

Literary Piracy and the Art of Experimental Narratives

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Abstract

A pirate is a ship-raider who abides by no rules. The pirate roams the tides of the ocean exploring new territories. An experimental writer is a literary pirate who explores new textual territories and toys with literary canons. The literary pirate abides by no generic laws and inscribes rebellion in the pages of his fiction. Classicists even label them as “literary outlaws”. In normative piracy, stealing, killing, destroying and ravaging are absolutely allowed. In experimental fiction, plots are either spiral, cyclic or non-existent. Characters are either strange humans or mutant creatures mirroring internal and external struggles with their worlds. Ever since the Second World War, American writers have pledged the oath of piracy and created a fiction that transcends reality. To reflect their apparent antagonism to the laws of the canons, literary genres are often introduced by the prefix “anti” such as anti-detective and anti-romance. To delineate their own code of superiority over tradition, the prefix “meta” becomes attached to historiographic-metafiction and “post” is added to post-apocalyptic fiction. Science fiction, graphic novels, psychedelic fiction are only a tip of the iceberg when it comes to enumerating how literary piracy eviscerated the laws of time, space, death, religion, morality and consciousness. Drawing on Jean François Lyotard’s contention that postmodernity is “the incredulity towards grand-narratives”, this chapter shall examine how the rise of new literary genres in postmodern literature is a form of literary piracy. *American Psycho* (1991), *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (1962) and *Naked Lunch* (1959) are three case studies that epitomize piracy in its many folds. Accordingly, this article shall explore the different generic transgressions from psychedelic, to anti-detective to postmodern gothic experimentations. It will equally explore how literary piracy transgresses the boundaries of reception through tackling controversial themes ranging from madness, to homosexuality to substance abuse. This essay shall culminate on tracing the parallels between actual piracy and its cultural inscription in these novels. Naturally, as actual piracy is criminalized, literary piracy is deemed as scandalous, unacceptable and highly controversial. Whether sailing across the tides of the endless sea or writing the pages of timeless novels, breaking free from the confinement of mould and tradition renders freedom irresistibly outlawed.

Keywords: piracy, periphery, outlaw, postmodern, genre

Inside *Noise*: A Case of Intersemiotic Translation and Metatheatre in Radio Drama

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Abstract

Although a number of discussions, analyses and interpretations of radio drama attempt to make effective use of semiotics, semiotic vocabulary tends to be employed mainly for the purposes of theoretical explications on the relationship between radio productions and their listeners. This seems to be an obvious direction, as intersemiotic translation is an inherent part of radio drama which is essentially based on the written script interpreted via the sound medium. In other words, radio drama may be said to exist thanks to intersemiotic translation between the written word and its acoustic realization. Taking the above as the starting point, this paper aims to show how intersemiotic translation works within a produced radio play. I want to focus specifically on one BBC radio production entitled *Noise* (2012) and on its basis present the ways in which various semiotic systems (in spite of the apparent limitations of radio drama as a purely sound medium) interact on various levels. This reveals intersemiotic translation within radio plays as conducive to emphasizing its dramatic form, which further results in uncovering radio drama's metatheatrical elements.

Keywords: radio drama, intersemiotic translation, metatheatre, *Noise*

Private Stories, Public Issues: Representations of Migration in Angus Macqueen's *The Last Peasants. Journeys*

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Abstract

The documentary trilogy *The Last Peasants* (2003), directed and produced by Angus Macqueen, seeks to reveal the 'private stories' behind Romanians' illegal migration to Western Europe against the background of major transformations in the post-Communist Romanian society still in transition at the turn of the twenty-first century. The paper focuses on one of the films of the trilogy, *Journeys*, which is the most explicit in its representation of the dangers that Romanian migrants had to face, prior to Romania's joining the European Union, while crossing borders to 'go West' in hope of living their 'Western European dream'. The exploration of the rhetorical and narrative strategies employed by the British director in this filmic text aims, therefore, at casting light on how images of the sending Romanian society, the Western European hosts and the Romanian diaspora are constructed, in an attempt to challenge the audiences and to raise their awareness of the need for a better understanding of such a complex social phenomenon as migration, as well as for the change in attitudes in host-migrant interactions.

