

ĐỀ BÀI

Phần I. Đọc hiểu (4,0 điểm)

Đọc văn bản sau:

TRUNG THU

Phiên âm

*Trung thu thu nguyệt viên như kính,
Chiếu diệu nhân gian bạch tự ngân.
Gia lý đoàn viên ngật thu tiết,
Bất vong ngục lý ngật sầu nhân.
Ngục trung nhân đã thương trung thu,
Thu nguyệt thu phong đới điểm sầu.
Bất đắc tự do thương thu nguyệt,
Tâm tùy thu nguyệt cộng du du!*

Dịch nghĩa

*Trăng trung thu tròn như gương,
Chiếu rọi cõi đời, ánh trắng trắng như bạc;
Nhà ai sum họp ăn tết trung thu,
Chẳng quên người trong ngục nuốt sầu.
Người trong ngục cũng thương thức trung thu,
Trăng thu, gió thu đều vương sầu;
Không được tự do ngắm trăng thu,
Lòng theo cùng trăng thu vơi vơi.*

Dịch thơ

*Trung thu vành vạnh mảnh gương thu,
Sáng khắp nhân gian bạc một màu;
Sum họp nhà ai ăn tết đó,
Chẳng quên trong ngục kẻ ăn sầu.
Trung thu ta cũng tết trong tù,
Trăng gió đêm thu gọn vẻ sầu;
Chẳng được tự do mà thương nguyệt,
Lòng theo vơi vơi mảnh trăng thu.*

(Trích *Nhật ký trong tù*, Hồ Chí Minh, NXB Văn học, 2021, tr.31)

- Nhật ký trong tù - *Ngục trung nhật ký* - là tập thơ chữ Hán gồm 134 bài theo thể Đường luật do Hồ Chí Minh sáng tác trong thời gian bị chính quyền Tưởng Giới Thạch bắt giam ở Quảng Tây, Trung Quốc, từ ngày 29 tháng 8 năm 1942 đến ngày 10 tháng 9 năm 1943. Ngoài ra, phần cuối văn bản là bút ký đọc sách và bút ký đọc báo ghi chép tóm tắt những thông tin quan trọng về chính trị, quân sự, văn hóa quốc tế và Việt Nam đương thời.

- “*Trung thu*” được xem là hai bài thơ, đánh số thứ tự 22,23 trên tổng số 134 bài

Thực hiện các yêu cầu từ 1 đến 5:

Câu 1. Xác định nhân vật trữ tình trong bài thơ.

Câu 2. Chỉ ra cách gieo vần trong bài thơ.

Câu 3. Nêu tác dụng của nghệ thuật đối trong hai câu sau:

*Sum họp nhà ai ăn tết đó,
Chẳng quên trong ngục kẻ ăn sầu.*

Câu 4. Khái quát tâm trạng của nhân vật trữ tình trong bài thơ trên.

Câu 5. Chỉ ra điểm tương đồng và khác biệt của bài thơ trên với bài thơ *Ngắm trăng* của Hồ Chí Minh trong *Nhật kí trong tù*:

*Trong tù không rượu cũng không hoa
Cảnh đẹp đêm nay, khó hững hờ
Người ngắm trăng soi ngoài cửa sổ
Trăng nhòm khe cửa ngắm nhà thơ.*

Phần II. LÀM VĂN (6,0 điểm)

Câu 1 (2 điểm)

Viết đoạn văn (khoảng 200 chữ) làm rõ vẻ đẹp tâm hồn của Bác được thể hiện trong bài thơ

Hoặc: làm rõ vẻ đẹp cổ điển và hiện đại của bài thơ

Câu 2 (4 điểm)

Trước những áp lực của cuộc sống hiện đại, nhiều bạn trẻ lựa chọn sống trong vùng an toàn nhưng cũng có nhiều bạn bước ra khỏi vùng an toàn để khám phá thế giới rộng lớn ngoài kia.

Là một người trẻ, anh/chị lựa chọn cách sống nào? Hãy viết một bài văn nghị luận (khoảng 600 chữ) lí giải cho sự lựa chọn đó.

