Michel de Montaigne's Response to Machiavelli's
Il Principe

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Abstract

The new political vision advanced by Niccolò Machiavelli in *Il Principe* represented a radical shift in the early modern political discourse. Investigating such topics as the logic of power, the use of cruelty, the *honestum*/*utile* dichotomy and asserting the insufficiency of theological and moral imperatives to meet the rhetorical concerns of effective political action, Machiavelli provoked a disruption in the Renaissance understanding of politics, power and ethics. This essay considers Michel de Montaigne's response to two important Machiavellian themes – the honourable/useful distinction and the prince's use of cruelty – and argues that Montaigne adopts a different, at times ambiguous, stance towards these issues. On the one hand, Montaigne's treatment of the use of deceit in political life seems to share Machiavelli's views on the divorce of ethical principles from practical ones in the realm of politics, although he is quite adamant that there should be a difference between the conduct of those involved in public life and private persons; on the other hand, in the discussion on the (political) use of cruelty, he clearly adopts an anti-Machiavellian position, expressing his utter disapproval of all forms of cruelty.

Keywords: Michel de Montaigne, Niccolò Machiavelli, honestum/utile dichotomy, cruelty, politics, power

Cultural Dissonances and the Monsterisation of the Ethnico-Religious Other in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Western Imaginary

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Abstract
Often dubbed "Saracen" in the medieval Christian West and typically reviled and abjected as idolatrous and prone to abominations, the religious and ethnic other of Middle English drama and of Matthew Paris's *Chronica majora* will endure, in different guises, in early modern imagological cartographies, if oftentimes displaced into the New World. In the process of self constitution, otherness becomes a projection of everything unacceptable to the self. Accordingly, Herod, the typical tyrant of Middle English biblical plays, is portrayed as a self-aggrandising sadistic butcher, whose bloodthirsty propensity as shown in the N-Town and Towneley plays, however, is not substantially different from that of the cannibals populating early modern maps and cosmographies such as Sebastian Münster's and Diego Gutiérrez's. Nonetheless, the dramatic, historiographic and cartographic practices of the later Middle Ages and early modernity in England and on the Continent suggest that the *dissonant* other is but "another of the [hegemonic] same" (Irigaray) whose *monsterisation* works all the more effectively as it conceals its *consonance* with the supremacist self that has repudiated it. This paper seeks, therefore, to unravel the disavowed consonances, within late medieval and early modern discursive practices, between the *other* figure and the hegemony responsible for such othering.

"Shaped Like the Island of Newfoundland":
The Japanese Influence on Pilgrimage in John Steffler's
The Grey Islands

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Abstract
'Shaped like the Island of Newfoundland': The Japanese Influence on Pilgrimage in John Steffler's *The Grey Islands*" explores the impact of John Steffler's long-time obsession with Japanese literature and of the underlying Shinto and Buddhist philosophies on his poetry. In examining the poetry and journey of *The Grey Islands*, this essay shows the various ways in which the Japanese literature and philosophy have influenced the poetic representations of the relationship between man and nature, how they shaped the poet's awareness, use of stillness, and infused his work with continual reminders of impermanence, thereby allowing for an altered sense of time and the supernatural, as well as legitimizing his travel and retreat to the Grey Islands.

These very Japanese components of Steffler's vision intersect in interesting ways with the geographical place of Newfoundland in his work. Moreover, there are many ways of viewing Steffler's journey of *The Grey Islands* as a pilgrimage, but this paradigm is necessarily changed by the shape of Newfoundland and the influence of Eastern thought.

