



THE ATHENS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Abstract Book

**17th Annual International Conference on
Literature
3-6 June 2024, Athens, Greece**

**Edited by
Aleksandra Tryniecka & Olga Gkounta**

2024

Abstracts
17th Annual International
Conference on Literature
3-6 June 2024, Athens, Greece

Edited by
Aleksandra Tryniecka & Olga Gkounta

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Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 17th Annual International Conference on Literature (3-6 June 2024), organized by the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER).

A full conference program can be found before the relevant abstracts. In accordance with ATINER's Publication Policy, the papers presented during this conference will be considered for inclusion in one of ATINER's many publications only after a blind peer review process.

The purpose of this abstract book is to provide members of ATINER and other academics around the world with a resource through which they can discover colleagues and additional research relevant to their own work. This purpose is in congruence with the overall mission of the association. ATINER was established in 1995 as an independent academic organization with the mission to become a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world can meet to exchange ideas on their research and consider the future developments of their fields of study.

To facilitate the communication, a new references section includes all the abstract books published as part of this conference (Table 1). I invite the readers to access these abstract books –these are available for free– and compare how the themes of the conference have evolved over the years. According to ATINER's mission, the presenters in these conferences are coming from many different countries, presenting various topics.

Table 1. *Publication of Books of Abstracts of Proceedings, 2010-2024*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2024	23	11	Tryniecka and Gkounta (2024)
2023	43	24	Wick and Gkounta (2023)
2022	53	27	Pappas and Gkounta (2022)
2021	25	14	Papanikos (2021)
2020	23	20	Papanikos (2020)
2019	23	14	Papanikos (2019)
2018	30	16	Papanikos (2018)
2017	43	24	Papanikos (2017)
2016	30	18	Papanikos (2016)
2015	26	17	Papanikos (2015)
2014	40	18	Papanikos (2014)
2013	31	20	Papanikos (2013)
2012	93	37	Papanikos (2012)
2011	126	36	Papanikos (2011)
2010	111	41	Papanikos (2010)

It is our hope that through ATINER's conferences and publications, Athens will become a place where academics and researchers from all over the world can regularly meet to discuss the developments of their disciplines and present their work. Since 1995, ATINER has organized more than 400 international conferences and has published over 200 books. Academically, the institute is organized into 6 divisions and 37 units. Each unit organizes at least one annual conference and undertakes various small and large research projects.

For each of these events, the involvement of multiple parties is crucial. I would like to thank all the participants, the members of the organizing and academic committees, and most importantly the administration staff of ATINER for putting this conference and its subsequent publications together.

Gregory T. Papanikos
President

Editors' Note

These abstracts provide a vital means to the dissemination of scholarly inquiry in the field of Literature. The breadth and depth of research approaches and topics represented in this book underscores the diversity of the conference.

ATINER's mission is to bring together academics from all corners of the world in order to engage with each other, brainstorm, exchange ideas, be inspired by one another, and once they are back in their institutions and countries to implement what they have acquired. The 17th Annual International Conference on Literature accomplished this goal by bringing together academics and scholars from 11 different countries (China, Germany, Georgia, Hong Kong, Iraq, Poland, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Taiwan, Türkiye, USA), which brought in the conference the perspectives of many different country approaches and realities in the field.

Publishing this book can help that spirit of engaged scholarship continue into the future. With our joint efforts, the next editions of this conference will be even better. We hope that this abstract book as a whole will be both of interest and of value to the reading audience.

Aleksandra Tryniecka & Olga Gkounta
Editors

**17th Annual International Conference on Literature, 3-6
June 2024, Athens, Greece**

Organizing & Scientific Committee

All ATINER's conferences are organized by the Academic Council. This conference has been organized with the assistance of the following academic members of ATINER, who contributed by reviewing the submitted abstracts and papers.

1. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, ATINER & Honorary Professor, University of Stirling, U.K.
2. Stamos Metzidakis, Head, Literature Unit, ATINER & Professor Emeritus of French and Comparative Literature, Washington University in Saint Louis, USA & Adjunct Professor of French, Hunter College-CUNY, USA.
3. William Davis, Deputy Head, Literature Unit, ATINER & Professor, The Colorado College, USA.
4. Aleksandra Tryniecka, Deputy Head, Literature Unit, ATINER & Assistant Professor, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland.