PREFACE

I. Course Hero:

A. Summary

- In the preface to the 1984 edition of *Notes of a Native Son*, Baldwin recalls how it was a friend who first suggested he write the book. Baldwin's reaction was that he was too young to write something akin to a memoir, even though he had already written many of the essays it contains. His friend's suggestion made him realize that time had passed. Baldwin returned to America from Paris in 1954, "out of motives not at all clear to me." He recalls that 1954 to 1955 was a great year for him, despite being incredibly broke. Because of this, he acquiesces to his friend's request, writing one more essay to complete the collection that would become *Notes of a Native Son*.
- Meanwhile, Baldwin finished another book, *Giovanni's Room* (1956), which was rejected by publishers. Baldwin borrowed money from a friend and left for France again. He recalls that he had never thought of himself as an essayist, and reflects that the self-discovery it requires may have been something he was trying to avoid. He also recognizes that perhaps his salvation lies in trying to decipher "the rock" of himself, and claim this part of him in order to understand it better. Baldwin believes that by writing, he can claim both his inheritance and his birthright as an African American—what "time, circumstance, [and] history" have made of him. Writing the preface nearly 30 years after the publication of *Notes of a Native Son*, Baldwin dubs it "not pleasant" to realize that the dynamic of being excluded from American inheritance as an African American has not changed. What's more, "morally there has been no change at all and a moral change is the only real one." Economic opportunities for African Americans, to him, remain severely limited.
- Baldwin notes that he was 31 when the book was published, and that he is now 60. He reflects that he is, in many ways, a survivor, though he is not sure of what. He recalls being told when he was younger that it would "take time before a Black person can be treated as a human being here." He ends his preface by quoting British novelist Doris Lessing (1919–2013) on the importance of "seeing ourselves in every creature that breathes under the sun."

B. Analysis:

- Baldwin's preface to his collection of essays comes nearly 30 years after he wrote them. This afforded him the opportunity to reflect on the reasons why he wrote the essays, what he learned, and how society has and hasn't changed since. He reveals that even with the passage of time, facts and memories can seem malleable and unreliable, since one has grown so much so as to not recall the precise person they were when they made the decision. Another reflection Baldwin contends with is that he had never before thought of himself as an essayist, which is why he was reluctant to turn his essays into a book. Digging deeper, he notes, "It has something to do ... with what I was trying to discover and ... trying to avoid." This conflict of self is at the heart of the essays in *Notes of a Native Son*, as Baldwin wrestles with the conflicts he finds in his own identity and the way white Americans treat African Americans. The best way Baldwin can describe it, looking back, is that somewhere between the self he wanted to discover and the self he was avoiding was "the accumulated rock of ages." What he aims to find out is who he is: "I could feel it, stirring within and against captivity." Baldwin's ability to understand his identity "depended on whether or not [he] would be able to decipher and describe the rock." If the rock is the part of himself he finds inscrutable and avoids, understanding it is what he sets out to do in his book.

- A similar tangle of identity and contradiction that Baldwin describes is the difference between inheritance and birthright. They can seem at odds with one another as an African American but "one cannot claim the birthright without accepting the inheritance." Again, Baldwin hints at the notion of acceptance, even if it is unpleasant or easier to avoid. He addresses what has and hasn't changed since he wrote the essays in the book. He concludes that moral change is the only real change that counts and that morally there has been no growth at all. Yet true to Edward P. Jones's claim in the introduction, Baldwin leaves his preface with a note of hope in the words of Doris Lessing—if people are able to see themselves in each other, things may change.

II. Litchart:

Summary

When Baldwin's friend told him to write *Notes of a Native Son*, he objected that he was "too young to publish my memoirs." Baldwin had returned to the United States from Paris in 1954, for reasons that remain unclear to him. He recalls that 1954-55 was overall a great year; he lived at a writers' colony, watched his friend Marlon Brando win an Oscar, and had his play put on at Howard University, where it was popular despite objections from the faculty and negative reviews in the press. Baldwin also fell in love, although he adds that he didn't have any money. He finished the short novel *Giovanni's Room*, and agreed to publish *Notes of a Native Son* even though he did not consider himself an essayist. At the same time Baldwin felt that he wanted to discover himself through the project and to access his "inheritance" and his "birthright."