Keywords: Canada, Newfoundland, Japan, Pilgrimage, Buddhist, Catholic, Nature, Island, East, West

The Appropriation of the East in the U.S. 1960s Counterculture

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Abstract

Seymour Glass, the main character of J.D. Salinger's Glass family stories, would be a potential poet if it had not been for his early suicide. In "Seymour: An Introduction," his brother Buddy Glass writes about Seymour's poems and the universe of literature, at the same time as he evokes childhood memories. However, Seymour's poems are never shown to the reader of "Seymour: An Introduction;" they are kept in Buddy's hands and in the readers' imagination. They are invisible poems that Buddy uses in an attempt to legitimate Seymour's brilliant existence in the Western reality. The poems, as Buddy suggests, are in haiku form – Japanese poetry. Seymour constantly builds a bridge between Eastern and Western cultures (in relation to religion, literature, philosophy), and this is done through Buddy's narratives about his family, the Glass family. Jack Kerouac and some writers from the beat generation also incorporated the Eastern culture in their works, especially regarding religion. Some of them, including Kerouac, studied Buddhism and found in the Eastern religion and literature a way to escape the socio-political struggles the U.S. was facing during the 1960s. Bearing that in mind, it is relevant to ask: How do J.D. Salinger and Jack Kerouac develop an argument in their works regarding the appropriation of Eastern religion and literature in the U.S. 1960s culture? Thus, this essay aims at discussing such questions based on Roland Barthes' book *Empire of Signs*, in order to understand the bridge Salinger and Kerouac built between Eastern and Western cultures during the long 1960s.

Identity and Nostalgia in Chinese *Zhiqing* Literature

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Abstract

Contemporary China has turned its recent traumatic history, namely, the Cultural Revolution, into a mere product of commodification, a good source of income based on elderly people's memories of things past, or youngsters' tendencies of reconstructing and reimagining it as a symptom of discontentment with the capitalist, alienating moral values. A dark moment of Chinese history has thus become the symbol of an idealized world, which, at the end of the 90's, started creating a wave of pureblood nostalgia for it, especially among those very people and victims who experienced this gigantic human tragedy. The zhiqing generation, or the young intellectuals dislocated for hard labor and reeducation in remote parts of the Chinese countryside, transcend the painful memories about their own past and reinvent it through a kind and nostalgic light, within long series of equally nostalgic memoirs that boomed in the Chine literary landscape at the end of the 90's. This essay tries to explore the socio-psychological reasons that led to such a flabbergasting attitude during the post-Mao era, at a time when China becomes more and more visible culturally and economically on the global scene.

The Dichotomy of Cultural Perspective
in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*

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Abstract
In her last novel, *Daniel Deronda* (1876), George Eliot demonstrates a profound, if uneven relationship between the traditions of the English upper classes and the culture of European Jews. Through the novel's two principle characters, Daniel Deronda and Gwendolen Harleth, Eliot grounds her broader cultural dichotomy in the intimate relationship between two people who share an unusual experience of chance. Over the course of the novel, Eliot explores the chance nature of Daniel's identity – his native Jewishness and his English nature – as well as Gwendolen's misfortunes, which force her to undergo a profound test to her nature and represent for Daniel a mirroring of his own mother's experience of oppression in marriage. Eliot explores identity, though, with an emphasis on the broader cultural differences that inform the characters' positions. Although some critics and readers have questioned the compatibility of the more distinctly English elements with the Jewish plot lines, the aim of this essay is to demonstrate the significance of the dichotomy between the novel's two plots and, more generally still, its two divergent cultural perspectives.

Changing Places (and not Only) in
Home by Toni Morrison

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Abstract
Published in 2012, *Home* by Toni Morrison brings into discussion some of the problems which the African-Americans of the 1950s confronted, and it concentrates, in less than 150 pages, on the destinies of two brothers, Frank and Ycidra Money, from Lotus, Georgia. Morrison's style is direct, concise, accessible and heartwarming. The two concepts upon which I have concentrated throughout the novel are "otherness" and "change," both of them showing the development of the protagonists' personalities, as well as how they can influence the lives of the main characters.

Keywords: African-American, protagonist, otherness, change

Globalism, Gender, Psychosis:
Redrafting Identities
in the Scope of 21st Century Warfare

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Abstract
A number of successful films and television programs dealing with the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are intercultural adaptations, which revise specific aspects of the international conflicts they feature. While these texts' perceived authenticity is gauged according to the real situations they represent, their creators often deny the political implications and promote the universal significance of the challenges their fictional characters face. This essay assesses the political dimensions of several films, in particular Susanne Bier's *Brødre* and Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker*, to raise questions about international politics, representation, and national identity in 21st century Western cultures.

