



# The Poetics of Literary Transfer in Early Modern France and England

*Hassan Melehy*

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Examining both familiar and under appreciated texts, Hassan Melehy foregrounds the relationships that early modern French and English writers conceived with both their classical predecessors and authors from flourishing literary traditions in neighboring countries. In order to present their own avowedly national literatures as successfully surpassing others, they engaged in a paradoxical strategy of presenting other traditions as both inspiring and dead. Each of the book's four sections focuses on one early modern author: Joachim Du Bellay, Edmund Spenser, Michel de Montaigne, and William Shakespeare. Melehy details the elaborate strategies that each author uses to rewrite and overcome the work of predecessors. His book touches on issues highly pertinent to current early modern studies: among these are translation, the relationship between classicism and writing in the vernacular, the role of literature in the consolidation of the state, attitudes toward colonial expansion and the "New World," and definitions of modernity and the past.

"In *The Poetics of Literary Transfer in Early Modern France and England*, Hassan Melehy moves through subtle readings of Joachim Du Bellay, Spenser, Montaigne, and Shakespeare toward some of the most profound reflections on literary transmission since Thomas Greene's *Light in Troy* (1982). Whereas Greene's early modern poets experienced pathos in their descent from an ever-receding Roman origin, Melehy's poets find in it a liberating *energeia*."

--John Watkins, University of Minnesota, *Studies in English Literature*

"Hassan Melehy's brilliant and innovative *The Poetics of Literary Transfer in Early Modern France and England* is the first to offer precise accounts of the literary relationships between four Renaissance authors: Du Bellay, Spenser, Montaigne, and Shakespeare. Staging their ongoing discussion on the subject of Rome and its legacy, this fascinating book brings to light a myriad of textual engagements and intertextual moments. Melehy's sensitive and erudite readings revivify the humanist ideals of friendship and dialogue, recasting them as inspiring and galvanizing 'mutual regards and intermeshings.'"

--Deanne Williams, York University, Canada

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