Baldwin reflects on the nature of inheritance and the way in which people are and are not the product of their circumstances. He describes his wish to reclaim the inheritance that he has been denied. Unfortunately, not much has changed since Baldwin wrote the book. White people live in fear of black people and treat them as superfluous and unwanted members of society. Baldwin thinks back to the African chiefs who sold people to slave traders, noting that there is no way they could have known that slavery would last forever, or "at least a thousand years." Meanwhile, in the United States, movies like *Gone With the Wind* create a false image "of the happy ducky," which many Americans believe is accurate. Baldwin notes that, for the most part, the only evidence of white supremacy has come through the testimony of black people, and that in the contemporary world white people "have the choice of becoming human or irrelevant."

Analysis

In the opening to the preface, Baldwin addresses different ideas about time, age, and maturity. He initially rejects the idea of publishing "*Notes of a Native Son*" because he thinks he is too young to publish his memoirs, yet he doesn't elaborate on what he means by this. Is the problem that he hasn't had sufficient life experience to write about, or that not enough time has passed to achieve a retrospective outlook on his existing experiences? At the same time, Baldwin also suggests that writing memoir is a way of accessing his "birthright," which by its definition is something he should not have to wait until old age to receive.

One of the characteristics of Baldwin's writing style is the way in which he moves quickly between different thoughts and references. For example, in this passage he jumps from discussions of inheritance and social determinism to the stagnation of racial justice to African slave traders to "*Gone with the Wind*." While these examples may seem distinct from one another, they all support Baldwin's point that the past—a person's "inheritance"—is something inescapable. The weight of inheriting centuries of racist violence and oppression can be difficult to comprehend, but that does not mean anyone should turn to comforting and sentimental myths for relief, such as those portrayed in "*Gone with the Wind*."

Baldwin was 31 when *Notes of a Native Son* was published and is now 60. He considers himself a “survivor” of prejudice and oppression. He recalls being told that “it takes time” for the world to change, but he objects to the logic that black people must patiently wait to be treated as human. Baldwin laments the fact that black Americans cannot trust the words of their “morally bankrupt and desperately dishonest countrymen.” He concludes with a quote from Doris Lessing, who argues that the white oppression of black people is one of the worst crimes of all of humanity, yet it is just one component of the overall block that prevents people from identifying with all living creatures.

The end of the preface is simultaneously optimistic and pessimistic. It is clear that, at the age of 31, Baldwin hoped and expected there would be a larger degree of progress by the time he reached 60 than has actually been the case. At the same time, Baldwin remains steadfast in his determination that the world will change and he characterizes this change as inevitable. His impatience in refusing to concede that “it takes time” is itself a kind of optimism pushing against widespread cynical “realism.”

III. GradeSaver

A. Summary:

- James Baldwin wrote this preface three decades after *Notes of a Native Son* was published. It describes how he came to the decision to publish this book of essays and also describes major themes of the work.
- Here, Baldwin introduces the theme of the “rock.” He begins with an allusion to the seventeenth-century Christian hymn “Rock of Ages” to describe an inaccessible part of himself that only the strongest tools can penetrate. With this book, he set out to “decipher and describe the rock” inside him. Baldwin then references other rocks described in folk songs before revealing that for him the “rock of ages” is a metaphor for what he calls his “inheritance.” This inheritance is connected to the conditions and history that made him who he is, specifically the experiences of being a black man in America. Baldwin contrasts this inheritance, which is “specifically limited and limiting” with something he calls his “birthright.” This is something universal: “vast, connecting me to all that lives, and to everyone, forever.”
- For Baldwin, the separation between his specific inheritance and universal birthright is connected to the specific history of racism in America, or the “conundrum of color.” While this conundrum (a difficult problem or question) has the strongest effect on black people, in fact, it shapes the lives of every American. Baldwin refers to the situation in South Africa, the country where Nelson Mandela and other activists were fighting against the racist apartheid system. Baldwin argues that the European colonizers of Africa have long called Africans “savages,” but their fortunes were based on stealing from these people. Now that the formerly colonized or enslaved have risen up in the twentieth century, Baldwin remarks, some still see it as an “error that the Savage can, now, describe the Civilized,” meaning they can talk back to former masters and use language to challenge the system. In the United States, Baldwin describes the pain of the “Black face and voice” of people that are not seen or listened to. This pain stems from “the unforgivable and unimaginable horror of being a captive in the promised land.” Yet Baldwin ends the preface on a more uplifting note, quoting the expression “the trouble don’t last always.” Eventually, the balance of power will shift. He concludes with the French phrase “En avant,” meaning “Forward!”

