James Baldwin’s God: Sex, Hope, And Crisis In Black Holiness Culture

James Baldwin’s God—Clarence E. Hardy 2013 “James Baldwin’s relationship with black Christianity, and especially his rejection of it, exposes the anatomy of a religious heritage that has not been wrestled with sufficiently in black theological and religious studies. In James Baldwin’s God: Sex, Hope, and Crisis in Black Holiness Culture, Clarence Hardy demonstrates that Baldwin is important not only for the ways he is connected to black religious culture, but also for the ways he chooses to disconnect himself from it. Despite Baldwin’s view that black religious expression harbors a sensibility that is often vengeful and that its actual content is composed of illusory promises and empty theocracies, he remains captive to its energies, rhythms, languages, and themes. Baldwin is forced, on occasion, to acknowledge that the religious fervor he saw as an adolescent was not simply an expression of repressed sexual tension but also a sign of the irrepressible vigor and dignified humanity of black life.” In one of his later extended essays, James Baldwin remembered how his stepfather, David Baldwin, a one-time Baptist minister, died because of his “unreciprocated love for the Great God Almighty.” James Baldwin’s God engages most directly those aspects of Baldwin’s work that address the substance and character of this unrequited love for a Christian God that is depicted as both silent before black suffering and as white—i.e., actively opposed to the florishing of black life. Despite his consistent portrayal of a black holiness culture full of energy and passion, Baldwin implicitly condemns the fact that the principal backdrop to black people’s conversion to Christianity in the United States is shame and not hope. Hardy’s reading of Baldwin’s texts, with its goal of understanding Baldwin’s attitude toward a religion that revolves around an uncertain God in the face of black suffering, provides provocative reading for scholars of religion, literature, and history.

Understanding James Baldwin

Understanding James Baldwin—Marc Dudley 2019-04-17 The Harlem-born son of a storefront preacher, James Baldwin died almost thirty years ago, but his spirit lives on in the eloquent and still-relevant musings of his novels, short stories, essays, and poems. What concerned him most—as a black man, as a gay man, as an American—were notions of isolation and disconnection at both the individual and communal level and a conviction that only in the transformative power of love could humanity find any hope of healing its spiritual and social wounds. In Understanding James Baldwin, Marc K. Dudley shows that a proper grasp of Baldwin’s work begins with a grasp of the times in which he wrote. During a career spanning the civil rights movement and beyond, Baldwin stood at the heart of intellectual and political debate, writing about race, sexual identity, and gendered politics, while traveling the world to promote dialogue on those issues. In surveying the writer’s life, Dudley traces the shift in Baldwin’s aspirations from occupying the pulpit like his stepfather to becoming a writer amid the turmoil of sexual self-discovery and the harsh realities of American racism and homophobia. The book’s analyses of key works in the Baldwin canon—among them, Go Tell It on the Mountain, Giovanni’s Room, “Sonny’s Blues,” Another Country, The Fire Next Time, and The Devil Finds Work—examine the complex, sometimes contradictory, and ever-racing energies of Baldwin’s vision and dynamic concerns. As police violence against people of color, a resurgence in white supremacist rhetoric, and pushback against LGBTQ rights fill today’s headlines, James Baldwin’s powerful and often-angry words find a new resonance. From early on, Baldwin deplored the damming potential of alienation and the persistent bigotry that feeds it. Yet, even as it sometimes wavered, his hope for both the individual and the nation remained intact. In the present historical moment, James Baldwin matters more than ever.

If Beale Street Could Talk

If Beale Street Could Talk—James Baldwin 2018-10-30 “This is Fanny and have pledged to get married, but Fanny is falsely accused of a terrible crime and imprisoned. Their families set out to clear his name, and as they face an uncertain future, the young lovers experience a kaleidoscope of emotions—affection, despair, and hope.”—Page 4 of cover

James Baldwin and Toni Morrison: Comparative Critical and Theoretical Essays

James Baldwin and Toni Morrison: Comparative Critical and Theoretical Essays—Lowalter King 2006-11-16 This collection of comparative critical and theoretical essays examines James Baldwin and Toni Morrison’s reciprocal literary relationship. By reading these authors side-by-side, this collection forges new avenues of discovery and interpretation to represent their perceptions of African American and American literature and cultural experiences.

