Running In The Family Michael Ondaatje Analysis

Running in the Family

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"During certain hours, at certain years in our lives, we see ourselves as remnants from the earlier generations that were destroyed... I think all of our lives have been terribly shaped by what went on before us." Twenty-five years after leaving his native Sri Lanka for the cool winters of Ontario, a chaotic dream of tropical heat and barking dogs pushes Michael Ondaatje to travel back home and revisit a childhood and a family he never fully understood. Along with his siblings and children, Ondaatje gathers rumours, anecdotes, poems, records and memories to piece together this fragmented portrait of his family's past, his father's destructive alcoholism and the colourful stories and secrets of ancestors both disgraced and adored throughout centuries of Sri Lankan society. In an exotic, evocative portrait of the heat, wildlife, sounds and silences of the Sri Lankan landscape, Ondaatje combines vivid recreations of a privileged, eccentric older generation with a deeply personal reconciliation journey in which he explores his own ghosts, and how his family's extraordinary history continues to influence his life.

Examines the representation of masculinities in the work of some of Canada's most exciting writers, including Michael Ondaatje, and Rohinton Mistry, to show how cross-cultural migration disrupts assumed codes for masculine behaviour and practice.

Autobiographical writings have been a major cultural genre from antiquity to the present time. General questions of the literary as, e.g., the relation between literature and reality, truth and fiction, the dependency of author, narrator, and figure, or issues of individual and cultural styles etc., can be studied preeminently in the autobiographical genre. Yet, the tradition of life-writing has, in the course of literary history, developed manifold types and forms. Especially in the globalized age, where the media and other technological / cultural factors contribute to a rapid transformation of lifestyles, autobiographical writing has maintained, even enhanced, its popularity and importance. By conceiving autobiography in a wide sense that includes memoirs, diaries, self-portraits and autofiction as well as media transformations of the genre, this three-volume handbook offers a comprehensive survey of theoretical approaches, systematic aspects, and historical developments in an international and interdisciplinary perspective. While autobiography is usually considered to be a European tradition, special emphasis is placed on the modes of self-representation in non-Western cultures and on inter- and transcultural perspectives of the genre. The individual contributions are closely interconnected by a system of cross-references. The handbook addresses scholars of cultural and literary studies, students as well as non-academic readers.


In Michael Ondaatje's beloved family memoir, fact and fiction blur to create a dazzlingly original portrait of a lost time and place. Ondaatje left Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) at the age of eleven. Almost twenty-five years later, he returned to sort out the recollected fragments of experience, legend, and family scandal, and to reconstruct the carefree, doomed life his parents and grandparents had led in a place where couples danced the tango in the moonlight, where drink, gambling, and romance were the main occupations of the upper class. Rich with eccentric characters and captivating stories, and set against the exotic landscape of a colonial empire in decline, Running in the Family is Ondaatje's unforgettable journey through memory and imagination to reclaim his past. From the Hardcover edition.

Nonfiction novels have usually been associated with the "new journalism" writers of the 1960s such as Tom Wolfe, Norman Mailer, and Truman Capote. Yet this form has long commanded a key position in the literary canon, as John Russell now reveals. Russell identifies eleven major works not usually thought of as nonfiction novels, such as Isak Dinesen's Out of Africa and E. E. Cummings's The Enormous Room, to create a new definition of the genre. He shows that journalistic writing is characterized by a reporter's proprietary stance, which undermines reciprocity with subjects, while true nonfiction novels feature greater reciprocity and also employ such techniques as circular narrative and bricolage. Reciprocities in the Nonfiction Novel contributes to ongoing explorations of literary forms and offers wise commentary on how writing about real life can become art.

"In examining the literary representations of these critical junctures, Neluka Silva draws upon key aspects of postcolonial, nationalist and feminist theory, which have influenced both the understanding of the concerned episodes and the literary productions of the authors selected. By providing an authentic comparative frame of reference, the author succeeds in suggesting ways in which certain choices reinforce or subvert established power relations in the fraught arena of nationalist politics in the four South Asian countries. "This book will be of interest to students and scholars of postcolonial literature, cultural studies, critical theory, gender studies, politics and nationalism."--BOOK JACKET.

This third volume of ASNEL Papers covers a wide range of theoretical and thematic approaches to the subject of intertextuality. Intertextual relations between oral and written versions of literature, text and performance, as well as problems emerging from media transitions, regionally instructed forms of intertextuality, and the works of individual authors are equally dealt with. Intertextuality as both a creative and a critical practice frequently exposes the essential arbitrariness of literary and cultural manifestations that have become canonized. The transformation and transfer of meanings which accompanies any crossing between texts rests not least on the nature of the artistic corpus embodied in the general framework of historically and socially determined cultural traditions. Traditions, however, result from selective forms of perception; they are as much inventions as they are based on exclusion. Intertextuality leads to a constant reinforcement of tradition, while, at the same time, intertextual relations between the new literatures and other English-language literatures are all too obvious. Despite the inevitable impact of tradition, the new literatures tend to employ a dynamic reading of culture which fosters social process and transition, thus promoting transcultural rather than intercultural modes of communication. Writing and reading across borders becomes a dialogue which reveals both differences and similarities. More than a decolonizing form of deconstruction, intertextuality is a strategy for communicating meaning across cultural boundaries.

