



Home: Social Essays

Amiri Baraka

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With a new introduction by the author. This new edition re-present's seminal collection of essays by one of our foremost African-American thinkers. These audacious essays range from short, impressionistic pieces on urban life and culture to longer political statements on the Cuban revolution, black sexuality, and the artist's role as a force for social change. But more than a collection of occasional pieces, Home is truly an ideological autobiography.

Home: Social Essays Details

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Author : Amiri Baraka

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Dwight says

Home is one of my favorite books. I especially like the account of Robert Williams' (African-American revolutionary and author of "Negroes with Guns - a once banned book in the U.S.) trip to Cuba. The book is a classic! It was written during the Black Power struggle of the 1960's (the period of Malcolm X and the civil rights movement). This is a short book but a powerful one.

Jamall Andrew says

There are many times when the arbitrariness of moralizing and the pompous drug of self-righteousness causes us to evaluate political artists harsher and more unfairly than we do artists who write/paint/dance/craft for “art’s sake.” And that is definitely true for black political artists, especially artists as prolific and as brave as Amiri Baraka. Baraka’s critiques never address the white supremacy he encountered and fought head on. They never examine the violence, the riots or the gruesome deaths enacted on black peoples that Baraka was writing about. They only know him for his flaws, for his impulsiveness, for the errors that are not exclusively his (I will say that the sexism and homophobia is hard to read. Some parts were a bit much and his resentment towards white supremacy got the best of him in terms of thinking about ‘what’ he was actually saying. He should have been way more careful when writing about rape. It is inexcusable). It is undeniable that the critics only real investment in reading Baraka, in critiquing him, was to silence him, was to keep him in the corner of angry black men not worthy of the microphone or ink they died with. This is sad not just because of intentions. It is said because, sometimes, they are successful. But Baraka cared little for the mainstream. He cared about the black ears. And this is what is so beautiful about his collection of essays. They are broad in depth, mostly precise and sometimes hasty in analysis, but always worth engaging. His essay on “Soul Food” is a classic. His treatment on “Black Literature” is as good as it is controversial and many will either adamantly agree or emphatically disagree. His writing on Malcolm X is honest and insightful. All in all, Baraka’s collection of essays is as good as Ellison’s “Shadow & Act” and Baldwin’s “Notes of a Native Son.” It is no Fire Next Time or What Moves at the Margins, but what I can tell you, is it is worth every second it takes to complete it.

Floyd Webb says

This is a book that was life changing for me. It pulled at my mind sent me off in a new direction.

Derek Davis says

Read these essays close to when they came out, in the early '60s. Brilliant writing by a brilliant mind.

Dave says

Baraka's development from 1960 to 1965 is by far the most interesting part of reading this collection. Baraka's prose is on par at least with his verse, if not his drama. I value this above all as a glimpse into the burgeoning Black Arts movement in the early 60s.

noelle says

I'm not angry at Jones'/Baraka's dislike of white people. It's entirely understandable. I am, however, pretty perturbed by his casual homophobia and sexism--the second you start advocating rape is the second you are fucking discredited, not sry2say. This would be a four (or five!) star book if it weren't for that, honestly. Most of the essays are insightful and provide a unique perspective. Several of them I skipped because I didn't find them to be accessible--but they don't need to be accessible to me as I am not its target audience. Several of them focus a lot on black writers (and the apparent mediocrity of many), but fail to mention (m)any women--I know Toni Morrison's first book wasn't published until 1970 & Zora Neale Hurston was only rediscovered in the mid-70s, but surely there were some black women writing from '61-'65? Regardless, he also fails to mention anyone except for Josephine Baker in a cultural context. I have his *Blues People* and I'm hoping it's as an insightful a read.
