

Abstracts

- 207 **George Hoffmann**, *Anatomy of the Mass: Montaigne's "Cannibals"*
 What might the Mass resemble among a people who never experienced the Fall? Montaigne's most famous essay, "Of Cannibals," emerges as a radical response to this question when examined in the context of his time's religious polemic, a context from which the essay borrows much of its imagery. Unlike Protestant controversialists who disparaged Catholic eucharistic rites as barbarous, Montaigne suggests such religious prejudices prove little better than the cultural ones under which New World natives labored. He elects to pursue a line of religious inquiry opened up by Renaissance speculation that Amerindians might constitute a non-Adamite race in order to conduct a personal exploration of alternative practices of faith. This two-mindedness with regard to religion suggests that characterizations of Montaigne need to step beyond the categories of believer and unbeliever. Abandoning tendencies toward denominationalism and, more generally, toward affixing labels to heterodoxy allows for an investigation of the fully idiosyncratic experience of early modern belief. (GH)
- 222 **Bruce Boehrer**, *"Lycidas": The Pastoral Elegy as Same-Sex Epithalamium*
 Milton's "Lycidas" deploys a variety of matrimonial references—classical and Christian—within an elegiac context that simultaneously manifests anxiety over feminine sexuality. The result is a poem whose erotic investments, coexisting as they do with a general preference for masculine over feminine companionship, tend to settle into patterns of same-sex attachment. These culminate in the "unexpressive nuptial song" of the poem's conclusion, which figures spiritual consummation in matrimonial terms while implicitly positioning Lycidas in the role of bride. (BB)
- 237 **Ted Underwood**, *Romantic Historicism and the Afterlife*
 Many Romantic poets were fascinated by the idea that a special historical sense could hear the cultural difference of remote epochs in the sound of the sea or of the wind. This essay traces that fascination back to late-eighteenth-century attempts to imagine a new kind of secular afterlife that fused nature and history, thereby combining the permanence of a natural process with the consoling collectivity of social existence. The most influential parts of James Macpherson's Ossianic poems were the ostensibly archaic ghosts who literalized Enlightenment fantasies about this form of historical immortality. In poems by William Wordsworth, John Keats, and Felicia Hemans, historical sensations function as intimations of immortality and as signs of culture's primacy over other forms of class distinction. The essay closes by suggesting that late-twentieth-century film and literary criticism continue to promise their audiences a similar kind of earthly immortality. (TU)

- 252 **Maya Socolovsky**, *The Homelessness of Immigrant American Ghosts: Hauntings and Photographic Narrative in Oscar Hijuelos's *The Fourteen Sisters of Emilio Montez O'Brien**

Cuban American literature and Oscar Hijuelos's texts in particular have generally been approached through a consideration of their material, multicultural aspects. This essay analyzes Hijuelos's *The Fourteen Sisters of Emilio Montez O'Brien*, on which there is little critical work, by combining the novel's descriptions of photography and immigrant experiences with theories of photography. My reading considers the placing of ghosts and memory in the narrative and problematizes the undialectical presence of death in it. Referring to Hijuelos's text as an "imagnetext" (photographs exist in it only through descriptions, never appearing visually), I read it through Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida* and his development of the wounding *punctum* of a photograph, which produces a melancholy lingering trace of the past in the present moment. In this reading, the immigration experience in Hijuelos's novel exceeds narrativization and is unrepresentable by it. (MS)

- 265 **Sarah Brophy**, *Angels in Antigua: The Diasporic of Melancholy in Jamaica Kincaid's *My Brother**

This essay endeavors to clarify the paradoxes of Jamaica Kincaid's grief in her AIDS memoir, *My Brother* (1997). By analyzing two related motifs—the memoir's pattern of botanical metaphors and the descriptions of her brother Devon's dying and of his corpse—the essay explores how Kincaid's melancholic commitment to Devon complicates her approach to biographical and autobiographical writing. Weighed down and consumed by her brother's affliction, Kincaid traces how Devon—or, rather, her memory of him—possesses independent powers of articulation, forcing her to confront her own implication, as a relatively privileged expatriate writer, in the political, social, and economic contexts that shape his suffering. A self-theorizing text that testifies to the changing demographics of the AIDS pandemic, *My Brother* also overlaps with and significantly redirects current theoretical understandings of mourning and melancholia, through its relocation of melancholic subjectivity at the intersection of postcolonial and racial anxieties. (SB)