B. Analysis:

- In this book, Baldwin seeks to heal the split between his “inheritance” as a black person in America and his universal “birthright” as a human being. One insight writing this book gave

Baldwin was that he “need[ed] to accept the inheritance to claim the birthright.” In other words, it is only by exploring and owning his specific experiences as James Baldwin the person that James Baldwin the writer can speak to more universal questions. He argues that racism has excluded African Americans like him from their birthright, but that he eventually realized he could claim his specific inheritance in order to take back that birthright.

- Though he wrote this book in the 1950s, in this preface from the 1980s he argues that racism, or the “conundrum of color,” still shapes the United States: “The more it changes, the more it remains the same.” For Baldwin, race remains the key factor in understanding American life. While he approaches universal questions from a black perspective, he argues that race affects everyone. He writes, “the people who think of themselves as White have the choice of becoming human or irrelevant.” In this sense, he suggests that grappling with race is not only something African Americans must do in order to understand and their place in the world: white people need to also understand that their experiences are not universal but also influenced by a specific position in America’s racial hierarchy.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

I. Course Hero:

A. Summary

- Baldwin notes that he was born in Harlem 31 years ago and began thinking of novels he wanted to write around the time he learned to read. However, his childhood was a “bleak fantasy,” and not one he would want to relive. He helped to raise his siblings and read everything he could get his hands on. When he was 12 he wrote a short story about the Spanish revolution that won a prize and publication in a church newspaper, but the story was censored by the editor. Baldwin also wrote plays, songs, and poetry, which delighted his mother but concerned his father, who wanted him to become a preacher. Baldwin became a preacher at age 14, but quit three years later. By the time he was 21, he had written enough of a novel to get a fellowship, but the novel was unsellable.
- Next, Baldwin began waiting tables and writing book reviews about “the Negro problem.” At 24, he decided to leave his unhappiness in the United States and move to France, where he finished writing his book *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953). Baldwin realizes that the things that hurt a writer and the things that help him are linked. When he tries to conjure up his influences he guesses that they are the King James Bible and “the rhetoric of the store-front church.” Yet he supposes that “the most difficult (and most rewarding)” thing in life is having been born African American and being forced to make a truce with this reality. Baldwin claims that one of the many challenges about being an African American writer “is that the Negro problem is written about so widely.” The information that is dispensed only operates to “reinforce traditional attitudes ... For or Against.” Both attitudes cause Baldwin pain, but he acknowledges that any change is better than none at all. He believes that the business of the writer is to “examine attitudes, to go beneath the surface, to tap the source,” but laments that from this perspective, “the Negro problem is nearly inaccessible,” because it is written about both widely and poorly. In order for a writer to have clarity, he must be allowed to look back before he can look forward. It is only when the past can be assessed honestly that the present will seem coherent.
- Baldwin's own reckoning with his past forces him to confront the notion that he was “a kind of bastard of the West,” given that his ancestors were not from Europe, but from Africa. This distances him from many of the Western influences he admired as he cannot see his reflection in them. He realizes, however, that he has no other point of reference for understanding himself. In the process of confronting this, he is forced to admit something he

(and many African Americans) have had to hide for many reasons: a hatred and fear of white people. But Baldwin also despises African Americans, and so "in effect, [he] hated and feared the world." Baldwin believes that writers can only write from experience, and he knows he needed to write about being African American before he could tackle other subjects. He also claims that "everyone in America bears some responsibility for [the Negro problem]." Despite all of this, Baldwin wishes to be "an honest man and a good writer."

