

Left Curve No.27
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Left Curve is a journal of collected essays, book reviews, fiction, poetry and interviews from leftist, radical and anarchist perspectives. *Left Curve* is published irregularly out of Oakland California.

In both content and concern, *Left Curve* No.27 is soaked in the cultural, artistic and political aftermath of post 9-11. The three terrains are seemingly inseparable as it finds connections that overlap amongst them all. In this manner, *Left Curve* No.27 utilizes contributions from various academic, non-academic and creative sources to forge an interdisciplinary appeal to readers who may have varied interests. For those new to the issues and ideology confronted in these pages it is an aggressive but articulate introduction.

For instance, several of the essays in *Left Curve* No.27 all find ways to link academic discourse/ideas/themes in relation to the current U.S. political mindset and the fears over repressive "anti-terror" measures. In light of all this terror that abounds, the essays sharply critique and demonstrate any notion of a separate world of academia from that of a social/political reality. The spawning of U.S. reactionary internal policies in wake of 9-11 is especially scrutinized. Covering the contemporary situations citizens in the U.S. (especially citizens of color) and citizens in the Developing World face are E. San Juan Jr.'s *Spinoza and the War of Racial Terrorism* and Farhang Erfani's *Being-there and Being-from-Elsewhere: An Existential-Analytic of Exile*. Other essays of interest include examinations of the works of artists like Barbara Kruger, Carrie Mae Weems and Paul Virilio. Combining black and white photographs of the artists' works, the essays (though at times dense) discuss how these artists are/were involved with expressing many of the concerns over language, identity, images and stereotypes made even more relevant after 9-11.

There is also a section of poetry that deals with the suffering and violence in Palestine. Of course, there are limits to such types of *political* poetry and any "aesthetic" quality these poems may have is left for the reader to judge. Yet these kinds of poetic testimonials (some from eyewitness or local accounts) reveal a difficult but nevertheless engaging depiction. In addition, there is a fine piece borrowed from the Eugene, Oregon based journal, *Green Anarchy*. *Communiqué from the Heart of the Beast* is a short but mesmerizing dramatization of anonymous victims in a nightmarish and out of control industrial Capitalist society. As a creative contribution to *Left Curve* No.27, it is perhaps the most vehement in its bellicose assault upon Capitalism.

Yet by far the standout of *Left Curve* No.27 is a deserving, re-examination of the facts behind Amiri Baraka and his poem "Somebody Blew Up America". It is deserving not because of the "greatness" of Amiri Baraka but because of the dangerous restrictions on *freedoms* after 9-11. *Left Curve* No.27 dedicates a substantial amount of coverage to Baraka's career up until the recent uproar over his nomination as Poet Laureate of New Jersey. In addition, there is an insightful interview with Baraka that at least allows for his point of view/explanation to be heard through the cacophony of name-calling. After Baraka refused to resign his post as Poet Laureate of New Jersey over charges of anti-Semitism the state of New Jersey retaliated in awe-inspiring brilliance. Since they could not get rid of Baraka the New Jersey Senate State Government Committee voted to scrap the whole Poet Laureate Post altogether. Two days before July 4th 2003 Governor Jim McGreevey officially eliminated the post. We need to remember what has been done with critical poets and writers like Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Joseph Conrad and all the other canonized racists and documented anti-Semites we study and hold as artistic "models". Perhaps one day Baraka may be given the same leniency. Then again, perhaps not. The inconsistencies though, as always, are quite intriguing.

As far as journals are concerned, *Left Curve* No.27 is a substantial read at 144 pages. And make no mistake about it, *left curve* is exactly the direction this journal will take you if not beyond. However, it is hard to argue that racial profiling, incursions on freedom of Speech and other civil liberties as well as the ruse of unconditional "Patriotism" are **un-verifiable** "illusions". Through diverse material *Left Curve* claims a

unifying voice despite its multifaceted approaches and delivers an informative and urgent message, as long as you are willing to follow its path.

For further interest: <http://www.leftcurve.org>