Yarmouk University

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The African American's Sexual Identity: A Study of Two Novels by James Baldwin

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The African American's Sexual Identity:
A Study of Two Novels by James Baldwin

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Dedication

To my loving parents

To my husband

To my daughter Ayah

To my son Waleed

To all people who love me
Acknowledgment

I would like to express my special gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Nasser Athamneh. I extend my thanks to my parents and sister Saedah for taking care of my little daughter and son. I am also grateful to my husband Khalid. I also extend my thanks to my friend, Rahma, and my brothers, Mohammed and Hassan.
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Abstract

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This thesis studies two novels by the African American writer James Baldwin (1924 – 1987): Another Country (1962) and Tell Me How Long the Train's been Gone (1968). Based on textual analyses of the two novels, this thesis discusses the African American's sexual identity as it is presented in these two novels. It highlights the racism that African Americans suffer in their society. It explains how African Americans are conscious of the way they are viewed by the White and of the sexual potency they have. This thesis reveals many kinds of sexual relationships established between African Americans and the White Americans for different reasons. On the one hand, African Americans try to gain a better identity through establishing sexual relationships with the Whites. In addition, these sexual relationships function as a catharsis and a way of status elevation for African Americans. On the other hand, the Whites' target from these sexual relationships is a kind of releasing their sexual desires inasmuch as they believe in the sexual power that African
Americans have. This thesis also reveals that these sexual relationships are void of true love.

This thesis deals with racial suffering as a way of achieving an identity. It also shows that African Americans establish homosexual relationships among themselves as a way of releasing pressure that the Whites impose upon them. Moreover, this thesis reveals that African Americans consider the Whites as a second sexual best.

Key Words:
African Americans, sexual identity, James Baldwin, Another Country, Tell Me How Long the Train's been Gone.