B. Analysis:

- Baldwin begins his collection of essays with his "autobiographical notes" in order to tell the reader that his personal experience is inextricable from the culture, history, and criticism he plans to address. He orients the reader to his life: where he grew up, how old he is, and how his childhood was "the usual bleak fantasy." Woven throughout his description are the aims he sets for himself as a writer, both within these essays and in the larger scope of his work. One of the beliefs underlying the job of a writer is that "the things which hurt him and the things which helped him cannot be divorced from each another," which is a theory Baldwin will attempt to tease apart within the scope of the African American identity. To this end, he claims, "The most difficult (and most rewarding) thing in my life has been the fact that I was born a Negro." This ability to hold two contradictory feelings and ideas as complementary is one Baldwin will revisit throughout his essays. To reconcile both these feelings, he seems to say, is the only way to survive as an African American.
- Baldwin aims to be one of many African American writers who address "The Negro problem," what it means to be African American. He worries, though, that he has blind spots he cannot see, and thus sets out to discuss them point blank. To this end, he claims it is the writer's duty "to examine attitudes, to go beneath the surface, to tap the source." By this he means it is not nearly enough to consider oneself informed, but rather to investigate what lies beneath the surface of information. The only way to do this is to investigate the past with as much scrutiny as possible, despite any discomfort it may cause those who would rather forget it in order to move forward. Baldwin says, "I think that the past is all that makes the present coherent." It is this honesty that Baldwin is after, as he believes the past is often obfuscated and disregarded as too horrible to contend with or reconsider.
- Another great reckoning of Baldwin's is his admission that he "was forced to recognize ... [he] was a kind of bastard of the West." Although he studied Western art, literature, music, and plays, he is forced to admit that they don't contain his history: "I might search in them in vain forever for any reflection of myself." By this, Baldwin means that there is an inherent contradiction in how he sees himself—these influences helped shape him, but they are not a part of his heritage: "I had no other heritage which I could possibly hope to use." This contradiction emphasizes the ongoing and persistent tension he and other African Americans feel about themselves. In the process, he must admit something he's never wanted to admit to himself—he fears and hates both whites and blacks, and therefore, his very world.
- Baldwin's final aim through his autobiographical notes is to make some kind of order and art out of his own experience: "To recreate out of the disorder of life that order which is art." He knows he cannot write about anything else until he writes about his own experience as an African American, and in the process, to write about his experience as critically as he can. He states, "I love America more than any other country in the world" and "I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually." With this disclaimer, Baldwin shows that he plans to spare nothing in his examination in peering under the surface and into the past in order to find a way to reconcile the contradictions both within him and within society.

II. Litchart:

Summary

Baldwin was born in Harlem and spent much of his youth looking after his many younger siblings. He was a keen reader and read every book he could find except the Bible, because that was the one he was told to read. At 12, he wrote a story that was accepted for publication in a church newspaper, but was then censored. He also wrote songs, plays, and poetry. His father disapproved of his writing and wanted him to become a preacher, which he did between the ages of 14 and 17, before leaving home. Baldwin wrote two books in his early 20s for which he received fellowships, but which were deemed "unsalable." At 24, he moved to France and finished the novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain*.

Baldwin reflects on the aspects of his upbringing that helped and hindered his development as a writer. He suggests that the King James Bible, the "store-front church," black American speech, and Dickens all influenced his current writing style. However, the single biggest influence on him was the fact that he was born black. He points out that much has been written about "the Negro problem," but that almost none of this writing is very good, in part because both black and white Americans are reluctant to examine the past. Baldwin himself reached a turning point when he acknowledged the fact that he was a "bastard of the West," and that European history and culture were not really his inheritance. At the same time, he also realized that he would have to "appropriate" white heritage in order to form a sense of heritage of his own, because he also had no personal connection to Africa. He felt a crushing sense of self-destructiveness and a hatred and fear of the world.

People inevitably write from their own experiences, and Baldwin feels that writing about blackness was "the gate I had to unlock" before approaching other subjects. He argues that everyone in America is affected by "the Negro problem," regardless of their race. He praises Ralph Ellison for being the first writer he has encountered that represented the black experience in all its "ambiguity and irony." Baldwin says he enjoys making experimental films with his 16mm camera, eating and drinking, discussion, and laughing. He is not a

Analysis

Baldwin was born into difficult circumstances, yet was sustained during these years by his love of literature and single-minded determination to become a writer. Despite his precocious early success, it seems that the world was not ready to accept his work, as evidenced by the censorship of his story in the church newspaper and his first two books being called "unsalable." This can be blamed on the climate of delusion and dishonesty that Baldwin denounces throughout the book.

This is one of the most important passages in the book. It explains Baldwin's sense of his own identity and heritage and it establishes the foundation of his exploration of African American life. Baldwin's realization that white European culture and history do not "belong" to him highlights the particular alienation that black Americans experience, being surrounded by culture that do not pertain to them. At the same time, this observation also calls into question the way we think about heritage and identity. Is it really the case that white Americans have a connection to Bach or Rembrandt just because of their ancestry and the color of their skin?

At the time Baldwin is writing, many people assume that "the Negro problem" is something that affects black Americans alone and, therefore, that only black people should have to address it. In this passage, Baldwin corrects this delusion by pointing out that, as much as being black is a definitive part of his identity, it is also an accidental attribute that does not determine who he is as a person or disconnect him from people of other races. Black people must be treated as equal human beings before any real understanding or progress on racial injustice can

fan of the bohemian lifestyle, which he finds too hedonistic, and he resents people who either like or dislike him on account of his race. Baldwin loves America and thus he is highly critical of it. He strives for skepticism, nuance, and honesty, and places the greatest value on getting his work done.

III. GradeSaver:

A. Summary:

- At the time when he wrote these “Autobiographical Notes,” James Baldwin was 31 years old. He begins by describing his childhood reading, which included Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*. Because people around him insisted he read the Bible, he resisted reading it. Baldwin’s first publication came out when he was around 12 years old. It was a piece about the left-wing Spanish Revolution in 1936, but it was censored in the church newspaper. Baldwin also received encouragement for his writing, as when New York City mayor Fiorello La Guardia sent him a letter of congratulations and when he was awarded a Eugene F. Saxton Fellowship at 21.
- In his twenties, Baldwin began living in the Village (i.e., the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Manhattan). He began writing book reviews, which he remarks were “mostly as it turned out, about the Negro problem, concerning which the color of my skin made me automatically an expert.” Tired of this situation, Baldwin went to France. This is where he finished his semi-autobiographical novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953).
- Baldwin describes how difficult it is to be a writer, saying that it sometimes feels like the whole world conspires against him. Because the world does not care about the writer’s talent, one has to find other ways to feel valuable. Baldwin writes that, for him, race represented both the challenge to and the reward for being a writer: “[F]inally, I suppose, the most difficult (and most rewarding) thing in my life has been the fact that I was born a Negro and was forced, therefore, to effect some kind of truce with this reality.” He had to grapple with race before he could move onto other topics. Race affects everyone in the United States, he argues. One can only understand it by digging into the “[t]he history, traditions, customs, the moral assumptions and preoccupations of the country.” He argues that race is central to the works of William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren, Ralph Ellison, and many others. Making reference to Ernest Hemingway, Baldwin writes that his primary responsibility as a writer is to “get [his] work done.” He ends by stating: “I want to be an honest man and a good writer.”

B. Analysis:

- Baldwin introduces his life to the reader by discussing his literary influences, what it means to be a black writer in America, and his principles for creating good and honest writing. Baldwin’s influences are wide-ranging. In trying to describe his style, he writes: “I hazard that the King James Bible, the rhetoric of the storefront churches, something ironic and violent and perpetually understated in Negro speech—and something of Dickens’s love for bravura—have something to do with me today, but I wouldn’t stake my life on it.” Though Baldwin earlier states that he avoided reading the Bible, here he admits that its language influenced his writing (after all, as a teenager he worked briefly as a preacher) along with everyday black speech and nineteenth-century novelists like Dickens.
- Baldwin also argues that being a black writer in America means that one approaches the cultural heritage of Europe and North America differently. He describes himself as a “bastard

of the West.” Having his family roots not in Europe but in Africa means that he approaches everything from Shakespeare to Bach, the Chartres Cathedral to the Empire State Building differently. “These were not really my creations, they did not contain my history.” While the black writer is fully knowledgeable about these traditions, he is separated from them. “This was not my heritage,” Baldwin writes. To live within a tradition while also being distant from it is a situation particular to the black writer. Many of the themes in this book center on this question of the black writer’s position in the world, which Baldwin describes here as a lack of place.

- Another challenge of being a black writer, according to Baldwin, is that there is so much written about the “Negro problem.” In terms of racism in America, merely compiling information is not enough to transform things. In fact, the assumption that one has solved something simply through reading can also be dangerous. However, the writer’s job, according to Baldwin, is to dig deep into the roots of problems and social issues: “It is part of the business of the writer—as I see it—to examine attitudes, to go beneath the surface, to tap the source.” Even so, Baldwin argues that the issue of race creates a particularly difficult challenge for the black writer. To be a good writer one must build on one’s personal experiences. However, being black in America means being prevented from looking too closely at one’s own experiences because the hate and fear one experiences can be so overwhelming. In this way, Baldwin states here, the task of the black writer is doubly difficult.