DISPATCH

White Lies Matter: *Begin Again*, A Review Essay

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Abstract

This review essay examines Eddie Glaude, Jr.'s new book *Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own* against several other recent works on Baldwin such as Bill Mullen's *James Baldwin: Living in Fire* and Nicholas Buccola's *The Fire Is Upon Us*.

Keywords: James Baldwin, Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., Nicholas Buccola, Raoul Peck, Bill Mullen, *No Name in the Street*

Several months after the publication of his book *Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own* (2020), Eddie Glaude, Jr. was given a two-hour interview on C-SPAN's "In Depth." An appearance here—nearly as good as an endorsement by Oprah—is a good indication of a book's importance and popularity, and Glaude was peppered with questions from the host and callers.

"When you think about Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael, Malcolm X," the host Peter Slen asks Glaude, "where do you place yourself in that spectrum?"¹ Glaude begins by saying that he has never been asked that question before. "I'm always dealing with my rage," he says, "always on the verge of spilling over in some ways. And then there's this love. I guess this why I'm so attracted to Baldwin as a figure because he seems to stand in that space where rage and love exist simultaneously."²

Navigating that space between love and rage figures prominently in Glaude's book, but reconciling Baldwin's love and rage is not an easy endeavor in light of his famous quote that "To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a *rage* almost all the time."³ It's a situation Glaude grapples with in the early pages of the book, noting that when he read *The Fire Next Time* (1963), "I could not reconcile his rage with his talk of love. It was like Dr. King meets Henry James meets Malcolm X meets Freud. Baldwin was *too* personal."⁴

That intimacy, however, that closeness to Baldwin, is exactly what Glaude adopts, a nearness that has been harnessed by a coterie of writers, activists, biographers, and filmmakers such as Hilton Als, Jesmyn Ward, and Raoul Peck. Like Peck, he has undertaken a deep dive into the Baldwin oeuvre, excavating and thoughtfully mining the most precious jewels of his thinking. To this end Glaude thinks along with Baldwin, weaving his way through a "complex bundle of evasions, denials, and hatreds that made up the American project, and point a pathway forward to becoming new, different human beings," emulating the moves of his esteemed predecessor.⁵

Confession is good for the soul it is often stated, and Glaude unloads on his evasion of Baldwin before allowing his invasive ideas.

My classmates wrote dissertations on him, one of which eventually became an important scholarly book. I hesitated because I knew that, if I let him inside my head—inside of me—he would force me to look at myself honestly as the precondition for saying anything about the world. I was right. I finally found the courage to read him seriously, and in his work I found a way of thinking and a language to express what was happening inside of me and what I was seeing in my country.⁶

In summoning the genius of Baldwin, Glaude and Peck join a parade of luminaries who, far less extensively, have quoted or cited Baldwin to give their remarks additional gravitas. His works, in an almost biblical way, pop up daily in sundry disparate places, where his wisdom is used to amplify a moment or circumstance, and his words are particularly useful to summarize a production. A brief listing of some works released in 2020 alone bears this out: At the close of David Byrne's *America*

Utopia, his musical adapted for HBO by Spike Lee, Baldwin is summoned to drive home a message of hope and well-being; a closing statement from Baldwin appears in Ric Burns and Gretchen Sorin's engaging documentary *Driving While Black*; in the recent Netflix release *The Trial of the Chicago 7*, a young woman is removed from the jurors because she is reading a Baldwin book; and when Philip Gefter's biography of photographer Richard Avedon was published, mention of Baldwin was inevitable since they attended DeWitt Clinton High School and were contributors to the *Magpie*, the school's magazine. And it was expected that Baldwin would be featured in Alan Govenar's documentary *The Myth of a Colorblind France*.