Keywords: documentary, illegal migration, Home/West, identity, imagology

The Masquerade of Social Selves in *What Maisie Knew* by Henry James

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Abstract

The paper discusses the Social Self represented in the novel *What Maisie Knew* (1897) by Henry James. Its representation is analysed under the lens of his brother's (W. James) psychological theory outlined in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890). The concept of the Social Self in *What Maisie Knew* may be seen as taking shape in the images of five adults: a father and a mother, a stepfather and a stepmother and a governess. All the adults fail to fulfil their social roles as parents, apparently because their material and spiritual Selves are stronger than the social one. The representation of the Social Self in the novel is achieved via fixed focalization; the Social Selves of the (step)parents are presented from a little child's innocent, subjective point of view. The child becomes the eyes and the ears of the novel, that is, the reflector character through which the novel is narrated. Henry James almost never crosses the boundary and the radii of Maisie's perspective which is strictly kept throughout the entire narrative. It seems that through his novel H. James indirectly blames the English society where unhealthy ethics prosper and in which the devaluation of morality and ideals occurs.

Keywords: Social Self, English society, motherhood, perspective, experience

As if by Magical Realism: A Refugee Crisis in Fiction

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Abstract

Mohsin Hamid is, along with Salman Rushdie, one of the most powerful ‘postcolonial voices’ in British literature to employ elements of magical realism in order to fictionally recreate a hectic contemporary history which seems to be moving faster than ever. People desperately flee from violent civil wars, seeking refuge, and politics of inclusion flourishes in Europe in response. Against this background, drawing inspiration from various violent events, like the Syrian Civil War, the fall of Mosul and the Yemeni Civil War, as well as from his personal migrant experience, Hamid publishes his fourth novel, *Exit West*, equally personal and political as his other novels, most notably, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, dedicated to the events of 9/11. The paper aims to analyse *Exit West* from the perspective of this relation between the personal and the political, tracing the role of magical realism in opening the doors towards the painfully realistic construction of otherness.

Keywords: Mohsin Hamid, refugees, otherness, politics, migration

Tropes of Ireland in the Gendered Mirror

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Abstract

The paper discusses the connections between gender, colonialism and nationalism by focussing on the “woman-nation” pairing that has characterised both the colonial and countercolonial modes of representing Ireland. One strand of the argument focuses on English allegorical representations of the colonised land as a frail but docile Hibernia, protected by the English law and order, which is a favourite trope of the 19th-century British periodic press and its iconographic texts. In opposition, the Irish native tradition (exemplified by the early 18th-century *aislinge* of Aogán Ó Rathaille and by the political ballads of the late 18th- and 19th-centuries) revert to either the image of “a vulnerable virgin ravished by the masculine aggressive invader from England” or that of “a mother goddess summoning her faithful sons to rise up against the infidel invader” (Kearney 1984: 21). Blending the two, Yeats’s *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* constitutes itself into a mythic nexus for personifications of Ireland, becoming a potent symbol of Irish nationalism. A final part of the argument considers the ‘afterlives’ of such feminine national icons, which “while seeming to empower women, actually displace them outside history into the realm of myth.” (Fleming 1999: 48) Maud Gonne’s play *Dawn* and Eavan Boland’s poem “*Mise Eire*” offer examples of women’s rewritings of patriarchal modes of representation which question and reformulate the “woman-nation” trope.

Keywords: identity, gender, colonialism, nationalism, representation, “woman-nation”

On the Origin of Species: *Adaptation*

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Abstract

The question of literature and the media has always been of interest to writers and critics alike, and Charles Kaufman’s *Adaptation* is no exception to the rule. Seen as an intertextual re-telling or transformation of the source text, Charles Kaufman’s script discloses its own status not only as a pre-text but also as a theoretical co(n)text made up of universal principles according to which an adaptation works. As such, it is not memory – seen as intertextuality that controls the process or the product of adaptation but rather evolution, i.e. the capacity to adapt and evolve to any given circumstances.