James Baldwin and the 1980s

James Baldwin and the 1980s—Joseph Vogel 2008-03-20 By the 1980s, critics and the public alike considered James Baldwin irrelevant. Yet Baldwin remained an important, prolific writer until his death in 1987. Indeed, his work throughout the decade pushed him into new areas, in particular an expanded interest in the social and psychological consequences of popular culture and mass media. Joseph Vogel offers the first in-depth look at Baldwin’s dynamic final decade of work. Delving into the writer’s creative endeavors, crucial essays and articles, and the impassioned polemics The Evidence of Things Not Seen, Vogel finds Baldwin as prescient and fearless as ever. Baldwin’s sustained grappling with “the great transforming energy” of mass culture revealed his gifts for media and cultural criticism. It also brought him into the fray on issues ranging from the Reagan-era culture wars to the New South, from the deterioration of inner cities to the disproportionate incarceration of black youth, and from pop culture gender-bending to the evolving women’s and gay rights movements. Autotelic and compelling, revives and redresses the final act of a great American writer.

The Critical Reception of James Baldwin, 1963-2010

The Critical Reception of James Baldwin, 1963-2010—Conseula Francis 2014 Examines the major divisions in criticism of this major African American writer; paying particular attention to the way each critical period defines Baldwin and his work for its own purposes.

A Political Companion to James Baldwin

A Political Companion to James Baldwin—Susan J. McWilliams 2017-11-15 “Uniformly excellent” essays on the work of the renowned author and his “extraordinary relevance in the present moment” (Choice). In seminal works such as Go Tell It on the Mountain, Notes of a Native Son, and The Fire Next Time, acclaimed author and social critic James Baldwin expresses his profound belief that writers have the power to transform society, engage the public, and inspire and channel conversation to achieve lasting change. While Baldwin is best known for his writings on racial consciousness and injustice, he is also one of the country’s most eloquent theorists of democratic life and the national psyche. In this book, prominent scholars assess the prolific author’s relevance to present-day political challenges. Together, they address Baldwin as a democratic theorist, activist, and citizen, examining his writings on the civil rights movement, religion, homosexuality, and women’s rights. They investigate the ways in which his work speaks to and galvanizes a collective American polity, and explore his views on the political implications of individual experience in relation to race and gender. This volume not only considers Baldwin’s works within their own historical context, but also applies the author’s insights to recent events such as the Obama presidency and the Black Lives Matter movement, emphasizing his faith in the connections between the past and present. These incisive essays will encourage a new reading of Baldwin that celebrates his significant contributions to political and democratic theory.

James Baldwin

James Baldwin—Harold Bloom 2007-01-01 A collection of essays presenting critiques and analysis of the major works of the African American author.

James Baldwin’s Turkish Decade

James Baldwin’s Turkish Decade—Magdalena J. Zaborowska 2008-12-26 Between 1961 and 1971 James Baldwin spent extended periods of time in Turkey, where he worked on some of his most important books. In this first in-depth exploration of Baldwin’s “Turkish decade,” Magdalena J. Zaborowska reveals the significant role that Turkish locales, cultures, and friends played in Baldwin’s life and thought. Turkey was a nurturing space for the author, who by 1961 had spent nearly ten years in France and Western Europe and failed to reestablish permanent residency in the United States. Zaborowska demonstrates how Baldwin’s Turkish sojourns enabled him to re-examine his own black queer writer and to revise his views of American identity and U.S.-race relations as the 1960s faded to a close. Follows Baldwin’s travels from western Turkey to Ankara, and Rodrum, Zaborowska presents many never published photographs, new information from Turkish archives, and original interviews with Turkish artists and intellectuals who knew Baldwin and collaborated with him on a play that he directed in 1969. She analyzes the effect of his experiences on his novel Another Country (1962) and in two volumes of his essays, The Fire Next Time (1963) and No Name in the Street (1972), and she explains how Baldwin’s time in Turkey informed his ambivalent relationship to New York, his responses to the American South, and his decision to settle in southern France. James Baldwin’s Turkish Decade expands the understanding of Baldwin’s role as a transnational African American intellectual, casts new light on his later works, and suggests ways of reassessing his earlier writing in relation to ideas of exile and migration.

