

Note from the Editors

Welcome to another issue of *49th Parallel*. This is our second issue under the new format, and we hope you agree that we have successfully managed to extend and improve upon the ideals and standards previously established. This issue again features a diverse selection of articles, together with an assortment of book reviews pertaining to recent developments in the study of North American politics, history and culture.

With the third anniversary of the invasion of Iraq passing recently, it seems particularly apt this issue features the first in an occasional series of 'Featured Debates'. The item under consideration on this occasion concerns the foreign policy of the incumbent Bush Administration. The multimedia potential of the e-journal format has been utilised to good effect with the inclusion of a photographic essay. Also featured in this issue are two articles that examine North American culture through the lens of popular music and contemporary literature.

Lee Ruddin has contributed a provocative, and at times, contentious article which aims to debunk some provocative, and at times, contentious theories regarding the neo-conservative influence on George W. Bush's foreign policy. His central thesis posits that the impact of the neo-conservatives has been exaggerated by its opponents, and that post-9/11 foreign policy has been shaped by a globalising of historical post-World War Two concerns such as the Roosevelt Corollary, and is thus anything but radical or revolutionary.

In a bid to encourage healthy academic discourse, Maria Ryan provides a counterpoint to these bold claims. This ensures the debate is kept vibrant and energetic, and testifies to the contemporary and controversial subject matter. As per protocol, Lee Ruddin has been provided with the opportunity to 'Reply' to Maria Ryan.

Courting controversy, but not in terms of international politics, is Marios Elles, whose article on Hendrix aims to re-evaluate his near mythic performance of 'The Star Spangled Banner' at the Woodstock Festival. Reconsidering Hendrix's musical career at the time, Elles demonstrates that his cultural, aesthetic, and musical stock was plummeting by the time that iconic moment came to be rendered on grainy film and muffled tape recorders. It is only through a force of collective memory that this performance and his enduring image have become reshaped to fit this 'mythic' perception.

Continuing from the work presented on Toni Morrison and African-American writing in the previous issue of *49th Parallel*, we present an intriguing article by Éva Gyetvai that introduces the concept of an aesthetics of defragmentation in Toni Morrison's fiction. The narrative technique of defragmentation in *Sula* enacts the characters' acts of becoming, which mirror African American women's historical efforts to survive whole in Diaspora. The aesthetics of defragmentation incorporate both the modernist and the postmodernist impulses that arguably energize Morrison's fiction.

This is a striking intervention into the critical and theoretical frameworks of African-American fiction and confidently engages with a variety of overlapping and

contrasting discourses. As such, it suits the ‘boldness’ with which many of the articles in this issue are characterised.

Finally, from Sinclair et al of the First Nations University of Canada, we present a profoundly beautiful photographic essay concerning Contemporary Aboriginal Winter Life. This is a bold visual discourse on power, history, memory, community, and many other things, and is best encapsulated through a quotation from the introductory text:

I believe that our song, dance, art, carving, basketmaking, and other art forms can provide the foundation for our atonomy, solidarity, self-determination, and the means for keeping our spirit alive.” We believe that photography can also be added to this list. We would like to donate our photographs as part of our vision from their words. This is the way we are continuing our lives, Aboriginal existences, through our cameras.

Boldness, energy, and vibrancy run through all these articles as a common thread. This goes some way to demonstrating 49th Parallel’s philosophy of encouraging healthy, contemporary academic debate. The varied nature of the articles, in terms of subject matter and the use of multimedia, demonstrates our commitment to showcasing groundbreaking and eclectic multi-disciplinary work that challenges and innovates.

Finally, we are pleased to feature book reviews concerning a range of topics from Nineteenth Century questions of identity in North America, to present-day issues of war and alliances. We take the opportunity to thank Greenwoods Press and McGill-Queen’s University Press for their continued support and generosity.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all who have contributed to this issue of 49th Parallel and for sharing in our values. We look forward to continuing the debate in our [discussion forum](#) and hope to see you there.

KM, ER & MS