

## **Shakespeare, the Musical and Political Humour in *Kiss Me, Kate* Revived**

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### **Abstract**

The present study focuses on Michael Blakemore’s turn-of-the-millennium revival for Broadway and the London stage of the 1948 musical comedy *Kiss Me, Kate* by Cole Porter (music and lyrics) and Bella and Samuel Spewack (book). The metatheatrical structure of Blakemore’s revival of this famous adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew* impresses, among other things, by the multiplication of intertextual links as it projects Porter and the Spewacks’ as well as Shakespeare’s ‘battles of the sexes’ against the realistically ‘painted’ background of a world populated by actors, gangsters and, as an element of novelty, politically-involved US army representatives. Thus, Blakemore’s directorial perspective on the text(s) in performance turns out to be thought-provoking, drawing the present-day audience’s attention to a wider range of gender, culture and power-related forms of conflict, and making excellent use of subversive humour, the mechanisms of which this study will explore, to subtly comment on history-shaping political ‘games’.

**Keywords:** adaptation, intertextuality, performance, humour, gender, politics

## **The Tragedies of Yorùbá's Spiritual Space**

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### **Abstract**

In his play *The Road*, written in 1965, Wole Soyinka, the 1986's winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, addresses in sombre shades not only to the historical tragedies of the Nigerian space, but also to an obsolete cosmology unable to balance the social structures born in the postcolonial aftermath. Its engagement with rituals and masks, with the distortion of the Christian religion - forcedly imposed within a collective mind not prone to it - transforms the African cosmology in a haunting turmoil of trials and errors. In 1970, after his imprisonment during the Nigerian War, the Nigerian playwright creates a God-like figure in *Madmen and Specialists*, a tragedy considered one of the gloomiest collections of representations in the history of the African theatre. We will argue that both plays advance proposals of hybrid gods, and both plays end by envisioning failures and death. Through these forms of death, the complex creations of an alienated collective mind strain to shape a space in which the ancient cyclic pilgrimage of old gods and the linear progressive design of the modern gods share a dimension of death and revival around which a new social identity could be interwoven.

**Keywords:** Obatala's myth, chthonic space, African tragedy, egungun masquerade, Christian religion

## **Western Political Philosophy in J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year***

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims at evaluating J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* – a novel which, for the time being at least, has received much less critical assessment than the writer's widely-acknowledged masterpieces – from the perspective of the intertextual relation it establishes with Western philosophers in point of political thinking, but also from that of its own politics of writing, which have geared the author towards experimenting with the traditional, feminine and introspective, diary mode in view of forwarding his opinions on perennial, yet acutely contemporary issues such as the state and the constraints it incurs, democracy, anarchism, terrorism, doctrine; on breaking news issues like avian influenza or Al-Qaida; but also on lighter topics such as music, the body, tourism, language use or authority in fiction. On the one hand, the reading thus discloses Coetzee's affiliation to certain patterns of Western philosophical thinking, which he either follows closely, or confutes passionately. On the other hand, a further focal point in the present undertaking concerns the experimentalist-like innovation in point of form: the multi-layered diegetic scaffolding and the polyphony of the narrating instances.

**Keywords:** politics of the novel, diary, contemporary issues, polyphony, intertextuality

## **Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* as an Act of Literary Resistance**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the sheer variety of creative roles that the contemporary Scottish iconoclastic writer Alasdair Gray assumes in his works of fiction, discussing the external manifestations of his multifaceted talents in action as well as considering the conveyed effect. Widely regarded as the leading figure of the 1980s Scottish literary renaissance and the founding father of Scottish postmodern fiction, Gray emerged as a major creative artist with the publication of his influential novel *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (1981), which epitomises his experimental approach to literary production and consumption. Gray figures in *Lanark* not only as the author of the text and the creator of the accompanying original illustrations, he also makes a cameo appearance as the morose and mean writer of the work-in-progress, who engages in an intellectual discussion with his protagonist concerning the plot of the very novel. Under the alias of Sidney Workman, Gray also fulfils the task of the literary critic in annotating the metafictional chapter of *Lanark* with discursive footnotes and embedding in it an index of earlier authors and texts that have been supposedly plagiarised in the novel under scrutiny. Gray succeeds in utilising the characteristically protean quality of the postmodern age for aesthetic purposes of his own making, challenging by the means of the mutually reinforcing form and content of his work our assumptions about the world as we know it.

