

**Abstract: Africana Womanism--James Baldwin & Toni Morrison:
Literary Crusaders for Social Justice**



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This paper will discuss James Baldwin, like Toni Morrison, as a Literary Crusader for Social Justice. He goes back to the 1960s, with a focus on “the history of identity as . . . “inaccessible” and “systematically and deliberately, denied and destroyed” (Baldwin, “On Racism,” *The Dick Cavett Show*, 5/16/1969). Later in the 1980s, he highlights the history of racism in particular and its tremendous impact on the African American family and American Democracy:

“I think we are going to have to re-think everything we think is true now. To accommodate ourselves is to re-think & re-create our **vocabulary**” (*CSPAN*, 12/10/86)

His kindred spirit, Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison, assesses that in re-thinking, and re-creating the **language**, we should make a distinction between Race & Racism:

“There is no such thing as Race. It’s just a Human Race—scientifically, anthropologically. Racism is a Social Construct, and it has benefits. Money can be made off it. People who don’t like themselves feel better because of it. And when you take it away, then there you are, all strung out and all you got is your little self.” (Charlie Ross—*Guardian*)

Like Ida B. Wells-Barnett, the Anti-lynching Crusader for Social Justice, Baldwin & Morrison are Crusaders for Social Justice--Literary Crusaders. But the heated debates with Baldwin really began in 1965, with the signing of the Voting Rights Act (which followed the 1964 Civil Rights Act) & the Legendary Baldwin vs Buckley Debate--“Has the American Dream Been Achieved at the Expense of the American Negro?” at Cambridge U. Baldwin won: **544** votes; Buckley—**164** votes.