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Spazi del mostruoso. Luoghi filosofici della mostruosità

Spaces of the monstrous.
Philosophical topics on monstrosity

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1. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Albrecht Classen

The Epistemological Functions of Monsters in the Middle Ages

Monsters in the Middle Ages assumed significant epistemological functions, providing an image of the complete 'other' in the human quest for the self. Since late antiquity teratology played a big role in literature, art, philosophy, and religion, but meaning and relevance of monsters changed from author to author (the same applies to their visual representation). This article provides an overview of how the image of the monster changed throughout times and how individual writers evaluated them.

Keywords: Monsters, Middle Ages, Voyagers, Epistemology, Writers

2. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Simon Asa Mittman

Navigating Myriad Distant Worlds

This essay attempts to draw connections between medieval maps and their many monsters, digital cartographical interfaces, and modern experiences of the world. Each impacts our understandings of the others. The medieval notion of *speculum* - the metaphorical mirror that allows us to see our worlds and ourselves more clearly - draws attention to the very process of spectatorship. The modern notion of "telesthesia" (perception at a distance) borrowed from Cultural Studies, becomes a unifying discourse, allowing us to bridge the gap between medieval and modern, East and West, us and them, viewer and monster.

Keywords: Monsters, Telesthesia, Maps, Cartography, Perception

3. SAGGIO/ESSAY: David Gilmore

Monsters and Man in Spain

Images of magical evil populate community festivals in various European countries, especially Spain. There, ritualized images of demons, devils, ogres, deformed animals and so on are rife in village fetes. Symbolizing evil and horror, monster effigies perform burlesque aggressions in the streets before they are killed off in typical Christian morality plays. This paper describes some of these representations in rural Spain and goes on to interpret the monster vs. man narrative from an ethnological and a psychological viewpoint, utilizing a model of “redemptive violence”.

Keywords: Monsters, Anthropology, Spain, Violence, Morality

4. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Simone Guidi

Errata naturae. Cause prime e seconde del mostro biologico tra medioevo ed età moderna - Errata naturae. First and second causes of biological monsters between the Middle Ages and the Modern Age

According to one of the most influential definitions, by Michel Foucault in his *Les anormaux*, the monster is, since the Middle Ages, a violation of a “bio-juridical” order. In critically discussing the historical plausibility of this claim this article explores medical and philosophical conceptions of monsters between medieval and early modern period, addressing in particular the matter of the relationships between first and second causes in nature’s errors. The main authors dealt with are Thomas Aquinas, Ambroise Paré, Francisco Toledo and Fortunio Liceti. What emerges is that up to the 17th century...

Keywords: Monsters, Aristotelian Biology, Metaphysics, Medical Anthropology, Etiology

5. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Stella Carella

Mostri di natura e omuncoli in alambicco. Tommaso Campanella e la generazione degli imperfetti - Monster in nature and homunculi in alembic. Tommaso Campanella and the generation of defective beings.

Campanella’s reflection about teratology goes through some of the main issues in his thought and more in general the philosophical debate of his time: the controversial about the human generation *ex purefatio*, the organic and functional distinction man-woman, the theory of imagination, the moral responsibility and the *contra natura sin*, the possibility of creating artificial life. Especially, and this is the essential point for Campanella, this theme regards the heart of the theological anthropology, questioning the very concept of humanity...

Keywords: Monsters, Campanella, Generation Theories, Imagination, Nature

6. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Gilles Barroux

Quels éléments d'anthropologie et de pensée médicale s'expriment dans la figure du «monstre» au XVIIIe siècle? - Which elements of anthropology and medical theory are conveyed through the figure of the «monster» in the Eighteenth century?

The theme of monsters crosses all ages and survives through the centuries, provoking questions in such diverse fields as physiology, medicine, philosophy and even morality. If examples of vegetables with remarkable structures have been many times related by naturalists since antiquity, thus contradicting the monotony of the development cycles, it is nonetheless the human monster which attracts all the attention, either hostile or curious. From the point of view of disciplines such as medicine or chemistry, the 18th century often appears as a transition century...

Keywords: Monsters, Medical Anthropology, Naturalism, Diderot, Enlightenment

7. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Maddalena Mazzocut-Mis

Una scienza per ogni mostro. Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Cuvier, Balzac e la querelle... sulla "zebra mostruosa" - A knowledge of each monster. Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Cuvier, Balzac and the controversy about "the monstrous zebra"

At the end of the Eighteenth century, anatomists aimed at detaching themselves from a mere classifying and descriptive approach to establish a philosophic science studying form patterns and relationships. Organic forms can either be part of a research program, grounded on how their components coordinate and are related from a functionalist perspective, as Cuvier maintained, or explained by placing them within a pattern, a single framework of organization (unity of composition), as it is for Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire. These positions came to a clash in 1830, resulting in what...