At the outset of *Begin Again*, Glaude posits a caveat that "this is a strange book."⁷ He declares that the book is not biography, not literary criticism, nor straightforward history, "but a combination of all three in an effort to say something meaningful about our current times."⁸ This he does with all the clarity and insight of one who has thoroughly absorbed Baldwin's wisdom and vision, and he accomplishes this by moving backward and forward, vacillating, as he notes, between past and present, never losing sight or counsel of Baldwin's guidance. It's a very interesting and unique way to utilize Baldwin, using him as a co-conspirator as he interrogates the tenor of our times, mainly the fascistic-tending, pandemic dystopia created and overseen by Donald Trump.

Glaude is absolutely right when he says that in the book—seven tightly composed chapters and 239 pages is not a biography—it is not possible to access Baldwin's searing prose without discussing his "furious passage."⁹ Even so, Glaude illustrates or underscores how the drama of Baldwin's life intersects with the American experience; or how his books are like literary milestones highlighting various episodic moments in the nation's history. His opening chapter, "The Lie," establishes a thematic tone that reverberates throughout the book. From the very creation of this nation, Glaude opines, there has been an inability to deal with the truth, which he insists is at the core of Baldwin's mission. Merging Baldwin with Black Lives Matter and unrest in the streets is deftly achieved when Glaude recounts an incident during the Freddie Gray demonstration in Maryland in 2015. One activist, he notes, had a sign quoting Baldwin that read: "Ignorance allied with power is the most ferocious enemy of justice."¹⁰ This is further evidence of the extent to which Glaude has paid attention to the contemporary turbulence and how it often embodies Baldwin's motto to be a good writer and a witness.

To this end, Glaude is a keen observer, chronicling Baldwin's struggle to become a writer and a witness, whether in the South during the emerging civil rights movement, or alone in Paris, where the racism may have been less brutal, but nonetheless was everywhere evident, as so many other Baldwin authorities have written. Baldwin, who died in 1987, was not around to witness the confrontation in Charlottesville in the summer of 2017 when a neo-Nazi plunged his car into a crowd of activists, killing Heather Heyer. In his retelling of the incident, Glaude appropriates Baldwin's journalistic style, marinating it with historical information, some of which will be foreign to most Americans. Few writers and historians have the reach and insight to expound on W. E. B. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* (1935), leaning on the book's final chapter "exposing the lies of the historiography

around Reconstruction.”¹¹ This is Glaude’s Baldwinesque pivot back to the book’s basic theme about falsehoods that permeate the nation’s history. It’s an easy segue from here to the prevarications at the heart of any tweet from Trump.

There are thoughtful and heartfelt ruminations on Dr. King, Malcolm X, Medgar Evers, the Black Panthers, as well as Emmett Till, but the revelations here are gifted by Glaude’s poetic turns and his perspective on Baldwin. “Through the 1960s, Baldwin turned his attention away from the gaze of white America and focused more directly on the well-being and future of Black people,” Glaude writes.¹² That future was as troubled as ever, and by the early 1970s Baldwin was completing *No Name in the Street* (1972), which for him meant, as he told a reporter, “I’m beginning again.”¹³ These are the watchwords, so to speak, and riffs on this theme conclude each chapter of the book, a clear indication of the wide net Glaude has cast in his search for the essential Baldwin.

Of Baldwin’s works, *No Name in the Street* gets the longest exposition, and for Glaude it is Baldwin’s most “important work of social criticism.” He places Baldwin’s book of essays in the context of transcendentalist thinkers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Glaude may have found a connection between them in a quote he cites from Emerson, who declared “Let me begin anew.”¹⁴ Often, beginning anew for Baldwin involved relocation, and this came with his journey to Istanbul. Glaude gives extensive coverage of this sojourn, much of which complements Magdalena Zaborowska’s remembrance of Sedat Pakay in *James Baldwin Review*, a publication that Glaude mentions along with a number of other Baldwin scholars.¹⁵ There was no need for him to forage into the territory they have fully plowed, but we are still awaiting a deeper dive into the CIA’s surveillance of Baldwin, something Glaude touches on without going beyond a passing nod.