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

17th Annual International Conference on Literature,
3-6 June 2024, Athens, Greece

PROGRAM

Monday 3 June 2024

08.30-09.15

Registration

09:15-09:45

Opening and Welcoming Remarks:

- o Gregory T. Papanikos, President, ATINER.

09:45-11:30 Session 1

Moderator: Aleksandra Tryniecka, Deputy Head, Literature Unit, ATINER & Adjunct Professor Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Poland.

1. **William Davis**, Professor, Colorado College, USA.
Title: Schelling, Hegel, and the Marbles of Aegina.
2. **Nicholas Meihuizen**, Extraordinary Professor, North-West University, South Africa.
Title: Some Thoughts on Humour in Yeatsian Style.

11:30-13:00 Session 2

Moderator: William Davis, Deputy Head, Literature Unit, ATINER & Professor, The Colorado College, USA.

1. **James Kirkland**, Professor, East Carolina University, USA.
Title: From "Little Red Riding Hood" to "The Company of Wolves" and Beyond: Representations of the Werewolf in Folklore, Fiction, and Popular Culture.
2. **Elizabeth Dahab**, Professor, California State University, Long Beach, USA.
Title: The Rebirth of Ganesh in Nobel Prize Laureate VS Naipaul's The Mystic Masseur.
3. **Aleksandra Tryniecka**, Assistant Professor, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland.
Title: Is Marrying Ernest a Bad Idea? Women's Desire and Men's Self-Image in Oscar Wilde's the Importance of Being Earnest (1895).

13:00-14:30 Session 3

Moderator: Elizabeth Dahab, Professor, California State University, Long Beach, USA.

1. **Wei-cheng Chu**, Associate Professor, National Taiwan University, Taiwan.
Title: Queering Solitude in Christopher Isherwood's A Single Man.
2. **Anisha Saxena**, Assistant Professor, SUNY Cortland, USA.
Title: Group of Lovers or RApe: Narratives of Sexual Assault from Premodern South Asia Literature.
3. **Murat Gokmen**, Lecturer & Dean of Research, Düzce University, Türkiye., MA student in Quds Studies (in English) & Ankara Social Sciences University, Türkiye., MA student in Turkish Language Teaching Studies (in Turkish) & Düzce University Türkiye, MSc student in International Relations and Diplomacy (in English) & Leiden University, Netherland.
Title: Challenging Gender Norms: A Critical Analysis of the Witch's Role in Rapunzel retold by Mary Hoffman.

14:30-15:30 Lunch

15:30-17:00 Session 4

Moderator: Sotiria Rita Koutsopetrou-Møler, PhD Candidate, University of Agder, Norway.

1. **Agata Czapiewska**, PhD Student, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland.
Title: Vilnius Theater "Reduta" with Przybyszewski on Stage – A Study of Polish – Vilnius Experimental Theater.

2. **Justinus Pieper**, Scientific Researcher, Technical Vocational Didactics (TVD), University of Siegen, Germany.
Title: The Classical World Revisited: Some Benefits for Today and Tomorrow.
3. **Evangelia Şarlak**, Professor, Işık University, Türkiye.
Ruhiye Onurel, Lecturer, Istanbul Beykent University, Türkiye.
Title: Integration of Icon Symbolism in Contemporary Turkish Art and Stylistic Experiences.

20:30-22:30

Athenian Early Evening Symposium (includes in order of appearance: continuous academic discussions, dinner, wine/water, music)

Tuesday 4 June 2024

09:00-10:30 Session 5

Moderator: Moshe Gat, Professor Emeritus, Bar-Ilan University, Israel.

1. **Steven Oberhelman**, Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and George Sumey Professor of Liberal Arts, Texas A&M University, USA.
Title: Byzantine and Postbyzantine Laic Texts: Navigating the Public and Private Spheres.
2. **Irma Karaulashvili**, Associate Professor, Ilia State University, Georgia.
Title: Ruler-Apostle Chosen by God in the Byzantine and Georgian Narratives on the Christianization of Georgia/Karthli.
3. **Monika Szczot**, Associate Professor, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland.
Title: Between Imitation and Emulation. The Ancient Symposium in Polish Literature – An Attempt to Describe the Cultural Phenomenon on Selected Literary Examples.
4. **Manhal Frayh**, Associate Professor, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Saudi Arabia.
Title: The Impossibility of the American Dream in John Steinbeck's of Mice and Men.

