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## The Rhetoric of Terror Reflections on 911 and the War on Terror

By Marc Redfield

Fordham University Press. Hardcover. Condition: New. 148 pages. Dimensions: 9.0in. x 6.0in. x 0.6in. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, did symbolic as well as literal damage. A trace of this cultural shock echoes in the American idiom 911: a bare name-date conveying both a trauma (the unspeakable happened then) and a claim on our knowledge. In the first of the two interlinked essays making up *The Rhetoric of Terror*, Marc Redfield proposes the notion of virtual trauma to describe the cultural wound that this name-date both deflects and relays. Virtual trauma describes the shock of an event at once terribly real and utterly mediated. In consequence, a tormented self-reflexivity has tended to characterize representations of 911 in texts, discussions, and films, such as *World Trade Center* and *United 93*. In the second half of the book, Redfield examines the historical and philosophical infrastructure of the notion of war on terror. Redfield argues that the declaration of war on terror is the exemplary postmodern sovereign speech act: it unleashes war as terror and terror as war, while remaining a crazed, even in a certain sense fictional performative utterance. Only a pseudosovereign—the executive officer of the world's superpower—could have declared this absolute,...



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