In this regard, more could have been said about Baldwin’s article published in *Encounter* magazine, which was underwritten by the CIA, something neither Baldwin nor other writers were aware of at that time. Baldwin’s submission was a review of the Negro-African Writers and Artists (*Le Congrès des Ecrivains et Artistes Noirs*) that took place at the Sorbonne’s Amphitheatre Descartes in Paris on 19 September 1956, entitled “Princes and Powers.” Sixteen years later in *No Name in the Street*, which Glaude cites extensively, Baldwin observed that “In the fall of 1956, I was covering for *Encounter* (or for the CIA) the first international Conference of Black Writers and Artists.”¹⁶ Apparently, while living in London in an increasingly potent climate of radicalism, Baldwin felt the specter of the CIA. “Eventually, of course, Black Englishmen, Indians, students, conscientious objectors, and CIA infiltrators—no doubt—tracked me down, as we had known was inevitable,” he wrote.¹⁷

Curiously, given the attention he devotes to *No Name in the Street*, more so than any of Baldwin’s other books, there is no mention of *Encounter*, though Glaude does expend a lengthy paragraph on the essay “Princes and Powers,” in which he sides with Eldridge Cleaver and notes that “the essay does leave much to be desired.”¹⁸ Moreover, he writes that “Baldwin’s understanding of the geopolitics surrounding decolonization appears limited. He comes off as someone decidedly committed, despite his criticisms, to the exceptionalism of the American project.”¹⁹

Some exception should be extended to the notion that Baldwin's "decolonization appears limited," especially if Glaude had more than a cursory chance to further examine Baldwin's unpublished novel "No Papers for Muhammad," which Bill Mullen discusses in his 2019 book *James Baldwin: Living in Fire*. Mullen writes that the

paper trail around *No Papers* then serves as an ineffable coda to Baldwin's confession from *No Name in the Street* about his relationship as an African-American to the Arab world: "as I began to discern what their history had made of them, I began to suspect, somewhat painfully, what my history had made of me."²⁰

The two authors may differ on Baldwin's perspective on decolonization, but they are seemingly in agreement about Baldwin's rejection of Négritude, according to Glaude, or his skepticism regarding the concept, according to Mullen. Neither go far enough in explaining Négritude and its historical connections, particularly to the Harlem Renaissance, though Mullen does cite the significance of Aimé Césaire's role in the movement.

An exegesis of Négritude would present a broad international tapestry and illustrate significant ties with authors from Africa and the Caribbean, who Baldwin encountered from a distance during the Congress in Paris in 1956. To be fair to Baldwin, Négritude was still in formation as a cultural and political outlook. Négritude as a term does not appear in his essay on the Congress, nor was the term mentioned—if Baldwin's article is taken as the source—by any of the major progenitors of the concept, including Diop, Césaire, Senghor, and others. Had he stayed a little longer at the Congress and heard Frantz Fanon's speech, Baldwin might have gathered a better understanding of Négritude from one of its most profound and revolutionary thinkers. Such a grasp of the concept would give recognition to the essentials that embody Négritude, of which there is no better definition than one issued by Senghor: "During the 1930s when we launched the Négritude movement from Paris, we drew our inspiration especially—and paradoxically—from 'Negro Americans' in the general sense of the word: from the Harlem Renaissance movement, but also from the 'indigenist' movement in Haiti."²¹ He declared that all "the themes which were to be developed by the Négritude movement were already treated by [Edward] Blyden in the middle of the nineteenth century, both the virtues of Négritude and the proper mode of illustrating those virtues."²² Baldwin's reluctance to embrace Négritude might have been the same impulse that made him stand apart from the Harlem Renaissance, since, as Senghor notes, they were inseparably linked. This break was insightfully discussed by John Drabinski in his essay "The Poetics of Beautiful Blackness: On Baldwin and Négritude" in *James Baldwin in Context* (2019), edited by Quentin Miller. At variance between Black Americans and their counterparts in the colonial world is the question of the place where oppression obtains. "Baldwin," Drabinski writes,

breaks apart the racial identities at work in Négritude in order to reassemble those identities in the context of the United States. What we learn is that whiteness is

constructed in relation to blackness, blackness in relation to whiteness, and those constructions do not travel. A return to the cruel machinery that made such identities is a return to home. There is no need for an elsewhere. All the beauty of blackness is already in the poetics of this home.²³

To completely understand the evolution of Négritude demands an interrogation of the conflict that simmered between African Americans and the immigrants from the Caribbean, and sometimes from Africa.