**Keywords:** Scottish literature; metafiction; postmodernism

## **Building on the Woolfian Text: Intertextuality, Instrument or Philosophy?**

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### **Abstract**

For a quite extended period of time now, the theoretical pool targeting literature and the forces involved in the emergence of texts have been characterized by an excessive and obsessive use of theories revolving mainly around notions which inevitably bring under the scope issues of postmodernism and intertextuality. This phenomenon represents a natural response in the globalized and technologized world of the present day, where the socio-political discourses are articulated in a constant process of cultural recycling. Therefore, most studies operate under the assertion that postmodernism, understood as being governed by a philosophy of repetition, symbolizes a context in which intertextuality, the instrument, is at work; however, the very metaphysics of repetition enables, within theoretical frames, a certain synonymy between the two notions. Reflecting on these ideas, when meaningful texts (illustrated in this particular case by the Woolfian text) enter the process of repetition, the question pops: is intertextuality an instrument, or a philosophy, or both? Consequently, the present paper is oriented towards providing possible answers for the question formulated.

**Keywords:** postmodernism, intertextuality, Woolfian text

**An Imagological Reading of Kazuo Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans***

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**Abstract**

This paper focuses on the analysis of Kazuo Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans* from an imagological point of view. The storyline follows the life of a prominent British detective in his endeavour to solve the mystery of his parents' disappearances from their family home in Hong Kong. The images projected by the narrative reflect the centre of the empire in transition, with an accent on the reversal of the classical standpoints of characters, and a colony struggling to cope with the horrors of war as well as a change in vassality.

**Keywords:** imagology, identity, otherness, national character

## **J. R. R. Tolkien – A Literary Philosopher**

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### **Abstract**

In several of his writings, J. R. R. Tolkien has openly talked about the sorrow he felt due to the fact that his homeland had no mythology of its own. Through his Middle-Earth imagery, he was able to create a cosmogony and dwell on the eternal fight between Good and Evil. However, it's not in the mainstream texts on Middle-Earth that this intersection between literature and Philosophy is extensively explored. A definite answer will be found concerning the author's main queries on how the land can be healed through the reader's encounter with an elf and a human philosopher and consequent engagement in their debate: *Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth* (*The Dialogue Between Finrod and Andreth*). Through their ideas, fears, doubts and queries, we will understand that the healing of the marred earth has to come from within.

**Keywords:** myth, literature, philosophy, Middle-Earth

**The Identity Quest: from the Babel of the Worlds to the Coffers of the Body  
– Ruxandra Cesereanu, *Tricephalos***

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**Abstract**

Due to her academic qualification, Ruxandra Cesereanu prefers a literary discourse which is closely related to text production and reception theory. Whether she writes poetry, short prose, essays, or literary criticism, the author is totally aware of the permanent confrontation between the immanence of the text and the transcendence of the ego. Her second novel, *Tricephalos: Cartea licornei. Peripețiile Alisei în Țara NewYorkeză. Cuferele trupului meu* (2002), mixes in the autofictional register two essential themes of her writing: identity and lust. The romanesque pattern is not that of the trash autofiction: at the narrative level the story of visiting the erotic cabarets from Paris or the New York slums which abound in sexuality might be considered the perfect plot for consumerist literature; at the discourse level this plot is subdued by imagism and bookish inroads, by aesthetic and elitist rhetoric. From this point of view, we shall analyse the specificity of writing in relation to the feminine autofiction grid and to the identity of the postmodern subject.

**Keywords:** autofiction, body, identity, subject, feminine writing



## **Accessing Local Literatures via Public Institutions Websites**

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### **Abstract**

Most public institutions create and disseminate pragmatic, community oriented information via their official websites. Some, however, also have pages dedicated to literary text production, distribution and consumption. A case in point is the regional “V. A. Urechia” Public Library, Galati, Romania, with its webpage, available at <http://www.bvau.ro/>. Its cultural component, Axis Libri, includes links to the homonymous literary salon, cultural magazine, publishing house and book festival – all of which primarily promote Romanian culture, literature and education – but for the larger public access is limited due to the fact that translation into international languages (mostly English and French) is only partly provided, for three of the twenty-four volumes of the Axis Libri cultural magazine. A sample text and its translation into English, ‘Fănuș Neagu: Cum am scris *Îngerul a strigat*’ [‘Fănuș Neagu: How I Wrote *The Angel Yelled*’], are under scrutiny here, generating considerations regarding local representation and intercultural communication.

**Keywords:** culture, literature, translation, representation, website design

## **The Role of Intertextuality in Neil Gaiman's *American Gods***

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### **Abstract**

The American cultural identity and the essence of modern America are concepts difficult to describe and define. Neil Gaiman, a highly acclaimed British writer, tried to capture, in his award-winning novel, *American Gods*, the "real" America, and its elusive cultural identity. This article aims to uncover the intertextual references in *American Gods*, since Gaiman's work is renowned for its extensive intertextuality. It also attempts to analyse the role and the importance of references in the creation of the American identity, and its cultural representation in Gaiman's novel, by examining the types, functions, and effects of intertextuality.