10:30-12:00 Session 6

Moderator: Murat Gokmen, Lecturer & Dean of Research, Düzce University, Türkiye., MA student in Quds Studies (in English) & Ankara Social Sciences University, Türkiye., MA student in Turkish Language Teaching Studies (in Turkish) & Düzce University Türkiye, MSc student in International Relations and Diplomacy (in English) & Leiden University, Netherland.

1. **Houliang Chen**, Professor, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, China.
Title: A Troubling, Permanent Alien Presence: Representation of Chinese Immigrants in Charles Kingsley's at Last: A Christmas in The West Indies.
2. **John T. P. Lai**, Professor, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.
Title: Abyss and Anxiety: Cross-Cultural Reception of The I Ching in Philip K. Dick's The Man in the High Castle.

12:00-13:30 Session 7

Moderator: Nicholas Meihuizen, Extraordinary Professor, North-West University, South Africa.

1. **Liu Lin**, Professor, Shandong University, China.
Title: The Odes' Recitation in Zuozhuan and Reader-Response Criticism.
2. **Shokhan Fatah**, Permanent Teaching Staff, Charmo University, Iraq.
Title: A Linguistic-Stylistic Analysis of Maya Angelou's "Our Grandmothers".
3. **Simonetta Milli Konewko**, Associate Professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA.
Title: Grazia Deledda and her Sardinian Cultural Identity.

13:30-14:30 Lunch

14:30-16:00 Session 8

Moderator: Arnaud Nanta, Professor, French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), France.

1. **Junchang Yang**, Professor, Institute of Culture and Heritage, Northwestern Polytechnical University, China.
Title: Technological Study of Ancient Gilded Copper Granulations During The Sui and Tang Periods (6th-10th Century).
2. **Yan Liu**, Associate Professor, Institute of Culture and Heritage, China.
Title: Early Granulated Gold Ornaments in Xinjiang: A Case Study on the Baiyanghe Excavations (4th-3rd C. BCE) in the Southern Junggar Basin.
3. **Huan Yang**, Associate Professor, Institute of Culture and Heritage, Northwestern Polytechnical University, China.
Title: A Study on Lost Wax Casting in China from the Casting Method of the Bronze Chariots Unearthed from the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang Di.

17:00-20:00 Session 9

Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk

The urban walk ticket is not included as part of your registration fee. It includes transportation costs and the cost to enter the Parthenon and the other monuments on the Acropolis Hill. The urban walk tour includes the broader area of Athens. Among other sites, it includes: Zappion, Syntagma Square, Temple of Olympian Zeus, Ancient Roman Agora and on Acropolis Hill: the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, and the Parthenon. The program of the tour may be adjusted, if there is a need beyond our control. This is a private event organized by ATINER exclusively for the conference participants.

20:30-22:00

Dinner

Wednesday 5 June 2024
An Educational Visit to Selected Islands
or Mycenae Visit

Thursday 6 June 2024
Visiting the Oracle of Delphi

Friday 7 June 2024
Visiting the Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

Houliang Chen

Professor, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, China

**“A Troubling, Permanent Alien Presence”: Representation
of Chinese Immigrants in Charles Kingsley’s *At Last:
A Christmas in The West Indies***

This paper examines the representation of Chinese immigrants in *At Last: A Christmas in The West Indies* (1871), a travelogue by Charles Kingsley which tells his experiences in the West Indies between 1869 and 1870. The starting point of this paper is a noteworthy phenomenon in the book that, whenever the Chinese appearing in Kingsley’s vision, they were always depicted as the most unpleasant sight. The reader may wonder why did Kingsley grudge entry to the Chinese and singled them out as the most unwanted people while he intentionally depicted the West Indies as a paradisiacal world? The question is approached via scrutinizing the Orientalist discourse in Kingsley’s account of his several encounters with the Chinese. The paper argues that it was not that the Chinese immigrants were inherently inassimilable to the Creole society, but that Kingsley’s colonial gaze must need one object as the absolute other. Presuming the position as an “scientific” observer, Kingsley adopted British yardsticks of virtues and vices to evaluate whatever he looked, particularly things related to the Chinese. This reading of the novel suggests that Kingsley, though seemingly concerned with the morality of the Chinese immigrants, was actually worried about their extrication from the plantation economy.