It is rather interesting that Glaude chose not to use the revelations from William J. Maxwell's *F.B. Eyes: How J. Edgar Hoover's Ghostreaders Framed African American Literature* (2015), which charts the surveillance of Baldwin begun by the CIA, and continued by the FBI, though that material remains either redacted or unavailable. This information is discussed in Glaude's "Author's Notes" without any explanation as to why he chose to leave it alone. When Mullen writes that Baldwin would begin "the slow process of tearing himself away from Western moorings, though not without an internal ideological struggle over the meaning of doing so," this notion converges with Glaude on Baldwin's gaining critical distance from America during his sojourn in Istanbul.²⁴ Freed from the "deadly dynamics of American life," Glaude continues, the silence enabled Baldwin "to hear his own language and, I suspect, feel his own grief more deeply. That distance gave him a different angle of vision not only on the United States but on himself apart from the lie that suffocated him and much of American life."²⁵

Unlike Mullen, Glaude's pursuit of Baldwin the internationalist, save for his adventures in France, Switzerland, and Turkey, does not extend into the territory that Mullen has thoroughly investigated, especially his chapter entitled "Morbid Symptoms and Optimism of the Will: 1968–79." This decade or so in Baldwin's "furious passage" finds him deeply concerned about Black Power, anti-imperialism, the Vietnam War, and the Palestinian liberation struggle. The phrase "morbid symptoms" is taken from Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, and connects Baldwin with an unimpeachable political theorist. Noted author and activist Robin Kelley, in his blurb, wrote that "Mullen presents the James Baldwin we've been waiting for: the revolutionary, fierce internationalist, queer theorist, anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist, incisive dialectician, and perhaps the most dangerous thinking of the 20th century."²⁶ Baldwin's anticolonial stance may have taken some time to emerge, but he was soon convinced, as Mullen observes, "that the African-American, the Turk, the Arab, the Muslim, the African, the colonized everywhere, were one united 'wretched of the earth.'"²⁷

While Mullen is unsparing in his denunciation of Zionism, Glaude veers away from any mention of Israel and its Baldwin associations. About the closest he comes to Israel is in his several references to the New Jerusalem, the Jewish idealized heaven, where for Baldwin, Glaude writes, "the idols of race and the shackles of obsolete categories that bound us to the ground were no more."²⁸ Baldwin, in *No Name in the Street*, recounts his visit to Israel, and how much he liked the country and the people.

But it was obvious why the Western world created the state of Israel, which is not really a Jewish state. The West needed a handle in the Middle East. And they created the state as a European pawn. When I was in Israel, it was as though I was in the middle of *The Fire Next Time*. I didn't dare go through Israel to Africa, so I went to Turkey, just across the road.²⁹

Neither Mullen nor Glaude expends much insight on Baldwin's trip to Africa with his sister, Gloria, though Mullen does mention the countries they visited, including Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. Nor do they devote much time or attention to Baldwin's voyage to London with his brother David and Carole Weinstein, and there is hardly any discussion of Baldwin's debate with William Buckley. In his 2019 book *The Fire Is Upon Us: James Baldwin, William F. Buckley Jr., and the Debate Over Race in America*, Nicholas Buccola revisits the famous debate held at Cambridge University in England in 1965. Mullen is not mentioned, but Glaude is acknowledged by Buccola since he attended a symposium at Linfield University in McMinnville, Oregon, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the debate. Glaude is also credited by Buccola for answering a number of questions from the author. Buccola says that Glaude is a serious scholar, a principled thinker, and the same can be said of him. For more than 400 pages Buccola fully examines the hour-long debate, framing Baldwin and Buckley's exchanges within the vortex of the times. It was a war of words between an electrifying African American intellectual and a Brahmin-bred conservative, with no holds barred as they contested the question "The American dream is at the expense of the American Negro."

