

My admiration for this unique journal is such that it seems to me somewhat pointless to suggest another way or ways for so successful an undertaking. The fact is that *Critical Inquiry* is an indispensable journal—not the sole (fortunately) but the best of the journals that can be depended upon to provide critical theory from the much-needed American perspective of the Left (and not the merely liberal humanist Left) incorporating any and every promising critical theory and any and almost every relevant subject matter. Like so many readers, I trust *Critical Inquiry* completely and depend on it. Moreover, I trust that it will continue its path, a critical theoretical journal of the Left and within that necessary theoretical perspective a methodologically pluralistic academic journal.

It does occur to me, however, that a proposal on expansion of subject matter for the journal's critical theoretical work may be in order; hence, two suggestions:

1) With the “turn to the other” of so much contemporary thought, articles (and perhaps whole issues) devoted to the ethical and political (more exactly, the ethico-political) implications of the new capitalist economy in the new era of globalization, terrorism and the kind of global, terroristic counterterrorism policies employed by the present Bush administration is critically needed. The few remaining journals of the Left in this country are not academic journals, for example, *The Nation*. They cannot be expected to provide the critical theoretical and more explicitly academic resources of *Critical Inquiry*. This new and increasingly disparate situation could occasion editorials on these ethico-political issues, jointly sponsored conferences and issues with *The Nation*, and so on, and articles on economics and globalization from the new ethico-political perspective of the other—a perspective completely absent in mainstream U.S. publications as well as in most U.S. academic journals.

2) It has always been curious to me, as a scholar in religious studies, how little attention our best critical journals of the Left (including *Critical Inquiry*) have allotted to the phenomenon of religion. There is something peculiarly American in this lack. Perhaps too many North American academics (unlike their European, Asian, African and Latin American counterparts) still think that ‘religion’ is a phenomenon having to do with individual “belief” or “disbelief” in God or *Sunyata* or the *Tao* or whatever. Such “belief” or “disbelief” questions on the necessarily controverted nature of “ultimate reality” are intellectually interesting even, for some like me, important issues. However these questions in the present intellectual crises are somewhat beside the major point next to studying religion as a cultural phenomenon. In fact, there is a crying need for the kind of critical theoretical analysis of the global (not merely personal) phenomenon of religion. There are many scholars of religion with diverse methods and competencies who are clearly both on the Left and well-trained in various forms of critical theory in some area of “religious studies.” Some are believers in one way or another in a particular religious vision and way. Many are not. In either case these scholars have no natural journal outlet for their because since most journals in religious studies are traditional in scholarship. Nor do they have a journal to which they may turn for critical theoretical work on religion.

More importantly, however, religion is now a cultural, political, and ideational (and often ideological) reality of such import in the contemporary world that not to have (or to have so seldom) a *Critical Inquiry* study of religion begins to seem irresponsible. Happily several present editors of *Critical Inquiry* have contributed to the critical theoretical study of religion needed. Many other contemporary thinkers (Foucault, Kristeva, Irigaray, Derrida, and others) have as

well. It is surely time, I think (again with articles, jointly sponsored conferences, or even whole issues), for *Critical Inquiry* to attend to this complex phenomenon of religion with the same critical demands it has given other crucial cultural and political phenomena.

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