

Post-9/11 Noir

September 11th, 2001 has redefined the words, images and hermeneutical capacity of our artificially constructed cognitive environment. This journal fuses several articles that relate to this process of redefinition, one that is inherently dark and shrouded in uncertainty. For the last seven years, the American population has been beguiled into a problematic flux; we have become keen observers of critical change yet we are perpetually controlled by a structured response that seeks to strengthen social conditions that have ruptured chains of empire for thousands of years. 9/11 was uniquely polemical and disguised as a logical response to the public execution of three thousand lives, the ideological rejoinder supported the radical absence of Western hospitality towards the Middle-Eastern 'Other' and encouraged the naturalization of aberrant malevolence. This separation posits a difference, a true chiaroscuro that we are meant to internalize in order to sustain the questionable agendas of the state. To place this conflict succinctly, we are living in a world defined by contrasts, one so irrecoverably controlled by polemical discourses that it has become the only way to 'effectively' register our modern culture. The articles herein are in dialogue with this paradigm, as they seek to encourage the skepticism of an increasingly nefarious post-9/11 ideological center. They ask us to question this 'black and white' society and in turn, repair the acute disconnect from our landscape that this bleak and sinister period in history has created.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those that have guided the intellectual and material progress of this edition. Firstly, I wish to thank Stephen Pasqualina for his confidence and comradery in inheriting this project that he himself championed into a gleaming publication. I am indebted to the efforts of John Lowney and Granville Ganter for their continued interest and willingness to apply helpful suggestions during the selection process. A special thanks goes to the St. John's University Writing Center, particularly Derek Owens, Harry Denny, Thomas Phillipose and my fellow co-workers who have lent support and provided welcomed respites during the design process. A very exceptional appreciation goes out to all of the associate editors who have lent their time and critical skills to reading the plentitude of submissions we have received this fall, all of this would not have been possible without you. Lastly, I wish to thank Stephen Sicari and the entire St. John's University English department for their persisting enthusiasm in maintaining the production and distribution of this inimitable journal.

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New York City
December 2008

presented here also is the Accents of Life: a collection devoted to the people and areas ordinarily overlooked in modern American society. These various entities are not items located on the cultural periphery. On the contrary, the elements are part and parcel of the whole social experience, subtly adding and manipulating in a manner worth highlighting here as "accents" or "flourishes." Thus each piece included aims to explain, exemplify, call attention to, or even denounce a specific social accent. Notably, several works deal explicitly with accents that have developed as a direct result of the changes in American culture since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. However, the gloomy post-September 11 aura provides a backdrop without wholly dominating the discourse—a position as reflected in the varied attitudes of the articles herein. The main thrust remains an exposition of the cultural flourishes in American society.

First we address the role of the Intellectual in our society. Between the two articles, we arrive at the Intellectual as an identity and laden with responsibility. The current public Intellectual, a far cry from academic irrelevancy, can function as a justifier of the corrupt elite or the informer of the masses. The latter situates the Intellectual as a beneficial investigatory tool of society, whereas being a mouthpiece of the corrupt exploits the public's need to know. Thus how the individual Intellectual pursues his or her subjects inherently affects the society for better or worse, yielding the Intellectual a privileged position capable of widespread influence. The Intellectual role operates like a beacon of knowledge for the culture at large, a person expected to be exemplary and referential as a benchmark enabling changes for everyone else.

Apart from the role of a person, we move into the function of images. Pictures ordinarily passed over as incidental and average actually provide discursive power over the society utilizing them. We find repetition intentionally dulls sensation of the image enough to render any subjugating content appear natural. The true significance of this theme resides in the pervasiveness; these images highlight social tendencies and manipulate preferences while operating under the guise of mere commonplace pictorials.

Finally we delve into the realm of literature to examine language's power to corrupt and alter. In this manner a person by default of his or her social dialect may be altered for the worse into an ill-fitting and undesirable role. A socially-recognized identity is contingent on language to describe and define that role even when the inadequacy of naming comes into play. Thus the derogative influence of linguistic constructs provides a poignant view on the limited validity of so-called identity in our culture.

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the space of the intellectual: displacement in edward said marc auge and jacques ranciere

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