In his own review of *Begin Again*, Buccola compares Glaude to Baldwin, deeming both Jeremiahs, saying things that folks might not like to hear.³⁰ Some folks might not want to hear Glaude confess that he did not vote for Hillary Clinton, a decision he later explained, saying that it was done merely to push the Democratic Party to the left where his colleague Cornel West was ensconced. By taking such a stance, Glaude believed there was a chance to break the stranglehold of the corporate wing of the party:

The "carnival barker" nominated by the Republican Party offered a chance to upend the rules of the game, so I believed, because white America would never elect such a person to the highest office in the land. I was wrong, and given my lifelong reading of Baldwin, it was an egregious mistake.³¹

Buccola, in his review of *Begin Again*, welcomes Glaude's honesty, but finds a deeper problem at hand:

I appreciate Glaude's willingness to acknowledge the flaws in his political prognostication, but the wrongness that really matters here is that which was exhibited by the millions of voters whose journey to the polls was fueled by the delusion of the lie. And millions of American voters have proven, time and again, that the lie is a habit they just cannot kick. At the level of elite politics, then, we must stop pretending that these addicts can be saved. Instead, we must push elite politicians to stop just "playing it

safe” and we must pressure elites to address structural inequality. But we must also sometimes recognize that we have to “buy more time” and set up safeguards that might protect innocent people from the wrath of those animated by the delusion of white supremacy.³²

Buccola is spot on, and the world saw the terrible results of the lie when thousands, believing Trump was the victor and that the presidential election was rigged, rammed through doors and broke windows, resulting in the deaths of several people on Capitol Hill on 6 January 2021. White lies matter!

Glaude, in his praise for Buccola’s book, said it “brilliantly describes our current malaise,” and insists that it is a “must-read—especially as we are forced to choose between competing visions of who we take ourselves to be as Americans.”³³ Given the nature of their projects, neither author devotes much time to homosexuality, and Glaude never mentions the word, though he does touch on the topic of sexuality when he notes how “this black queer man represented a different kind of radicalism than the masculinist politics of black male preachers.”³⁴ It’s a matter of speculation whether Glaude’s deployment of queer theory would have sharpened and deepened his analysis, much in the manner of Matt Brim’s *James Baldwin and the Queer Imagination* (2014). However, as Brim warns, such an endeavor might have brought in its wake further complications and “failures.”

When Brim evokes Bayard Rustin, it’s as if wishing he had joined in collaboration with Baldwin, and a similar wish might also be found in Glaude. Rustin, born in 1912, was twelve years older than Baldwin and was devoutly anchored in the civil rights movement, but beyond their common queerness they were both supremely gifted intellectuals with a deep, abiding affinity to Black music. Both died in 1987, Rustin in August and Baldwin in December. Except for noting his position in the civil rights movement, Glaude offers this comment from Rustin in relation to Baldwin: “People sometimes didn’t understand Jimmy’s intense identification with people in the Movement. He often came off a platform after speaking trembling with emotion. It’s a wonder to me such intensity didn’t wear out the frail body long ago.”³⁵

In his chapter entitled “The Dangerous Road,” which is a gesture to Baldwin’s “The Dangerous Road Before Martin Luther King,” Glaude expends most of his time on King in 1968 in California, where Baldwin was asked to say a few words at a fundraiser for King. Glaude could have gleaned more from Baldwin’s “Dangerous Road,” composed in 1961, and his impressions of Rustin after he was dismissed from King’s camp. Baldwin asserted that King’s dismissal of Rustin was more than unwarranted:

[King] lost much moral credit, for example, especially in the eyes of the young, when he allowed Adam Clayton Powell to force the resignation of his [King’s] extremely able organizer and lieutenant, Bayard Rustin. Rustin, also, has a long and honorable record as a fighter for Negro rights, and is one of the most penetrating and able men around. The techniques used by Powell—we will not speculate as to his motives—were far from sweet; but King was faced with the choice of defending his organizer, who was also his friend, or agreeing with Powell; and he chose the latter course.³⁶

The struggle between Powell and King had been brewing ever since the minister from Atlanta emerged as the leader of the civil rights movement and displaced Powell as the spokesperson for Black America. Powell, angered that he had been excluded from a planned march outside the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles in 1960, warned King that if he didn't dismiss Rustin from his retinue, Powell would call a press conference and expose them as lovers. King capitulated, called off the demonstration, and put social and political distance between himself and Rustin. But none of this dismayed Rustin who, with A. Philip Randolph's blessing, was more in the thick of things by 1963 when he was the architect of the historic March on Washington.

This could have been a perfect moment for Glaude to comment on the movement and homosexuality. An elaboration of this situation would also have fit comfortably in Brim's wheelhouse. Gay author Hilton Als has more than once voiced his delight and introspection regarding Baldwin's life and legacy, and has specifically addressed the topic of homosexuality. During an interview in 2019 with Lester Fabian Brathwaite, a former senior editor of *Out* magazine, Als responded to the question of why Baldwin never fully formed his ideas on queerness. "In doing research, I interviewed an editor of his and he was working on a novel that was specifically about that," Als recalled.³⁷

This is the era when people were arrested and careers were destroyed because of it [homosexuality], so I think if he could fictionalize it with a white person to distance himself as the protagonist, this was a way to speak but not be seen. So I think he did the best he could with the information he had and the times he had.³⁸

An increasingly popular Black intellectual, Glaude often appears as a panelist on television news broadcasts, particularly on cable. He is even more on call in literary circles, where his opinions on the latest book are requested. When twenty-two prominent authors were asked by the *New York Times* to list a book they might suggest to President-elect Joe Biden, Glaude recommended *James Baldwin: Collected Essays*, the 1998 collection of nonfiction essays edited by the late Toni Morrison. "Given the moral reckoning we face in this country," Glaude wrote, "I would urge President Biden to spend some time with the nonfiction writings of James Baldwin. The book offers a clear-eyed view of what rests at the heart of our national malaise, and he writes about it—bears witness to its effects—without a hint of sentimentality."³⁹

Sadness and nostalgia surface a little when Glaude recounts the racist incident in Charlotte, North Carolina, when Dorothy Counts, a teen, was reviled and spat on by white protesters as she and others integrated an all-white school. It was a galvanizing moment in history and one Baldwin claimed convinced him to return to the US and get involved in the movement. But, as Glaude points out, this was not the case. "It could not have been the image of Dorothy Counts that spurred Baldwin to give up France. The ordeal at Harding High School happened in the fall of 1957, a year after the 1956 conference in Paris."⁴⁰ In effect, Baldwin's memory failed him on this occasion, and Glaude is not reluctant to correct his guide.

Instances abound when Glaude is on his own, exercising his agency without Baldwin's counsel, most vividly when he visits the Legacy Museum in Alabama or Ferncliff cemetery, where Baldwin is interred not too far from Paul Robeson, Malcolm X, and Dr. Betty Shabazz. "As I walked up and down the cemetery, I chuckled as I thought to myself that my refuge from the betrayal of the country and the craziness of Donald Trump was the storm of Jimmy's life. Made sense to me."⁴¹

No mention of Donald Trump is complete without the precedence and presidency of Barack Obama. Glaude is only eight pages into his book when Obama appears as he expounds on the American "lie": "The stories we often tell ourselves of the civil rights movement and social progress in this country, Rosa Parks's courage, Dr. King's moral vision, and the unreasonable venom of Black Power, culminating in the election of Barack Obama, are all too often lies."⁴² Much later in the book, Glaude rightly pairs Obama with the Black Lives Matter movement that gradually inculcated Baldwin's visionary ideas.