A Historical Guide to James Baldwin

A Historical Guide to James Baldwin—Douglas Field 2009-09-24 With contributions from major scholars of African American literature, history, and cultural studies, A Historical Guide to James Baldwin focuses on the four tumultuous decades that defined the author’s life and art. Providing a comprehensive examination of Baldwin’s varied body of work that includes short stories, novels, and polemical essays, this collection reflects the major events that left an indelible imprint on the iconic writer: civil rights, black nationalism and the struggle for gay rights in the pre- and post-Stonewall eras. The essays also highlight Baldwin’s under-studied role as a trans-atlantic writer, his lifelong struggle with faith, and his use of music, especially the blues, as a key to unlock the mysteries of his identity as an exile, an artist, and a black American in a racially hostile era.

The Cambridge Companion to James Baldwin

The Cambridge Companion to James Baldwin—Michelle Elam 2015-04-09 This Companion offers fresh insight into the art and politics of James Baldwin, one of the most important writers and provocative cultural
critics of the twentieth century. Black, gay, and hailed as a ‘speaker for the race’, although he personally, and controversially, eschewed titles and classifications of all kinds. Individual essays examine his personal spirituals and nonfiction as well as his work across across a range of subjects, including race, culture: a poet and novelist, a critic, and an academic. Growing out of this collaboration, in 2013 James Baldwin was appointed as the Cambridge Companion to James Baldwin, which captures the power and influence of his work during the civil rights era as well as his relevance in the ‘post-race’ transnational twenty-first century, when his prescient questioning of the boundaries of race, sex, love, leadership, and country assume new urgency.

**Bibliography:**

- **James Baldwin and the Heavenly City** (Christopher Z. Hobson 2018-08-01) Following James Baldwin’s unsustainable ability to evoke a nation’s crisis and potential hope lies his use of religious language to describe social and moral transformation. The first study of its kind, James Baldwin and the Heavenly City shows that Baldwin’s novels use biblical ideas in partly but not fully secularized ways to express the possible human attainment of a new life—embodiment of a real but unfeasible holiness. Focusing on Baldwin’s six novels, along with essays, stories, and drama, the book first shows Baldwin’s method of evocating biblical and African American prophetic traditions to reveal their liberating core. It then examines key themes: the prophet’s survival, Me and My House, the spiritual and the apocalyptic, the “apocalyptic city”, as presented in all his novels; and the polarity between prophecy and doubt, the subject of his last novel, Just Above My Head. This important work provides new readings of Baldwin’s novels, reassesses his often-neglected later fiction, and shows Gospel music’s centrality (with blues) in his fictional imagination.

- **Black Freethinkers** (Christopher Cameron 2019-09-15) Black Freethinkers argues that, contrary to historical and popular descriptions of African Americans as naturally religious, freethought has been central to Black political and intellectual life from the nineteenth century to the present. Freethought encompasses many different schools of thought, including atheism, agnosticism, and nontraditional orientations such as deism and pantheism. Cameronographer Baldwin suggests an alternative option of nonbelief and religious skepticism in America, namely the servitude of the institution of slavery. He also traces the development of atheism and agnosticism among African Americans in two major political and intellectual movements of the 1920s: the New Negro Renaissance and the growth of black socialism and communism. In a final chapter, he explores the critical importance of freethought among participants in the civil rights and Black Power movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Examining a wealth of sources, including slave narratives, travel accounts, novels, poetry, memoirs, newspapers, and archival sources such as church records, sermons, and letters, the study follows the lives and contributions of well-known figures, including Frederick Douglass, Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, and Alice Walker, as well as lesser-known thinkers such as Louise Thompson Patterson, Sarah Welthet Fabo, and David Cincore.

- **Me and My House** (David Hempton 2008-12-01) ‘David Hempton looks at evangelism through the lens of well-known individuals who once embraced the evangelical tradition, but later repudiated it. The author recounts the faith journeys of nine creative artists, social reformers, and public intellectuals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’.—Publisher description.

- **Me and My House** (Salvific Manhood Ernest L. Gibson 2015-10) ‘Salvific Manhood reimagines the complexities of human brotherhood and masculinity by examining distinct iterations of male intimacy within all of James Baldwin’s novels’—.

