

A Prefatory Note

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Despite its comprehensive range of topics, the current issue of *Via Panoramica* deals mostly with the subversive potential of Arts and Humanities, a potential that has traditionally aroused contradictory reactions with critics either calling into question their relevance and their very existence or, quite the opposite, trying to censor them for fear of their power over people's actions. Literature, in general, has been the object of several attacks, which, in turn, originated famous defences as for example Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* dating back to the sixteenth century.

The issue includes five main articles. The first is authored by João Sottomayor Fernandes who addresses the way Social and Human Sciences were taught in the United States of America during the Second World War, an interesting case study that illustrates the above-mentioned need for a defence of the Humanities in particularly troubled times.

Jéssica Bispo, on the other hand, presents a postcolonial reading of J. M. Coetzee's literary works *Foe* and *Youth* through two key concepts: "mimicry" and "subversion". By analysing the actions of two main characters - John and Friday - Bispo understands the strategies of mimicry employed in the texts as a successful attempt to subvert established Western discourses of power.

Still within the realm of literature, Rui Mateus and Diogo Barbieri address two very subversive and elusive genres: fantasy and dystopian literature respectively. Indeed, while Mateus seeks to apply Farah Mendlesohn's categorization of fantasy to N. K. Jemisin's *Broken Earth* trilogy to reveal Jemisin's innovative approach to the genre; Barbieri, in turn, revisits the fields of memory studies and psychoanalysis to investigate the importance of dreams and memory in Cormac McCarthy's post-apocalyptic novel *The Road*.



The issue is brought into a conclusion by Eelke André Verhagen's paper on the American reality show *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Verhagen analyses the show and its potential for the individual liberation of a traditionally marginalized group of people within the framework of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's thesis of Culture Industry and assesses the relevance of this theory when applied to a twenty-first century cultural object.