“James Baldwin and the Dirty Work of Comparison”

Keith Feldman
University of California Berkeley, United States
kpfeldman@berkeley.edu

Over the course of the next 25 years, Baldwin would advance a persistent critique of Cold War liberalism's desire to perform acts of atonement for the past-present of white supremacy via the twinned figures of the assimilated Jew and the state of Israel, both of which, in his accounting, are “doing the Christian’s dirty work.” I argue that Baldwin’s relational imaginary invites us to reckon with the representability of Eurocentrism's animation of antiblackness and indigenous genocide that are intensified in the Israeli context to serve as the salvation of western interests in a decolonizing world.