Keywords: species, origin, evolution, adaptation, intertextuality, memory

**Ambivalence Towards the Traditional Victorian Model of Femininity in
Rosa Nouchette Carey's *Rue with a Difference***

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Abstract

Like other novels by Rosa Nouchette Carey, *Rue with a Difference* focuses on female experience as revealed through women's concerns surrounding their various family roles. It deals with marriage and maternity at a time when such domestic-related issues were obsolete and when the pervasive ideology of domesticity gave way to late Victorian ideologies. The novel's adherence to traditional domestic ideals was one of the reasons why it was considered outdated and doomed to oblivion for the most part of the twentieth century. Attempting to reassess *Rue with a Difference* from a more neutral perspective afforded by the passage of time, the present article is designed to prove that the novel does not fully approve the domestic ideology, displaying instead an ambivalent attitude towards it and its model of femininity. By comparing the representations of feminine family roles in *Rue with a Difference* with the non-fictional accounts of the models of womanhood promoted by the contrasting ideologies of Victorian culture, the paper will show that the angelic ideal is both supported and subverted within the same fictional text through the mixture of traditional and non-traditional features defining the main female characters.

Keywords: representation, feminine family role, model of femininity, Victorian ideology, character construction

Writing on the Woolfian Palimpsest. Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*

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Abstract

Contemporary literary texts increasingly recycle older writings, assuming extra depth and addressing a cultivated reader. Their scaffolding reveals the intertextual net and renders the reading process at once challenging and rewarding. A case in point is Michael Cunningham's 1998 novel, *The Hours* – Woolfian in content, form and politics, with obvious references to Mrs. Dalloway, as well as oblique allusions to "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" and other writings. Along these lines, the paper is intended to advance an analysis of Cunningham's multi-layered novel, foregrounding its dialogism and the strategy of its discourse.

Keywords: novel, discourse, intertext

Romanian Cultural Identity After Admission to the European Union

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Abstract

This article aims to report on the cultural identity of Romanians after Romania’s admission to the European Union as described by Romanians themselves, especially in light of the trending unofficial appropriation of the term “European” to be synonymous with European Union status. A semi-structured survey was conducted that included twenty-two adult Romanians, Romanian being defined by holding Romanian citizenship. The data was then coded according to social science methodology to categorize emerging themes and aid in analysis. The analysis revealed four prominent themes that give insight into specifically the political landscape of Romania through Romanian cultural identity after Romania’s admission to the European Union. Issues of concern for participants were the metaphorical marginalization of Romania politically and economically within the European Union and problems of corruption, but contrasted with a strong overall commitment still to staying within the European Union and simultaneously maintaining good relations with their non-European Union neighbors.

Keywords: European Cultural Identity, Culture and Politics

Identity in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Milan Kundera

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Abstract

Drawing on essays concerning Mitteleuropa, this article attempts to describe aspects of cultural identity in Milan Kundera’s novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. The historical challenges that this particular geographical and cultural area encountered are reflected in relation to a struggle to maintain a certain cultural identity, encumbered by the Soviet influence in Czechoslovakia. A threatened identity relies on its cultural life, but the characters in Kundera’s novel also resort to a certain identitary separation and seek for a refuge in love. The Czech writer’s novels emphasize an unavoidable obsession with the totalitarian space, seen as a trap for an individual’s identity and personal freedom. Combining the essayistic reflection and a philosophical speculation within a narrative frame, the writer succeeds in rendering something more valuable than a beautiful story: a story brimming with ideas.

Keywords: identity, Mitteleuropa, polyphony, counterpoint, political novel

Modernity and Postmodernity. Some Reflections

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Abstract

We tend to think that our understanding of the world around us is complete if we are looking at and listening to what is happening. As a matter of fact, many cultural, intellectual and ideological forces filter and shape it. This world that we have lived in for some time now is one in which words are punished to have no definite meaning but discourses are so powerful, where truth is doomed to lose any universal character but everyone is entitled to their own opinion regardless of their domain of expertise or simply experience (or lack thereof), where people can choose their religion but terrorist attacks or simply violent conflicts in the name of faith are on the news oftentimes. In such a world, at any level, authority is whoever happens to be in power with almost everyone deriding authority figures.

Keywords: modernity, postmodernity, discourse, authority, power