- **Decolonial Love** (Joseph Drexl-Dreis 2018-12-04) Brings together theological liberation and decolonial thought, Decolonial Love interrogates colonial frameworks that shape Christian thought and legitimate structures of oppression and violence within Western modernity. In response to the historical situation of colonial modernity, the book offers a decolonial mode of theological reflection and names a historical instance of salvation that stands in conflict with Western modernity. Seeking a new starting point, Drexl-Dreis turns to the work of Frantz Fanon and James Baldwin, rejecting a politics of inclusion into the modern world-system, Fanon and Baldwin engage reality from commitments that Drexel-Dreis describes as orientations of decolonial love. These orientations express the identity of Western modernity, situating the human person in relation to a reality that exceeds modern/colonial significations, and catalyzes and authenticates historical movement in conflict with the modern world-system. The orientations of decolonial love in the work of Fanon and Baldwin—whose work is often perceived as violent from the perspectives of Western modernity—informs theological commitments and reflection, and particularly the theological image of salvation. Decolonial Love offers to theologians a foothold within the modern/colonial context from which to commit to the sacred and, from a historical encounter with the divine mystery, face up to and take responsibility for the legacies of colonial domination and violence within a struggle to transform reality.

- **A God of Justice?** (Qiana J. Whitted 2009) Focusing on the representations of spiritual crisis in twentieth-century African American fiction and autobiography. Qiana J. Whitted asks how some of the most distinguished writers of this tradition wrestle with the inexplicable nature of God and the experience of unmerited natural and moral sufferings such as racial oppression. Although this spiritual and existential dilemma of “the problem of evil” is not unique to African Americans, writers such as Countee Cullen, Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Ernest Gaines, Alice Walker, and Toni Morrison offer paradigmatic examples of it in black life and culture after World War I. Whitted argues that these spiritual struggles are so often articulated through the cry for divine justice are central to an understanding of modern black literary engagements with religion. Chapters explore the discourse of religious doubt and questioning through the crucified black Christ and the mourner’s bight tropes, womanist spiritual infidelity, and the humanist improvisations of blues narratives. For too long, the author contends, literary critics have explained this suffering through platitudes of endurance and communal redemption, valorizing problematic notions of unquestioned faith and self-sacrifice. By questioning what is at stake for African Americans who call for divine justice, Whitted challenges the assumptions about African American religiosity by revealing an alternative tradition of narrative dissent and philosophical engagement. In doing so, she broadens the horizons of critical inquiry in black literary and cultural studies.

- **A Queering of Black Theology** (Kernegy 2013-12-11) Kernegy’s brilliant and insightful use of James Baldwin’s literal genius offers ways forward that promises to overcome the divide between religion and sexuality that is of crucial importance not only for black church and theology but for socio-political-religious and theological discourse generally.

- **Great African-American Men in America history vol I** (Henry Epps)

**Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Christian Fiction** (Nancy M. Tischler 2009) Provides biographies of American and British Christians themed works from World War II until the present day.

- **Go Tell It on the Mountain** (James Baldwin 2013-09-17) One of the greatest American classics, Baldwin chronicles a fourteen-year-old boy’s discovery of the terms of his identity. Baldwin’s rendering of his protagonist’s spiritual, sexual, and moral struggle of self-invention opened new possibilities in the American language and in the way Americans understood themselves. With lyrical precision, psychological directness, resonating symbolic power, and a rage that is at once unrelenting and compassionate, Baldwin tells the story of the stepson of the minister of a storefront Pentecostal church in Harlem Saturday one Sunday in May of 1935. Originally published in 1953, Baldwin said of his first novel, “The book is the book I had to write if I was ever going to write anything else.” “With vivid imagery, with lavish attention to details ... [a feverish story].”—New York Times

**Translating Postcolonialism** (Wolfgang Berg 2010-07-08) “1. Culture and Identity in a Postmodern World Michel Foucault’s statement that: “The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity; we are in the epoch of juxtaposition.” (M. Foucault 1862: 22) heralded a new approach to identity in the contemporary world by suggesting that one’s identity is formed not as a result of the cultural and national values and history one has inherited, but rather as a result of the different spaces through which one travels. In other words, one’s identity is no longer perceived as an inherited construct but rather as something flexible that changes as one moves through the more fluid spaces of the contemporary, globalized world and internalizes a mixture of the different cultures and ideas that one encounters. The idealized postcolonial traveler will thus effortlessly cross national and cultural borders and negotiate a constantly changing and flexible identity for himself. Andy Bennett argues that it is no longer even possible to conceive of identity as a static entity, forged from a communal history and value system, because all of the traditional certainties on which identity formation were based in the past have been fundamentally undermined by a...”
postmodernist flux and fluidity: "Once clearly demarcated by relatively static and ethnically homogenous communities, the 'spaces' and 'places' of everyday life are now highly pluralistic and contested, and are constantly being defined and redefined through processes of relocation and cultural hybridisation" (A).