Wei-cheng Chu

Associate Professor, National Taiwan University, Taiwan

**Queering Solitude in Christopher Isherwood's
*A Single Man***

Christopher Isherwood's novella *A Single Man* (1964) has been lauded as one of the earliest works of fiction that affirms gay identity, so much so that its apparent content of a mature homosexual who "came face to face with the lonely life of the ageing single man" (the 1969 Penguin edition blurb) is often disavowed. Now that the negative turn of queer studies has recognized the persistent presence and significance of "unredeemable" feelings despite the proud politics of gay affirmation, these disavowed parts of this classic of Isherwood's deserves to be acknowledged without denial and examined closely. After all, one, or even the major, aspect of this story of a middle-aged gay professor bereaving the death of his long-time partner lies in his solitude, imposed by life's vagaries no doubt but also self-chosen to a certain extent. Yet why does he choose to remain in such a reclusive condition of life and how does he deal with it, especially at times of loneliness? Rather than using probably the only alternative approach to gay political reading of this work (namely that of Isherwood's Vedantism), this paper will seek to discuss it within the rather entrenched opposition between pathologizing solitude as a modern problem to be solved and philosophically extolling it as a precious necessity for one's well-being, with the purpose of negotiating them both in a more pragmatic way. It is hoped that a rather queer perspective on the subject can be teased out during the discussion as a useful intervention.

Agata Czapiewska

PhD Student, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland

Vilnius Theater "Reduta" with Przybyszewski on Stage - A Study of Polish - Vilnius Experimental Theater

The aim of the presentation - in the first phase - is to analyze the Vilnius period of Stanislaw Przybyszewski's work (a modernist writer who was called, "a brilliant Pole") and the reception of his dramas on the Vilnius stage at the "Reduta" theater. An in-depth analysis of Przybyszewski's dramas (especially "Snow") from a comparative perspective becomes an opportunity to reflect on the closeness of Lithuanian and Polish modernism, while showing the intimacy of the philosophical relationship between the countries. Przybyszewski - as an *ex tempore* poet - creates a space for the experimental display of acting methods and visual interaction with words on the boards of the theater. The second phase of the project, that is, a comparative analysis of the theater-laboratory on Lithuanian and Polish soil, emerges in view of the above beliefs. The difficult period for the functioning of the "Reduta" Theater was associated with numerous changes in the headquarters of the theater building, but this did not prevent the actors from realizing experimental theatrical performances, and the reception of these mysteries was closely related to the socio-political changes of the region and the so-called *civitas spiritus* - as an inherent and most primordial element of the cultural vision of the city and its inhabitants. Theater, in its laboratory version, reveals, first of all, deeply hidden fears, unconscious, Freudian fears, and becomes a projection of internal tensions not only of the individual, but of society as a whole. The dialogue of cultures, which is cemented by the works of the writer of Young Poland, provides an opportunity to recapitulate the theses on the theater-laboratory and establishes a new place in modernist (and theatrical discourse at the same time) for the phenomenon of the theater, "Reduta". The methodology of the presented content is based on the comparative analysis of the reception of Stanislaw Przybyszewski's works - mainly his most famous drama entitled "Snow". It is impossible to carry out the indicated project also without theatrical criticism and analysis of cultural discourse, which in this dimension shows the primarily anthropological nature of the presented content of the grant.

Elizabeth Dahab

Professor, California State University, Long Beach, USA

The Rebirth of Ganesh in Nobel Prize Laureate vs Naipaul's *The Mystic Masseur*

Ganesh, the God with an elephant head worshipped by a number of Buddhists under a variety of names, such as Ganesha, Vinayaka, and Phra Pikanet, is associated with overcoming obstacles. He is also the deity of grace, and prosperity. The affinity Buddhism has with Ganesh is well documented, and his association with potentials of rebirth and success is the backbone of Naipaul's *The Mystic Masseur*, where the protagonist named Ganesh, evolves under the auspices of his namesake through trials and tribulations that eventually catapult him to fame, success, and, ultimately, politics. Ganesh-the-protagonist is reinvented and reborn, first as schoolmaster, then as writer, as pundit, and finally as statesman. It is under the providence of Ganesh the God that the protagonist's work as a professional healer brings him to the act of writing, and to fame.