Glaude quotes and defends numerous prominent authors along his route to Baldwin's insights for our current moment. On several occasions in the book Ralph Waldo Emerson is cited. Historian Nell Painter is one of a number of scholars who have written that Emerson was a racist. From one of Emerson's early musings, Painter provides this glimpse of a man who was often deemed an abolitionist:

I think it cannot be maintained by any candid person that the African race have ever occupied or do promise to occupy any very high place in the human family. Their present condition is the strongest proof that they cannot. The Irish cannot; the American Indian cannot; Chinese cannot. Before the energy of the Caucasian race all the other races have quailed and done obeisance.⁴³

You wonder how Baldwin would react to the notion that his writings, particularly *No Name in the Street*, by Glaude's estimation stand in the tradition of American writing that dates back to Emerson.

Glaude is not alone, though, in reading Baldwin and Emerson together. Prentiss Clark, in her essay for *James Baldwin Review*, "What 'No Chart Can Tell Us': Ordinary Intimacies in Emerson, Du Bois, and Baldwin," imagines Baldwin in conversation with these two esteemed interlocutors; however, the intimacies do not extend into the sensitive area of race or racism.⁴⁴ But she does quote Emerson and his conclusion that "the civility of no race can be perfect whilst another race is degraded."⁴⁵

Several reviewers take umbrage at Glaude's concentration on *No Name in the Street* and his neglect of Baldwin's fiction, which might have brought considerable gravitas to the limited discussion of homosexuality. Elaboration on Baldwin's attempted suicides, a fuller explanation of the call for reparations, Trump's incipient fascism, and a deeper dive into Black Nationalism with the same exigency he gave white nationalism, as well as more on the nation's statutes rather than its statues would have provided additional resonance to a book packed with relevance.

Glaude is a perceptive traveling companion, a veritable Sancho Panza to Baldwin's laceration of America's windmills of lies. Baldwin once said that "to

begin again demands a certain silence, a certain privacy that is not, at least for me, to be found elsewhere.”⁴⁶ It is not so much a silence Glaude has found but a voice that he has summoned with a profound understanding of his purpose and direction, and a way of blending past and present, a Sankofa way of going forward by looking back. Baldwin’s “after times” are never more current than the next beat of your heart.

Notes

- 1 Peter Slen, host of “In Depth” on C-SPAN, 6 December 2020, www.c-span.org/video/?477970-1/depth-eddie-glaude (accessed 28 January 2021).
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 James Baldwin, qtd. in “Symposium: The Negro’s Role in American Culture,” *Negro Digest*, XI:5 (1962), p. 81.
- 4 Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., *Begin Again: James Baldwin’s America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own* (New York, Crown, 2020), p. xxiv.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. xxv.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. xviii.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 Glaude borrows the phrase “furious passage” from Fern Eckman’s 1966 biography, *The Furious Passage of James Baldwin*.
- 10 The original Baldwin source for this line is *No Name in the Street* (New York, Vintage, 1972), p. 149.
- 11 Glaude, *Begin Again*, p. 72.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 94.
- 13 Baldwin, *No Name in the Street*, p. 117.
- 14 Qtd. in Glaude, *Begin Again*, p. 121.
- 15 David Leeming and Magdalena Zaborowska, “Remembering Sedat Pakay,” *James Baldwin Review*, 3 (2017), pp. 173–85.
- 16 Baldwin, *No Name in the Street*, p. 49.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 90.
- 18 Glaude, *Begin Again*, p. 99.
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 Bill Mullen, *James Baldwin: Living in Fire* (London, Pluto Press, 2019), p. 185.
- 21 Léopold Sédar Senghor, “Negritude and the Civilization of the Universal,” in Carlos Moore, Tanya Sanders, and Shawna Moore (eds.), *African Presence in the Americas* (Trenton, NJ, Africa World Press, 1995), p. 21.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 John E. Drabinski, “The Poetics of Beautiful Blackness: On Baldwin and Négritude,” in D. Quentin Miller (ed.), *James Baldwin in Context* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 240.
- 24 Mullen, *James Baldwin: Living in Fire*, p. 50.
- 25 Glaude, *Begin Again*, p. 129.
- 26 Robin Kelley, blurb for Bill Mullen’s *James Baldwin: Living in Fire*, www.plutobooks.com/9780745338545/james-baldwin/ (accessed 29 January 2021).
- 27 Mullen, *James Baldwin: Living in Fire*, p. xiv.
- 28 Glaude, *Begin Again*, p. xxiii.