**Keywords:** intertextuality, transtextuality, American cultural identity, cultural representations of America.

***The Two Gentlemen of Verona in Shakespeare in Love: Intertextual Relations and their Role in Meaning-Making***

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**Abstract**

This paper seeks to explore the relationship between Shakespeare's early comedy *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and John Madden's film *Shakespeare in Love*. To this end, first of all, it will examine the role played by direct quotations of text from *The Two Gentlemen* and the significance of the fictional staging of the comedy in the film. Moreover, it will identify themes, imagery and elements of characterisation from *The Two Gentlemen* exploited by the film and explain how they contribute to the latter's dramatic development. Further, it will highlight situational parallelism between play and film and attempt an explanation of its functions. Finally, it will seek to integrate the above-mentioned aspects with a view to illustrating the picture of *The Two Gentlemen* as emerging from *Shakespeare in Love*: a highly mediated picture, where romantic love and comical excess are foregrounded at the expense of other equally important features of the play, such as risqué eroticism and highly refined wordplay.

**Keywords:** Shakespearean comedy, film, intertextuality, signification, multimodality

**Revisiting *The Mahabharata*: Draupadi's voice in Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions***

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**Abstract**

This paper attempts to read Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel *The Palace of Illusions* as a feminist interpretation of the Indian epic *The Mahabharata*. In the Indian scenario, women have been encouraged to follow the ideal women of the past: Sita, Savitri, Draupadi but their stories are given to us by the male writers from a male perspective. One wonders what these women would have had to say about their lives and here comes into focus Divakaruni's novel. The paper seeks to look at the delineation of the character of Draupadi and the textual strategies used to give prominence to the voice and thoughts of one of the central figures of this great epic. The paper seeks to answer whether *The Palace of Illusions* is a resistant text or a revisionist one, and how far it includes women in storytelling which hitherto has been male-centred. The paper uses the method of discourse and context analysis to arrive to the conclusion that Divakaruni has ably articulated the thoughts and voice of Draupadi and has successfully brought the story to the audience from a female's point of view.

**Keywords:** revisionism, postmodernism, resistant text, historiographic metafiction, feminist perspective

## **Parisian Space and Memory in Patrick Modiano's Fiction**

Elena-Brândușa STEICIUC (Professor PhD, “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania)

### **Abstract**

Patrick Modiano, the recent Nobel winner, depicts in his writings - more than any other French contemporary novelist – the space of France seen as a “terre d’accueil” for many persons, especially Jews who had to leave their homelands during the Second World War. The very heart of France, Paris is not only the “ville-lumière” much praised by artists of all times and cultures, but also a space where memory is present at any street corner, especially the sad and painful remembrance of anti-Semitism.

This is why our paper will deal with some of the most outstanding aspects concerning France during the 20th century, which are related in Modiano's writings (*Ronde de nuit*, *Livret de famille*, *Une jeunesse*) with memory, especially the Holocaust and the Vichy collaboration experience.

**Keywords:** Patrick Modiano, French culture, Paris, memory, Holocaust

## **Ezra Pound and the Transformation of Culture**

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### **Abstract**

To the contemporary reader, the world re-created by this pioneer of High Modernism bridges references from such different cultural spheres, that Poundian discourse as a whole confuses and defies interpretation. The anthropology of culture has brought forth a concept which reaches beyond the pure meaning of the discourse; by analysing together various references, from the cultural background to the intentionality of the writing and, further on, to the influence which the published texts are responsible for: the concept of culture transformation. To apply this to Poundian criticism, one must neglect neither the biographical nor the political or literary contexts, and develop a special interest in the efforts made for a shift in perspective to take place. Such changes, resulting from a cultural patching and comparing, will be the object of this paper and of subsequent research.

**[Review]** Adrian Papahagi, *Wyrđ. Ideea destinului în literatura engleză veche*, Cluj-Napoca: Eikon, Colecția Universitas, 2014, 430 pp., ISBN 978-606-711-065-4 (paperback)

**“Preserved like an insect within the amber of a poetic formula”- A Brilliant Display of Scholarly Endeavour**

Eugenia GAVRILIU (Retired Associate Professor, “Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați, Romania)

## **Cultural Intertexts**

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**[Review]** Therese Anne Fowler, *Z. Un roman despre Zelda Fitzgerald*. Traducere din engleză și note de Anca Peiu, București: Humanitas Fiction, 2015, 399 p. ISBN 978-973-689-866-2 / Therese Anne Fowler (2013-04-11). *Z: A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald*. Hodder & Stoughton. Kindle Edition.

### **The professor, the historian, the writer**

Ruxanda BONTILĂ (“Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați)