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# Abstracts

**Paula Blank, Comparing Sappho to Philaenis: John Donne's "Homopoetics"** 358

If recent studies of homosexuality in Renaissance literature have helped to challenge the modern idea of an essential sexual identity, I aim to challenge the idea that homosexual desire has its source in sexual "sameness," in an identity with another. Donne's "Sappho to Philaenis" participates in a common Renaissance discourse of likeness in love; his Sappho appeals to physical identity—the "sameness" of the bodies of two women—as the basis of an idealized passion. But in "Sappho to Philaenis" difference emerges as the only inviolable, invariable feature of erotic experience with another, and sameness is exposed as rhetorical rather than material, a contingency produced by Donne's comparative method. By comparing Sappho to Philaenis, Donne's poem suggests that sameness has to do not with the "nature" of homosexuality but with a cultural "homopoetics" that makes such likenesses and produces sexual identities. (PB)

**Donald Morton, Birth of the Cyberqueer** 369

While the return of *queer* is usually explained locally as an oppressed minority's positive reunderstanding of a negative word, as the adoption of an umbrella to cover diverse marginal subjectivities, or as a sign of generational difference, the term's reappearance must instead be historicized—systematically and globally—as one of the theoretical, cultural, and social changes that result from the uncritical acceptance (for class reasons) of the premises of ludic (post)modern theory in the dominant academy and the culture industry. By elevating the category of desire (mode of signification) and occluding the category of need (mode of production), ludic theory encourages the notion that in advanced technoculture, mutant subjectivities—such as the "cyberqueer"—occupy a new and freeing virtual reality of desire beyond mere need where they can write their own histories instead of being written by history. In the end, (cyber)queerity is but a new expression of an old class ideology. (DM)

**Santiago Colás, Of Creole Symptoms, Cuban Fantasies, and Other Latin American Postcolonial Ideologies** 382

Postcolonial theory and criticism have tended to ignore the specificity of Latin American experiences of decolonization, which are largely early-nineteenth-century phenomena. Using Slavoj Žižek's Marxist and psychoanalytic theory of ideology, I highlight the particularities of the poetry of independence in the 1820s and the political and cultural discourses of the Cuban Revolution of 1959. From these instances, I elaborate a concept of Latin American postcoloniality as the recurring product of an intellectual and political elite driven by an unconscious desire for the persistence of external and internal colonial relations, and I argue that the practice of Latin American studies in the United States should be related to this concept. (SC)

**Sharon Kinoshita, Heldris de Cornuälle's *Roman de Silence* and the Feudal Politics of Lineage** 397

The thirteenth-century French text *Le roman de Silence* is the story of a count's daughter, Silence, brought up as a boy because the king has prohibited female inheritance. Whereas previous readings emphasize the gender politics of the heroine's success as a male and the explicit thematization of issues of textuality, I focus instead on the work's representation of the feudal institutions of marriage, lineage, and the transmission of property. Under the cover of Silence's cross-dressing and refeminization, the text renegotiates the way bodies mattered in the thirteenth-century imaginary, redefining the function of the medieval nobility as genealogical reproduction rather than military service. While the story of the protagonist's parents euphemizes this politics of lineage, by the end of the tale the king's only recourse is Silence. (SK)

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