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Editors' Introduction

We are pleased to publish in this issue a range of articles around distinctive themes in American literature and culture, in particular, the construction of “America” amid the promise of progress and the reality of domestic tensions. Our first four essays work from a variety of perspectives with contemporary authors and their contexts, including Philip Roth, Don DeLillo, and John Gregory Brown. Our following five essays offer critiques of mass culture, including evaluations of nineteenth-century periodicals, dime novels, and *The Maltese Falcon*. In other essays, readers can move from study of Herman Melville to the relationship between Native American dance bans and citizenship, to an evaluation of the “long history” of US security.

Tracing the life and works not only of John Keats but also of his lesser-known brother, George, a roundtable organized by Michael Collins sees participants Clare Elliott, Peter Riley, Ben Hickman, and Michael Collins debate Denise Gigante's recent volume *The Keats Brothers: The Life of John and George*. Coming to grips not only with their fraternal relationship, these scholars engage in an in-depth intellectual conversation regarding transatlantic migration, especially as it relates to George Keats's removal to the United States, transcendentalism, melancholia, and chattel slavery. From a study of letters, biographical writing, and imaginative poetic discourse in relation to transnational models of exchange, new light emerges not only upon the life and works of an iconic poet also but upon the shifting relationship between British and American Romanticism. On the electronic side, Douglas R. Egerton's powerful review essay examines recent scholarship debating the history, politics, and, above all, memory of the Civil War vis-à-vis African American lives as lived in slavery and in freedom. Foregrounding black agency, radicalism, and resistance, he debates fundamental issues relating not only to black military service but also to political activism, familial life, and long-standing and emerging liberation movements.