- 29 Baldwin, qtd. in Mullen, *James Baldwin: Living in Fire*, p. 91.
- 30 Nicholas Buccola, "How Do We Begin Again?," *The New Rambler: An Online Review of Books*, <https://newramblerreview.com/book-reviews/literary-studies/how-do-we-begin-again> (accessed 29 January 2021).
- 31 Glaude, *Begin Again*, p. 170.
- 32 Buccola, "How Do We Begin Again?"
- 33 Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., blurb for Nicholas Buccola's *The Fire Is Upon Us*, <https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691181547/the-fire-is-upon-us> (accessed 29 January 2021).
- 34 Glaude, *Begin Again*, p. 19.
- 35 Rustin qtd in *ibid.*, pp. 118–19.
- 36 James Baldwin, "The Dangerous Road Before Martin Luther King" (1961), in *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York, Modern Library, 1998), p. 656.
- 37 Lester Fabian Brathwaite, "Hilton Als on the Many Faces of James Baldwin," *Newnownext.com*, 11 February 2019, www.newnownext.com/hilton-als-on-the-many-faces-of-james-baldwin/02/2019/ (accessed 28 January 2021).
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 "What Books Should Biden Read? We Asked 22 Writers," *New York Times*, 20 December 2020, www.nytimes.com/2020/12/20/books/joe-biden-book-recommendations.html (accessed 29 January 2021).
- 40 Glaude, *Begin Again*, p. 31.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 215.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 43 Nell Irving Painter, *The History of White People* (New York, W. W. Norton, 2011), p. 139.
- 44 Prentiss Clark, "What 'No Chart Can Tell Us': Ordinary Intimacies in Emerson, Du Bois, and Emerson," *James Baldwin Review*, 5 (2019), p. 23.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 25.
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Contributor's Biography

Herb Boyd is an awarding-winning author and journalist. He has written or edited over 28 books and published countless articles for national magazines and newspapers, including New York's *Amsterdam News*. His 2008 book *Baldwin's Harlem: A Biography of James Baldwin*, was a finalist for a 2009 NAACP Image Award. *Brotherman: The Odyssey of Black Men in America: An Anthology* (One World/Ballantine, 1995), co-edited with Robert Allen of the Black Scholar journal, won the American Book Award for nonfiction. In 1999, Boyd won three first place awards from the New York Association of Black Journalists for his articles published in the *Amsterdam News*. Among his most popular books are *Black Panthers for Beginners* (Writers & Readers, 1995), *Autobiography of a People: Three Centuries of African American History Told By Those Who Lived It* (Doubleday, 2000), *Race and Resistance: African Americans in the 21st Century* (South End Press, 2002), *The Harlem Reader* (Crown Publishers, 2003), *We Shall Overcome: A History of the Civil Rights Movement* (Sourcebooks, 2004), and *Pound for Pound: The Life and Times of Sugar Ray Robinson* (Amistad Press, 2005). Two of Boyd's most recent publications—*Harlem Renaissance Redux* (Third World Press, 2019) and *Black Detroit: A People's History of Self-Determination* (Amistad, 2017)—have been widely praised. Boyd has been inducted into the Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent, the Madison Square Garden Hall of Fame as a journalist, and National Association of Black Journalists Hall of Fame. Along with his writing, Boyd is national and international correspondent for *Free Speech TV*. A graduate of Wayne State University in Detroit, Boyd is an adjunct instructor at City College of New York in the Black Studies Department.