analysis of social influences toward John's dilemma.

G. Method of the study

The descriptive-analysis method is used in analyzing the topic. It will describe the analysis by the facts supporting. The sources are accumulated by library research which is done by collecting, reading, and selecting the information concerns to the novel and its author, topic, and theory.

H. Definition of the key terms

Dilemma :

1. An argument that offers an opponent a choice between two or more alternatives but that is conclusive against him no matter which alternative he chooses.
2. a choice or situation involving choice between equally unsatisfactory alternatives.
3. A difficult problem : a problem seemingly incapable of a satisfactory solution.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK