

# The New Criterion

## Notes & Comments

December 2007

### Lapham's latest folly

On the inaugural issue of *Lapham's Quarterly*.

The notebooks of the English aesthete Geoffrey Madan (1895–1947) are a trove of amusing aperçus, anecdotes, and apothegms. Among the many memorable gems Madan collected was the description of one now-forgotten character as “an intellectual without an intellect.” We thought of that observation while contemplating the inaugural issue of *Lapham's Quarterly*, which rolled off the press last month. It's been a few years since we've had occasion to notice Lewis H. Lapham in this space. In October 2004, we reported on “Tentacles of Rage: The Republican Propaganda Mill.” This 7,500-word philippic appeared in the September 2004 issue of *Harper's*, the magazine Mr. Lapham edited, with a brief hiatus in the early 1980s, from 1976 to 2006. What recommended “Tentacles of Rage” to the public's attention was not the heat of its invective—shrill and irresponsible though tha  
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