This paper addresses the poetics of rebirth under the mantel of the allegory behind the myth of Ganesh, guardian of his mother's door. When Ganesh becomes a celebrated figure in Trinidad, Ganesh's wife commissions "two stone elephants" to be built on the roof of his villa. A wink towards one of the gifts received by the god Ganesh, a pen with colored ink, used by him to write the Mahabharata. Ganesh the protagonist finally succeeds through reading and writing, the very gifts accorded the god Ganesh.

William Davis
Professor, Colorado College, USA

Schelling, Hegel, and the Marbles of Aegina

This paper centers on the invention of the “archaic”—chthonic, dark, and obscure—as an originary other whose sublimation is a prerequisite for culture’s teleological emergence into light. Hegel’s *Lectures on Aesthetics* articulates this emergence as a dialectical move from archaic, “symbolic,” art to the “classical.” As an example from material culture, proto-archeology (itself a sort of grave robbing) led to the literal unearthing of pedimental relief sculptures of Greek gods and heroes on the island of Aegina in 1811. These sculptures, the so-called *Ägineten*, ended up in the private collection of Ludwig I, King of Bavaria. According to art historians, they “illustrate the crucial shift from archaic to the classical in Greek art” (Diebold 60).

Hegel commented on the *Ägineten* in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*. The famous philosopher, Friedrich Schelling, at the time employed by the Bavarian State, wrote notes and commentary that were published along with the official assessment of the sculptures that appeared in 1817. I will argue that a comparison of the reactions of these two philosophers to these sculptures appropriated from the island of Aegina has much to tell us regarding their fundamental ideas regarding aesthetics. While Hegel views the sculptures as “oriental” and “archaic,” as representative of a form that must be overcome so that the “classical” can emerge, Schelling describes them with organic metaphors and embraces them as artistic forms in their own right. In conclusion, I will briefly refer to the poet Friedrich Hölderlin, whose “Bread and Wine,” famously deconstructed by Paul De Man, “Nun, nun müssen dafür Worte wie Blumen entsteh’n,” as the fantasy of a different kind of presence than the one De Man suggests. Metaphors of words arising like flowers and sculptures of gods rising from the earth point to the notion of a proto-divinity, to underground gods from which art must emerge, not dialectically, but organically.

Shokhan Fatah

Permanent Teaching Staff, Charmo University, Iraq

A Linguistic-Stylistic Analysis of Maya Angelou's "Our Grandmothers"

In this paper, Maya Angelou's lengthy poem *Our Grandmothers* is studied from a linguistic- stylistic perspective. Upon a primary look, Angelou's poem captures attention with its linguistic genius and outstanding structure. The 22-stanza poem is loaded with graphological, grammatical/syntactic, lexical, semantic, and dialectical deviations. The mysterious aspect of the subjective pronoun "she," which the poem starts with, piques the interest about the referent, knowing the title of the poem is in the plural form of the noun grandmother. To establish the unified pattern which Angelou follows, this research connects the linguistic features and deviations across the poem. The unconventional structure of the poem—the uneven number of lines in every stanza, the one-word verses, and the incomplete sentences—contribute to its distinction. Additionally, Angelou plays with words in terms of their function and place in a sentence. She also makes use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Mainly building on the framework of the English linguist Geoffrey N. Leech, all the creative deviations will be pinpointed and thoroughly examined as interrelated and accurate examples of how the poetic verses can be manipulated to serve the poet's purpose in conveying a message. Therefore, this study aims to indicate the linguistic deviations and originality which Angelou employed to create a unique piece of literature.

Manhal Frayh

Associate Professor, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University,
Saudi Arabia

The Impossibility of the American Dream in John Steinbeck's Novel *Of Mice and Men*

Do obstacles in one's life change one's aspirations? If something hard or even unexpected occurs, does one turn his or her back on all that has been worked for? In an American society, there is an idea of a dream. Most people have dreams that differ from one another. Dreams are not limited only to society. Countless numbers of times in American literature, there are moments when an obstacle slows or possibly halts progression. Dreams can also be found in American literature; however, like the reality of society, barriers can be a component of having aspirations. Barriers create obstacles, whether emotional or physical, those make achieving a dream difficult or even appear to be impossible. In American literature dreams seem to be unattainable because of barriers.

