

# Benchmarks

Although the articles in this issue touch on diverse subjects, all seek to come to terms with the historical specificity of our “post-millennial” era. **Raoul Eshelman** strikingly confirms the analytic value of his aesthetic concept of *performatism* in his extensively documented analysis of recent Berlin architecture. In **Adam Katz**’s first article for *Anthropoetics*, the question of Jewish/Israeli “normalization” is the occasion of a rethinking of the originary hypothesis, including a redefinition of the concept of “sacrifice,” that sheds new light on the dilemmas of contemporary politics in the Middle East and elsewhere. **Dawn Perlmutter** pursues her interest in the sacrificial elements of our culture with a richly documented parallel study of recent American Satanism and contemporary terrorism. The issue concludes with a dialogue between **Ammar Abdulhamid** and myself, largely focused on the Middle East, that resonates with some of the considerations in Katz’s article.

## About our Contributors

[Raoul Eshelman](#) (Ph.D. University of Constance 1988, Habilitation Hamburg 1995) is a Slavist specializing in modern and postmodern Czech and Russian literature. He is presently a Privatdozent at the Freie Universität Berlin (where he taught a seminar on **Generative Anthropology** in Fall 2001) and lives in Wasserburg am Inn, Bavaria.

[Adam Katz](#) teaches English at Quinnipiac University and other universities in Connecticut. He is the author of *Postmodernism and the Politics of “Culture”* (Westview 2000) and writes on Holocaust literature, composition, pedagogy, cultural studies, and postmodern politics. He is currently working on a book about the fiction of Ronald Sukenick.

[Dawn Perlmutter](#) is Director of the Institute for the Research of Organized and Ritual Violence. She is the author of two books and numerous articles on violent aesthetics, image worship and ritual violence in contemporary culture. She regularly consults for and trains law enforcement agencies throughout the United States on identifying and investigating ritual crime. Dawn Perlmutter holds a Doctor of Philosophy from New York University and a Master of Fine Arts from The American University, Washington, DC.

[Ammar Abdulhamid](#) operates Etana Press, a small publishing house in Damascus,

Syria. He holds a BS in history from the University of Wisconsin, and is the author of the novel *Menstruation*, published in London in 2001 (and since translated into several languages), which deals with the social and sexual mores of contemporary Syrian youth.

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