Annotation It is an event in literary criticism and culture scholarship that we have new studies on the work of such an original writer as Michael Ondaatje. In this collection, some of the most perceptive scholars working in cultural and literary studies examine Ondaatje's texts - his poetry, his novels In the Skin of a Lion, The English Patient (novel and film), and Anil's Ghost. Thesis (M.A.) from the year 2009 in the subject English - Literature, Works, printed single-sided, grade: 1.5, University of Bern (Institut f r Englische Sprachen und Literaturen), course: Problems of Intermediality in Canadian Literature, language: English, abstract: In my paper I shall explore the various functions and connotations of the coast/the beach in Charles Simmons' Salt Water and Iris Murdoch's The Sea, the Sea and substantiate my thesis by scrutinising these works of fiction- the paper's analysis is predominately based on text imminent examinations and their extrapolations- and assess their importance on grounds of the represented relationship between space and identity negotiations in re to the two opposing forces of sexual awakening on the one, and death and detrimental deterioration on the other hand. As the dramatic first sentence in Charles Simmons' Salt Water illustrates, "In the summer of 1969, I fell in love and my father drowned" (13), these two entities are intimately intertwined.

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Additionally, the beach figures as the uncertain boundary between nature and culture, between the past and the present as well as between the imaginary and the real. Related to this, the beach is a site of wishful thinking, reverie, nostalgia, (unreliable) and mediated memory as well as of the emergence of gripping, obsessive thoughts and their somewhat fabulous constructions. Whenever an act of rejuvenation or a nascent notion of the protagonists' own sense of sexuality is in progress, this development is harshly interrupted by the death of a central figure. I shall elaborate on the claim that here, death acts as an impediment on sexual awakening with unfavourable effects.

Asian diasporas are all too often seen in terms of settlement problems in a host nation, where the focus is on issues of crime, housing, employment, racism and related concerns. The essays in this volume view Asian diasporic movements in the context of globalization and global citizenship, in which multiple cultural allegiances, influences and claims together create complex negotiations of identity. Examining a range of cultural documents through which such negotiations are conducted — literature and other forms of writing, media, popular culture, urban spaces, military inscriptions, and so on — the essays in this volume explore the meanings and experiences involved in the two major Asian diasporic movements, those of South and East Asia.

The end of World War II led to increased interest in multicultural concerns and a flourishing of literary and artistic endeavors. It was also a time of decolonization and the emergence of new nations and cultures clarifying for recognition and respect. The political circumstances following World War II exposed many people to other cultures. This reference discusses the experiences of writers active since 1945 who were shaped by cultures other than their own. Included are alphabetically arranged entries for more than 100 writers, including Chinua Achebe, W.H. Auden, Mircea Eliade, Jamaica Kincaid, Salman Rushdie, and Elle Wiesel. The profiled authors either lived in another culture voluntarily or were wrenched from one culture into another. Each entry includes a brief biography, a discussion of multicultural themes in the writer's works, a review of criticism, and primary and secondary bibliographies. The volume closes with a selected, general bibliography. The reference demonstrates the value of multicultural experiences in the lives of writers around the world and fosters a greater appreciation of cultural diversity.

The essays collected here illustrate aspects of recent research conducted by graduate students in Canadian studies at various European universities. The methodological diversity displayed points to the very essence of the culture the contributors explore - what has been commonly termed the Canadian mosaic or, more recently, the Canadian kaleidoscope (Janice Kulyk-Keefer). In analysing the many facets of this mosaic, the numerous images of this kaleidoscope, the contributors offer fresh and youthful reappraisals of traditional visions of Canadianness.

This study brings together three major areas of interest - history, postmodern fiction, and myth. Whereas neither history and postmodern fiction nor history and myth are strange bedfellows. For many critics, postmodern thought with its resistance to metanarratives stands in direct and deliberate contrast to myth with its apparent tendency to explain the world by means of neat, complete narratives. There is a strain of postmodern Canadian historical fiction in which myth actually forms a complement not only to postmodernism's suspicion of master-narratives but also to its privileging of those marginal and at times ignored areas of history. The fourteen works of Canadian fiction considered demonstrate a doubled impulse which at first glance seems contradictory. On the one hand, they go about demythologizing - in the Barthesian sense - various elements of historical discourse, exposing its authority as not simply a natural given but as a construct. This includes the fact that the view of history portrayed in the fiction has been either underrepresented or suppressed by official historiography. On the other hand, the history is then re-mythologized, in that it becomes part of a pre-existing myth, its mythic elements are foregrounded, myth and magic are woven into the narrative, or it is portrayed as extraordinary in some way. The result is an empowering of these histories for the future; they are made larger than life and unforgettable.

Brave bear hunters go through grass, a river, mud, and other obstacles before the inevitable encounter with the bear forces a headlong retreat. Imaging Ourselves gathers together selections from Canadian non-fiction books that in some way have had a major impact on how we view ourselves as Canadians, revealing how the national identity has been shaped and informed by the written word. Included are selections from such well-known Canadian books as Wild Animals I Have Known (Ernest Thomas Seton), Pilgrims of the Wild (Grey Owl), Klee Wyck (Emily Carr), The Game (Ken Dryden), Renegade in Power (Peter C. Newman), Survival (Margaret Atwood), and The Last Spike (Pierre Berton).