Keywords: Monsters, Saint-Hilaire, Cuvier, Balzac, Biology

8. INTERVISTA/INTERVIEW: Paolo Lombardi

Un altro Seicento: mostri e paradossi antropologici in età moderna - Another view of the seventeenth century: anthropological monsters and paradoxes in the Modern Age.

Seventeenth century scientific rationalism versus witchcraft. Reason and beyond. Garnier's werewolf and blood transfusions. This paper aims at overcoming the traditional dichotomy between the rational and the monstrous, as the latter originates from a cultural background that is common to the former as well. What still concerns us today when approaching the notion of "monstrous" - beyond werewolves, vampires and witches- is not its original nature but our awareness of it. What if the monster were the seed of terror that, after over four centuries, still lives with us and questions us on who we really are?

Keywords: Seicento, monster, Anthropology, Modern Age, paradox

9. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Thomas Macho

Like tears in the rain. La breve vita del clone
Like tears in the rain. The short life of a Clone

This paper faces the issue of cloning and artificial breeding from the point of view of science-fiction literature and films. The examples range from the Welsh sheep Dolly to J. Craig Venters's genome, scenes from *Blade Runner*, clones in Houellebecq's novel and in the film *The Island*, Katy's loneliness in Ishiguro's *Never let me go*. The paper highlights the close connection between popular imagination on clones and their technological advancement. Is there an intrinsic link between narration and know-how or are they independent? What if our critical awareness of innovative technology were more short-lived than the clones it produces?

Keywords: Gene, Clone, Blade Runner, Death, Dolly Sheep

10. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Richard Kearney

Il male, la mostruosità, il sublime
Evil, monstrous, sublime

This paper explores one of the basic questions in the history of human thinking - unde malum? what is the origin of evil?-and summarizes the main theories put forward by Greek myth, the Bible, evil as a lack of goodness according to St. Augustine, Kant's "practical" understanding. Starting from such historical background the paper focuses on evil meant as the monstrous and the sublime in the post-modern age: Kristeva, Lyotard e Zizek. Finally, through Ricoeur, Habermas and Taylor's hermeneutics, it tries to approach a possible answer to another key question: what shall we do, then?

Keywords: Evil, Agostino, Kant, Monstrous, Zizek, Lyotard, Nihil, Sublime

11. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Peter G. Platt

From Translation All Science Had It's Of-spring»: John Florio and the Monstrous Birth of Knowledge

This paper looks at John Florio's comments on translation — especially in the Epistle Dedicatorie and To the Curteous Reader of his 1603 translation of Montaigne's *Essayes* — and examines the extent to which Florio conceived of translation as a monstrous birth of knowledge. Crucial to this exploration are a remark of Florio's friend Giordano Bruno that claimed science, or knowledge, was the offspring of translation; Florio's definition of "móstro" from his 1598 Italian-English dictionary *A Worlde of Wordes*; and some of Montaigne's remarks about the multiplicity and hybridity of both the essay...

Keywords: Monsters, Translation, John Florio, Montaigne, Definition

12. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Aya Iwashita Kajiro

Le monstrueux et la narration fabuleuse dans le Quart livre de Rabelais - The monstrous and fictional narration in Rabelais' Quart livre

The Quart livre by Rabelais is marked by the variety of monsters and at the same time by the way they are represented ie, their description. Our study observes the modality of fictional workings, and fictional monsters, among which Bringuenarilles (Chapter XVII) is an example of an “impossible” monster.

Keywords: Monsters, Rabelais, Literature, Grotesque, Fiction

13. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Brigitte Munier

La monstruosité du Golem, figure tutélaire de la modernité occidentale - Montruosity. The Golem as a forerunner of modern myths

This contribution to the contemporary figure of monstrosity looks for a common feature that may characterize and explain what we recognize as monster in the West. The article takes into account the rebel robot that must be destroyed because it threatens humanity: prevailing in the imaginary of popular culture, this story is the resumption of the myth of the Golem, endlessly reproduced in novels and movies, since Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. The Golem, intelligent and humanoid creature is monstrous because it lacks a soul, a spiritual and transcendental principle that defines human being...

Keywords: Monsters, Imaginary, Popular Culture, Golem, Post-Humain

14. SAGGIO/ESSAY: David Williams

Monsters, then and now

This article attempts to delineate the history of the monstruos by recognizing inside it the manifestation of severance between the contingent and the transcendent world. The monster embodies the boundary of the everlasting paradox of human existence, in the balance between the desire of knowing and the impossibility of drawing completely on knowledge.

Keywords: Monsters, Manifestation, Boundaries, Knowledge, Transcendence