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A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts
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- 295 A FIG LEAF FOR JEFF KOONS: PORNOGRAPHY,
PRIVACY, AND “MADE IN HEAVEN”
Lauren DeLand

This essay examines the unusual reception of the artist Jeff Koons’s “Made in Heaven” series (1989–1992), which paradoxically remains both Koons’s most notorious and underanalyzed body of work. Significantly, many of Koons’s formerly supportive critics responded with near total silence to the larger-than-life photographic prints on canvas of Koons and his then-wife, the Italian porn star Ilona Staller, nude and engaged in a variety of sex acts. Moreover, “Made in Heaven” attracted no attention whatsoever from the religious and political forces that mobilized against artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe in the same year as the series’ debut. This essay compares the critical silence that greeted “Made in Heaven” with the flurry of media attention bestowed on artists such as Mapplethorpe, in order to examine the ways in which Koons was effectively allowed by the art world to recuperate from what was institutionally viewed as an embarrassing public performance of his own sexuality. It examines privacy and reproductive heterosexuality as entwined legal and social constructs in United States history, asking how, in the wake of a nationwide tide of antipornography sentiment and of the gravely significant ruling on sexuality and privacy that was the 1986 Supreme Court decision *Bowers v. Hardwick*, did Koons’s blatantly pornographic work escape significant political attention?

- 315 FRIENDING JOE BRAINARD
Brian Glavey

The reception of Joe Brainard’s work, recently canonized in a comprehensive Library of America collected edition, has long been organized around a surprising rubric: the author’s niceness. Although it might seem that sidestepping the hagiographic attention to Brainard as a friend might be necessary to achieve a more accurate sense of his significance as an artist and author, this essay argues on the contrary that Brainard’s friendliness is in fact central to his aesthetics. The problem is not the attention to Brainard’s niceness but rather the assumption that this quality is a feature of his character rather than a particular sort of affective and poetic labor. Brainard’s work thematizes the relationship between generosity and creativity in ways that run parallel to Eve Sedgwick’s account of reparative

reading, and his experiments raise similar questions about what it means to interpret the relation between sexuality and the aesthetic. "Friending Joe Brainard" considers these parallels through a close reading of Brainard's most important literary work, the queer memoir *I Remember*, suggesting that Brainard mobilizes a queer form of tact to present a model of sexuality organized not around stigma and shame but rather around milder forms of embarrassment.

341 THOMAS DE QUINCEY'S STAGE-WORK: THEATER,
READING, BODY, AFFECT

Gerald Maa

This essay contributes to a growing number of studies that find in the work of Thomas De Quincey major contributions to the general practices, values, and blind spots of literary criticism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In particular, this essay argues that he aspires to create an embodied reading practice by underwriting his general theory of literature with his writings on drama. De Quincey values the theater as a place for phenomenal effect, and his literary criticism attempts to formulate a mode of textuality that can replicate, or at least approximate, the material effects of stage-work, thereby implicating the reader's perceptive body in the reading process. He, however, arrives at the impasse between the sensorial body and literature, an aesthetic medium completely mediated from the empirical world. In order to make the sensitized body the primary target of literature, De Quincey has to invent an interior space that obviates the problem that the body puts to reading, and he calls this the "subconscious." This essay not only demonstrates how De Quincey creates his literary theory of dramatic writing in conversation with William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and contemporary discourses about the stage. It also proposes that De Quincey fashions a formative critical practice that enlists techniques of the stage to sensitize and spatialize the reader's body. The problems, inventions, and solutions that he discovers prove that embodied reading can be possible only when supplemented by a notion of depth psychology.

363 CAPITALIZED BODY PARTS: RACE, SEXUALITY, AND
COMMODIFICATION IN HARRY CREWS'S *CAR* (1972)

Alex Pittman

This article explores racial and sexual discourses that mediate the experience of post-Fordist commodification. It does so by focusing on tropes of corporeal dismantling and reassembly that appear throughout Harry Crews's 1972 novel *Car*. After considering the political, conceptual, and historical ambiguities of the novel's representation of capital as a seduction of and assault on white masculine embodiment, the article concludes with

a meditation on what cultural analysis might stand to gain from accounts of fetishism that locate this concept at the intersections of race, sexuality, and commerce.

385 UTOPIAN TREMORS, OR, THE ENIGMATIC
RESTLESSNESS OF THE ISRAELI LITERARY SOLDIER
Oded Nir

In this essay, I define a genre unique to Israeli literature, the genre of soldier's experience, which I distinguish from war novels. I then trace the genre's transformation by exploring three distinct moments in its development: S. Yizhar's *Khirbet Khizeh* (1949), Yehoshua Kenaz's *Infiltration* (1986), and Ron Leshem's *Beaufort* (2005). I argue that each literary work corresponds to a distinct moment in Israeli history, so that each moment's transformations of literary form and subject matter are read as attempting to present an imaginary solution to the social contradictions of that particular moment. In the case of Yizhar's novella, I show how it registers the collapse of the Zionist utopian project and the repression of this failure; for Kenaz's *Infiltration*, I show how its formal "postmodernism" expresses negatively the proletarianization of Palestinians by Israeli capital after the 1967 war; for Leshem's *Beaufort*, I show how it registers the neoliberalization of the Israeli welfare state and a growing recognition of the loss of historicity as a political problem. I conclude by suggesting that my reading of these works fundamentally challenges their received ahistorical interpretations as either challenging or affirming Zionist ideology, conceived simplistically as illusory content.

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