Steinbeck develops the theme of the impossibility of the American Dream through the characterization, setting and symbolism in *Of Mice and Men*. He uses indirect characterization to show the characters' disappointment when they realize their dream of superior living is not going to come true. Their speech and actions show that they have crestfallen when their dream is crushed, which reinforces the idea that the American Dream only leads to disappointment. In addition to characterization, Steinbeck also uses descriptions of the setting to show that the American Dream is unreachable. He describes the ranch as an idealistic place. However, the dream is too perfect to be true, which shows that the American Dream is not realistic. Finally, Steinbeck uses symbolism to show that the American Dream is unachievable. The description of the multi-colored rabbits shows that the dream is just a fantasy of the imagination, and it is not realistic. Overall, through the use of symbolism, setting, and characterization, Steinbeck shows that in the context of *Of Mice and Men*, the American Dream is impossible to achieve because it is too idealistic.

Murat Gokmen

Lecturer and Dean of Research, Düzce University, Türkiye

A Challenging Gender Norms: A Critical Analysis of the Witch's Role in Rapunzel retold by Mary Hoffman

The study analyses Mary Hoffman's retold fairy tale Rapunzel regarding gender issues, particularly concentrating on equality and justice as represented by the witch. Although Rapunzel as a text was widely studied, the Witch's function and status in society by delivering justice have neither been studied nor supported yet. The study supports the idea that the Witch, although marginalized by society, once caught a chance to decide on the destiny of the community and employed rational and just decisions. The study argues that the witch is the symbol of justice, wit, patience, and objectivity in the tale. The study claims that the Witch's attitude towards Rapunzel's parents, Rapunzel in person and Prince, represents her just, equal, objective, and patient attitude since she give legitimate decisions regarding the people, which in total works on their behalf. The study supports the idea that, the Witch's punishing Rapunzel's parents and adopting Rapunzel enable her to be grown in a freer atmosphere. Witch's punishing Rapunzel in person and Prince enabled them to get together in a desolate place where there was no social and cultural ranking among people. The study further argues that the Witch's attitude in the tale is important in terms of her gender. Since her gender caused her to be entitled as Witch in the tale, the Witch upsides down the social norms by challenging patriarchal society where women were just and powerful but not revengeful.

The witch's growing Rapunzel in the tale is challenging since a marginalized figure in the tale grows a child whom she adopted upon her parents' immoral act. The study suggests that the witch, by growing Rapunzel, has a chance to shape the future of a community. The study is designed to employ a qualitative textual analysis method concentrating on the status of the witch in the tale.

Irma Karaulashvili

Associate Professor, Ilia State University, Georgia

Ruler-Apostle Chosen by God in the Byzantine and Georgian Narratives on the Christianization of Georgia/Karthli

Almost every story related to the conversion of a ruler and Christianization of a country is, explicitly or implicitly, related to the topoi fashioned by the earliest narratives that reflect this process. Eusebius of Caesarea, the founder of the genre of ecclesiastical history, recounting a tale about the conversion of the emperor Constantine the Great, develops his own concept of ruler's apostolicity. He presents Constantine as equal to the apostles, *apostolus apostolorum*, who needs no intercessor between God and himself. That is to say, Eusebius manages to combine two main ideas behind the conversion story – those of a pious ruler chosen by God and of apostolicity – into his own concept, that I would label as the concept of a ruler-apostle chosen by God. As is easy to guess, it was destined to serve as a perfect tool for legitimizing the ecclesiastical policy of Constantine.

It seems that the trail, blazed by the “father of Christian historiography,” was followed by later ecclesiastical historiographers as well, and apostolic activities were ascribed to the converted kings alongside with the acknowledgement of the missions of evangelisers of various countries. In my presentation I will juxtapose the Byzantine and Georgian narratives recounting a story about the conversion of the Iberian king to Christianity by a certain *captiva Christi*, to figure out what these sources have to say with respect to the Eusebian concept of a ruler-apostle chosen by God.

James Kirkland
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**From “Little Red Riding Hood” to
“The Company of Wolves” and Beyond: Representations of
the Werewolf in Folklore, Fiction, and Popular Culture**

The werewolf story has a long and varied history. Some scholars trace its origins to the myth of Lycaon, the king transformed into a wolf by Zeus, while others – notably John Clute and John Grant – argue for a more recent origin, theorizing that “European legends of WOLF-human SHAPESHIFTING – also known as lycanthropy – have been recorded since the 11th century or earlier” (*The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*). But regardless of its lineage, the werewolf continues to captivate the human imagination. This presentation will focus on the role of the werewolf in what is arguably the world’s best known and most enduring folk tale, “Little Red Riding Hood,” and the varied ways in which fiction writers, film makers, painters, and others working in different media have reinterpreted and reframed the story and its characters. Particular attention will be given to Angela Carter’s fictional recreation of the Red Riding Hood tale in “The Company of Wolves,” the penultimate story in her collection of literary *marchen* *The Bloody Chamber*; the film adaptation of the same title directed by Neil Jordan; and selected paintings and digital images on the same theme – all of which address implicitly or overtly what folktale specialist Jack Zipes describes as the enduring questions raised by the story: questions about “gender identity, sexuality, violence, and the civilizing process” (*The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*).

