

The Exotic in the Quotidian

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While the exotic is most often associated with the foreign, the strange, places distant in time and/or space, the principal factor in the creation of exoticism is the mind, specifically the imagination. The imagination is what creates separation from the ordinary, the too well known, the banal. Because French literature of the nineteenth-century is amply endowed with examples of the geographical exotic, it is easy to forget that authors have also provided striking examples of the ways that everyday experience has been rendered exotic through the exercise of a character's imagination. This session will explore that phenomenon, the transformation of the quotidian into the exotic, as well as the exotic into the ordinary by means of the imagination, in works by Jules Verne, Emile Zola, and Gustave Flaubert.

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Exotic Technologies in Verne's Steampunk Robinsonnade

The nineteenth century saw a profusion of island adventure tales patterned after Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. These "robinsonnades" frequently shared certain plot details and themes, differing from each other largely by one or two key choices, such as making the castaway female, a young boy, or a family of Swiss settlers. Exotic locales, typically tropical islands luxuriant with colorful plants and animals, figure in nearly every robinsonnade of the period.

This study will examine the most famous French-language robinsonnade, *L'île mystérieuse* by Jules Verne, published in 1875. This later island narrative is unusual in many aspects, not least in that it was written in French. Typically, just as Robinson Crusoe salvaged what he could from his shipwreck before making due with rough hand-made implements for all his other needs, later "Robinsons" would content themselves with sharpened sticks, rough-hewn logs, and vine ropes. The exotic in Verne's robinsonnade is not simply the lush environment, but rather the late-nineteenth-century technologies that his castaways recreate for their island settlement. From the very beginning of the novel, when the dangerous voyage and stranding occur not by ship but via hot-air balloon, we see that Verne is intent on updating the robinsonnade with the latest technologies. After identifying the exotic everyday implements that stand out in Verne's robinsonnade, this study will suggest ramifications of these details for the novel's eventual point of view on that ever-present subtext of the robinsonnade, European expansion and imperialism.

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The Aesthetics and Ethics of the Exotic in Flaubert's *La tentation de Saint-Antoine*

La tentation de Saint-Antoine is, by Flaubert's own admission, the work of a lifetime, and a key text through which to explore the complexities of his aesthetics. As Flaubert himself has famously remarked, his is an aesthetic sensibility torn between the lofty ideals of the imagination

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and the minutiae of the real. The purpose of this paper is to study the tensions of such a dual aesthetics in Flaubert, between the impulse to evacuate the ordinary real through an overinvestment of the artistic imagination on the one hand, and the will to impersonality and impassibility that risks a corresponding disinvestment from the real on the other. As Jacques Rancière notes, *La tentation de Saint-Antoine* reveals the paradoxes of an art caught between an excessive sympathy with the material world and the indifferent apathy of atoms and molecules, between pathos and logos, autonomy and heteronomy. Rancière reads the novel as an interrogation on the metaphysics of art, on the conditions of its possibility. Following this insight, my paper studies the power and value of the exotic in *La tentation de Saint-Antoine*, arguing that the exotic productions of the artistic imagination function as vectors in the definition of an aesthetics and ethics of the impersonal. The exotic, I submit, is a means whereby the artist transforms his relationship to the world of ordinary experience, avoiding both the chaotic madness of an excessive sensibility and the mute, apathetic indifference of impassibility.

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Pris au piège de Nana l'animale

Cette communication se propose d'étudier le côté exotique de Nana, la fameuse courtisane décrite par Zola dans son roman éponyme. Nana, une femme de la rue, a le don de bouleverser l'imagination de ses admirateurs qui en perdent la tête. Nana apparaît comme une personnification de la Nature en se métamorphosant en divers animaux, tels la mouche d'or, la pouliche, la chienne et la chatte. Ces métaphores animales la rendent plus grande que Nature et lui donnent un pouvoir mythique. Elle devient alors une illustration extraordinaire du mythe de la femme fatale qui occupe une place prédominante dans les arts au 19^{ème} siècle. Autant Emile Zola qu'Edouard Manet a dépeint des courtisanes dans ses œuvres, et la relation entre ces deux artistes est intéressante puisque les tableaux « Nana » et « Olympia » ont influencé Zola dans l'écriture de son roman.

En tant que mangeuse d'hommes, Nana devient une bête qui attire et piège ses victimes. Les hommes subissent l'ensorcellement sensuel causé par la puissante odeur de Nana, parfum qui révèle non seulement son statut de prostituée mais aussi de bête. La proximité de Nana à l'animal fait que les hommes, leur imagination devenant réalité, relâchent leur propre animalité. Cette contribution va donc montrer comment Nana est une figure énigmatique et captivante qui se meut sans cesse entre l'humain et l'animal tant dans l'imaginaire de Zola que dans celui des personnages masculins de son roman.

William Cloonan
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The Exotic Universe of *Un Coeur simple*

Few characters in modern literature have led lives as exciting, as replete with exotic moments, as has Félicité in Flaubert's "Un Coeur simple." She experiences great love and passion, enjoys the affection of lovely children, battles a wild animal, embarks on a dangerous

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voyage, has intense encounters with religion and ultimately experiences the Beautiful Vision. Obviously, from an outsider's perspective the preceding sentence may appear to be a bit exaggerated, but that is not the viewpoint Flaubert provides since readers are invited for the most part to see the world as Félicité does. This paper will examine the ways in which "Un Coeur simple" constitutes a prolonged reflection on the nature of the exotic as the product, not merely of distance in time and space, but of the human imagination which possesses the capacity to invest the most banal of experiences with vivid significance and, in Félicité's case, with ultimate truth.