

In the context of the thematic discussions

The Present for the Future

we invite you to a public lecture by

prof. dr. John J. Martin

»Cannibals, Christians, and the Ethnographic Imagination: Montaigne and his Contemporaries«

on wednesday, January 27, 2016 at 12 a.m.

Italian Institute for Culture in Slovenia, Breg 12, Ljubljana.

The discussion will be lead by prof. dr. Darko Darovec,
who cooperates with him on the the Ca'Foscari University in Venice.

Columbus never realized he was in a New World, but the Caribbean presented him with strikingly new cultures where one of his Arawak informants confirmed to him that the Caribs [or “Canibs”] were anthropophages – eaters of human flesh. Over the next few centuries cannibalism would become one of the defining traits or representations of the “barbarism” of many of the peoples of the New World and, therefore, of the presumed superiority of European cultures as they took possession of the recently discovered continents. Yet the great French humanist Michel de Montaigne famously questioned this claim to cultural superiority in his *Essays* (1580). Martin’s talk will explore Montaigne’s critique of his European contemporaries within the broader context of the fashioning of an early modern ethnography of the cannibal through the writings of a number of French, Spanish, Portuguese, and German travelers to the New World. Real or imagined, the European encounter with cannibalism played a major role in the shaping of what we might call the ethnographic imagination of early modern Europe.

John Jeffries Martin is the author of *Venice’s Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (1993) and *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (2004). This year, he is a visiting scholar at Venice International University, where he hopes to complete a new book *Crossing the Boundaries of Hercules: How The Modern World Was Made; Europe, 1492-1815*, a work that explores real and imagined “crossings” in the reshaping of European culture in these centuries. He is also interested in the history of torture, a topic he is pursuing through a study of Francesco Casoni, a provincial intellectual, whose writings on evidence and the art of conjecture did much to undermine the need for the use of torture in the courts of Europe in the early modern period.

Currently prof. dr. John J. Martin serves on the board of editors of the *American Historical Review* and is, with Richard Newhauser, editor of the series *Vices & Virtues* for Yale University Press.

Prof. dr. John J. Martin has received several awards and grants of the American and European Universities.



FAIDA. Feud and blood feud between customary law and legal process in medieval and early modern Europe.
This research was supported by a Marie Curie Intra European Fellowship within the 7th European Community Framework Programme.



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