John T. P. Lai

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Abyss and Anxiety: Cross-Cultural Reception of The I Ching in Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*

With far-reaching impacts on Chinese religion, philosophy, and politics, the *I Ching* (or *Yijing*; *Book of Changes*) has a far greater significance for the East Asian cultures as a philosophical/religious classic than as a mere divination manual. Thanks to the influential English translation by Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930) and Cary F. Baynes (1883–1977) published in 1950, the *I Ching* has travelled across the Pacific, transcended cultural borders, and emerged as a “world classic”, leaving a lasting impact on Western society. It has particularly captured the imagination and enthusiasm of postwar American readers who experienced considerable turmoil and anxiety during the Cold War, Vietnam War, and Civil Rights Movement.

Through a critical investigation of the award-winning novel *The Man in the High Castle* (1962) by Philip K. Dick (1928–82), an esteemed postwar American science fiction author, this paper scrutinizes the profound influence and cross-cultural reception of the *I Ching* upon Dick's literary creation, and the ways in which the characters draw from ancient wisdom in the *I Ching* to tackle the anxiety and distress in the fictional world where the United States was occupied by Japan and Nazi Germany. The Hexagram *Kan* (☵, Abyss/Water), with its multifarious layers of symbolisms, has emerged as the fundamental thread running through the plot and characterization of *High Castle*, imbued with its direct and subtle references. Dick has absorbed the multifaceted symbolisms of the Hexagram Abyss and creatively transformed them into the narrative of the *High Castle*, vividly depicting the political crises, military conflicts, personal distress, spiritual anxiety, and even the imminent threats of death, of the major characters.

Liu Lin

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The Odes' Recitation in Zuozhuan and Reader-Response Criticism

The current paper studies readers' critical response to The Books of Odes (hereafter "the Odes" 《诗经》) in Chunqiu (春秋, Spring and Autumn) Era with the aid of first-hand materials to be collected and analyzed from *Zuo Zhuan* (《左传》 hereafter ZZ), an ancient Chinese narrative history that is traditionally regarded as a commentary on the earliest chronicle *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals, 《春秋》) and known as "Chunqiu Nei Zhuan" (an inside commentary on *Chunqiu* "春秋内传"). ZZ abounds with recitation or singing of stanza(s) from the Odes (赋诗断章). As ZZ records, the Odes' readers at that time sing or recite the poetry to do a number of "things": to make or confirm a covenant, to declare war, to get ready for hunting, to comment on demeanors of others, to serve court feasts, etc. The paper proposes to give a scrutiny to poetic application in ZZ and argues for significant affinities between that poetic uses of Chinese antiquity and American reader-response criticism, such as. (1) it is the readers who are responsible for the meaning of poetry, since meaning is not something hidden in the text to be found but something to be experienced in readers' responses; (2) the reader's responses take place in the interaction between verse lines in temporal sequence and critical consciousness of the readers, which means that any textual device has to be experienced by the reader before it becomes such a device, so textual features, authorial intention and the reader's experiences are coexisting, overlapped, interrelated and interdependent; and (3) Professor Fish's concept of "interpretive community" indicates that interpretive strategies of any specific reader are embedded in commonly-shared interests, beliefs and values of a particular community, so debates on the meaning of poetry are performed "in a principled way" rather than in an arbitrary or random way. We might boldly guess that Professor Fish, had he been a sinologist, would have been inspired by ZZ instead of Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

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**Early Granulated Gold Ornaments in Xinjiang:
A Case Study on the Baiyanghe Excavations (4th-3rd C. BCE)
in the Southern Junggar Basin**