East-West Cultural Encounters in Romania: The Vlad/Dracula Connection

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"Vlad Dracul, has spawned 'two … different myths … a national and political symbol for the Romanians … (and) the gothic legend of the vampire.' One myth, culture, the other, the culture of commerce." (L. Boia qtd. in Thompson)

Abstract

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, many Western tourists have become interested in visiting Transylvania, a region in the central part of Romania, in Eastern Europe, in order to discover the stories and legends about Count Dracula, a mysterious and ruthless vampire, who, some believe, might have inhabited various solitary places in the heart of Transylvania. Some of these tourists may know that the Dracula vampire story originated in a novel written by Bram Stoker, who placed the vampire in Transylvania, a far-away mythic space, and the legends woven around this fictional character have created an intriguing link between the vampire figure and a real-life, fifteenth-century Romanian ruler, Vlad Ţepeș/Dracula. As a result of Western media representations of the Dracula myth, in time, Romania has acquired (and developed) a connection with the vampire myth. Therefore, this essay sets out to examine the impact of the Dracula myth on the postcommunist society, by exploring the historical and cultural dimensions of the "Dracula connection," reflected in the dichotomy between the Romanian general perception about Vlad Dracula as a medieval ruler and "the other" Romanian version of the Dracula vampire

persona loosely based on Vlad Dracula (a version constructed for a Western "audience" for commercial and touristic purposes).

Sign Typologies

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Abstract

Sign theory is one of those sciences that may diverge significantly from the lay perception of its subject matter. *Semiotics* (Anglo-Saxon schools of thought emerged in emulation of Charles Sanders Peirce, 1839–1914) and *semiology* (Continental schools, such as Structuralism, inspired by Swiss theoretician Ferdinand de Saussure, 1857–1913) have each put together some more or less rigorous systems of classification. Yet, of the two founders of the modern science of signs, it was Peirce who was drawn to typologies, and his contribution is still quintessentially accepted in research. It results into three major sign categories, among which we discriminate via degrees of arbitrariness: icon, index, and symbol (which further break down into subtypes, based on conventionality, code, medium, channel used, etc). For sign analysis or understanding of any kind – from the hermeneutics of early Christian texts to the search-engine management on the Internet – typology is an essential instrument. Apart from that, this essay investigates the contrast between the natural condition of sign-users (engaged in incessant, routine activity) and the particular condition of semioticians (who find motivation in the universality of signs while overcoming certain inherent limitations). An attempt is made to create a working typology, from examples that go past the expected limits of human interaction.

Some Considerations on Foreign Language Learning as a Means of Self-Development

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Abstract

Self-development has been regarded as a complementary method of education, usually as a parallel or post-educational step, involving self-awareness, self progress, and competitive desire to reach high levels of professionalism and a complex personality. While considering a variety of skills and aptitudes the individual must put to work, second or foreign language learning is likely to count among the most important aspects that can bring benefits to self-development. An ideal situation would be if we could train our children to grow into perpetuously developing personalities, always in search of good communication with the world and themselves. Part of this self-growth must start in infancy and continue throughout our lives, as a condition of progress. My study attempts to analyse some aspects that are implicit in this process, as well as the inherent impediments responsible for us not always being able to develop our personality, depending on many objective or subjective conditions. The ultimate purpose of the study, however, is to cast light on the important aspect of self-improvement and development.

The Metaphor of Sound in Leslie Saunders' Volume of Poems *No Doves / Fără porumbei*

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Abstract
The issue of translation, shortly commented upon via Quirk, Levy, Bassnett, Bell, Dubois, Chițoran and Bantaș, has been and still is a solid background for approaching poetic contributions, in our case, Saunders' poetry translated into Romanian. For the aesthetic value of the volume entitled *No Doves / Fără porumbei* to be properly revealed, sound patterns as stylistic instances suggesting the dimension of space and time, these two pure forms of intuition in Kant's philosophy, will be identified and analysed in relation with meaning via Jung's archetypes and Bachelard's aesthetics.

Keywords: Lesley Saunders, Jung, Bachelard, sound patterns, archetypes, translation, poetic self, metaphor of sound.