

# **“Not only in the Orient is white the color of death”: Post-Colonial Readings of James Baldwin's *No Name in the Street***

**by Rhys Whitemore and Savannah Payne**

James Baldwin, an African American novelist, activist, essayist, and playwright from Harlem, New York, rose to fame in the mid-20th century. His writings are fixated on the incessant interplay of race, identity, and nationhood in lived reality and in theoretical imagined spaces. This is especially true of *No Name in the Street*, a collection of nonfiction essays originally published in 1972. The events that Baldwin relates in *No Name in the Street* lend themselves particularly well to post-colonial theoretical approaches. As Baldwin moves, literally and theoretically, through real and imagined spaces of America and Western Europe, he dramatizes the racial and class struggles he observes and experiences. Frequently in *No Name in the Street*, Baldwin relies on principles we can identify as the tenets of post-colonialism, a theoretical approach that examines the workings of race, imperialism, capitalism, and class in the world and in the lived experiences of the colonizer and the colonized.

*No Name in the Street* is a complex text that resists categorization, chronology, and restrictions of genre. Thus, in an attempt to present the text in a remotely sequential way, we have separated this project into three distinct and somewhat chronological sections based on the three most prominent locations in the text: New York, the American South, and the American West, respectively. We have presented the text through these locations, and in this order, to indicate Baldwin's emphasis on place while also retaining some of the events' chronology.