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THIS JOURNAL

After September 11, 2001 support for any program or publication that has some relevance to Islam or the Muslim World seems to have required no justification beyond the fast-forming cliché: “In the post-9/11 world, it is obvious that we need.....” Is that why we present this new journal to the public?

Skepticism about what a new journal could contribute to any field, we contend, is reasonable; are not there too many journals already? At this point no scholar or serious student can aspire to have comprehensive knowledge of all the journals of relevance to any topic he/she sets out to study. However, it is just as true that many a lacunae in various fields cry to be filled. And it is also true that serious scholars, students, and researchers are worth their salt only if they have developed the art of distinguishing between good and bad publications and between informed judgments and rash speculation.

Writing on Islam and Muslim societies past and present is no exception to the above rule. Anglophone publications can boast many valuable contributions to the study of Islam and Muslims as well as worthless diatribes, and the years since 9/11 have added to both good and bad types of writing. Thus, the very fact that we issue our Journal a few years after 9/11 cannot stand by itself as a justification for its publication. Ultimately, we must believe that we have something unique to contribute.

The publication of this Journal stands on two justifications. First, the Journal is a celebration of the quality of the work done by Macalester students. These undergraduate students have discussed and reflected on complex issues and have contributed their own unique perspectives to them. With their College’s emphasis on internationalism as a point of departure in studying all academic fields, Macalester students are in a position to offer a useful contribution to a large audience.

Second, the journal attempts to engage college students with interest in the study of Islam and the Muslim World. The readership of this Journal is not intended to be limited to undergraduate and graduate students of Islamic studies; it goes beyond these to include all those who are curious about the field. However, students like those of Macalester College are likely to

react to the materials published in this Journal with an added interest. These students might choose to converse with the views and arguments presented in the Journal in their own papers and articles. Our hope is that the ease with which publication has become available to so many of us today will at least carry the advantage of acquainting college students with each others' perspectives.

The Journal's edition of record is its online publication, which can be viewed through the following website: <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/>. A limited number of hard copies will be available in the DeWitt Wallace Library at Macalester College. All comments or questions are welcome and should be sent to the following address:

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