

James Baldwin Now

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One of the most prolific and influential African American writers, James Baldwin was for many a harbinger of hope, a man who traversed the genres of art-writing novels, essays, and poetry.

James Baldwin Now takes advantage of the latest interdisciplinary work to understand the complexity of Baldwin's vision and contributions without needing to name him as exclusively gay, expatriate, black, or activist. It was, in fact, Baldwin who said, "it is quite impossible to write a worthwhile novel about a Jew or a Gentile or a Homosexual, for people refuse . . . to function in so neat and one-dimensional a fashion." McBride has gathered a unique group of new scholars to interrogate Baldwin's life, his presence, and his political thought and work. **James Baldwin Now** finally addresses the man who spoke, and continues to speak, so eloquently to crucial issues of the twentieth century.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Dwight McBride, the editor of this diverse and challenging new collection of James Baldwin scholarship, reports that at least 15 dissertations on Baldwin have appeared since 1990, suggesting that a revival may be taking place. That this should occur now, in the heyday of cultural studies, and among younger scholars, is especially promising for Baldwin, who has suffered since the publication of his first novel in 1953 (*Go Tell It on the Mountain*) by being relegated to one or another critical category. McBride notes, "It is finally possible to understand Baldwin's vision of and for humanity in its complexity, locating him not as exclusively gay, black, expatriate, activist, or the like but as an intricately negotiated amalgam of all of those things, which had to be constantly tailored to fit the circumstances in which he was compelled to articulate himself." Among the best essays here are the reception studies, William Spurlin's "Culture, Rhetoric, and Queer Identity: James Baldwin and the Identity Politics of Race and Sexuality," which focuses on Baldwin's position in the Black Power movement, including Eldridge Cleavor's famously homophobic reading of Baldwin, and Roderick A. Ferguson's elegantly readable "The Parvenu Baldwin and the Other Side of Redemption: Modernity, Race, Sexuality and the Cold War." --*Regina Marler*

Review

"This excellent volume conceives of Baldwin as a figure crucial to discussions of whiteness, sexuality, and globalization. The times are ripe for the valuable reconsideration of Baldwin that James Baldwin Now provides."

-Jennifer DeVere Brody,George Washington University

About the Author
Dwight A. McBride is Daniel Hale Williams Professor of African American Studies, English, & Performance Studies at Northwestern University where he also serves as Dean of The Graduate School and Associate Provost for Graduate Education. He is the author of several groundbreaking works in African American Studies, including *Impossible Witnesses* and *Why I Hate Abercrombie and Fitch*.

Users Review

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