American Pietàs

Visions of Race, Death, and the Maternal

American

Pietàs ruby c. tapia

Ruby C. Tapia

By means of a sustained engagement with Roland Barthes's suturing of race, death, and the maternal in Camera Lucida, Ruby C. Tapia contends that the contradictory essence of the photograph is both as a signifier of death and a guarantor of resurrection.

Tapia explores the implications of this argument for racialized produc-

tions of death and the maternal in the context of specific cultural moments: the commemoration of Princess Diana in U.S. magazines; the intertext of Toni Morrison's and Hollywood's Beloved; the social and cultural death in teen pregnancy, imaged and regulated in California's Partnership for Responsible Parenting campaigns; and popular constructions of the "Widows of 9/11" in print and televisual journalism. In the spaces between these different maternities, says Tapia, U.S. citizen-subjects are born-and reborn.

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