The current study investigates the use of precious metals, aesthetic taste, manufacturing techniques, and craftworking practices in the early Iron Age north-west China, focusing on an interdisciplinary study of gold ornaments newly discovered from the Baiyanghe cemetery (dating to the 4th-3rd centuries BCE) at Fukang in the southern Junggar Basin of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Employing multi-spectral analytical methods, such as 3D Digital Microscopy (OM), and Scanning Electron Microscopy with an Energy Dispersive X-ray Spectroscopy (SEM-EDS), we conducted non-invasive analyses and technological study of these gold artefacts. Our results reveal the mastery of sophisticated techniques, including granulation and filigree, which were rarely seen in central China prior to the 2nd century BCE. Such a genre of delicate decorative techniques required precision, skill and deep understanding of gold metallurgy and metalworking, which demonstrated a high level of technological competence of ancient craftsmen. Examining these delicate goldwork within a broader Eurasian context reveals that these innovative artistic styles and decorative techniques were originally intertwined with wider influences from the Hellenistic world and the central Asian steppes. This research enriches our understanding of ancient civilization's interconnectedness and the ability of local goldsmith to adapt and integrate foreign influences into their own artistic traditions.

Nicholas Meihuizen

Extraordinary Professor, North-West University, South Africa

Some Thoughts on Humour in Yeatsian Style

James Olney feels that *Stories of Michael Robartes and His Friends* serves as a type of parody comedy anticipating some of the elements of the divine comedy that is the rest of *A Vision*. He writes of its 'virtually impenetrable maze of humor and fiction', whose obfuscatory function should alert us to the fact that the 'truths' within the work 'are not literal but symbolic'. Olney begins to fathom the purpose of this Yeatsian style, but stops short at the level of the two contradictory modes of Yeatsian discourse, literal and non-literal. We need to delve further. Husein Haddawy, editor of the new Everyman *Arabian Nights*, says 19thC translators of the work failed to see that 'fidelity to the precise detail was crucial to achieve the essential quality of the *Nights*, by bridging the gap between the natural and the supernatural': 'The phantasmagoric is based on the concrete, the supernatural grounded in the natural'. Yeats understands what Haddawy points to, the ramifications attending style, and the effect of the right touch or tone in conveying certain materials. This is where humour comes into play, for Yeats writes of the congruence of natural and supernatural in a way that does not take itself too seriously. The resulting tone, elegantly nonchalant, is at once prosaic and strange, and this paradoxical coupling generates a substantial sense of otherness, in keeping with the subject. And yet, as my paper also hopes to show, Yeats sometimes uses humour in a way that simply parodies self and family, without any doctrinal positioning; he seems to enjoy the mode of humour for its own sake, a stylistic trait not often commented on by critics.

Simonetta Milli Konewko

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Grazia Deledda and her Sardinian Cultural Identity

Food is an important part of Grazia Deledda's work since it expresses Sardinian cultural and societal values. Food serves as a symbol of tradition, familial relationships, and social prestige, as well as a means of survival for impoverished peasants.

The goal of this study is to investigate how such food habits contribute to Deledda's personal and cultural identity building.

How and why does Deledda employ food imagery in particular? Who are the people who prepare meals, and what beliefs do their actions represent?

My research investigates multicultural theoretical discourse established by theorists such as Massimo Montanari, Victor Turner, and Mikhail Bakhtin, among others, to answer these problems.

Steven Oberhelman

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**Byzantine and Postbyzantine Laic Texts:
Navigating the Public and Private Spheres**

The Greek views on dreams and visions in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine eras were a continuation and yet a refinement of traditions stretching back to Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt of the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE and then filtered through Judaism, classical and Hellenistic culture, and paleo-Christianity. Dream-key manuals are perhaps the most well-known literary artifacts for dreams in Byzantium. Seven dreambooks, dating from the 8th through 14th centuries, have survived; most were intended for a general reading public, but a few were written for the imperial court and the aristocracy in Constantinople. After the fall of Byzantium in 1453, dreambooks continued to be written; they are usually found in codices filled with divinatory treatises that deal with astrology, lunar tables, cleromancy, zodiology, and brontology. I will show how the primary purpose of dreambooks was to serve as mental coping mechanisms for an individual during times of anxiety and uncertainty. The dreambooks that we have reveal a depressing and dangerous world: pervasive plots and treachery caused by envy and hatred; the fear of enemies coming from outside the empire, but also of murderers and dangerous people living inside the empire's borders, even inside the dreamer's home. We read of extensive anxiety about economic ruin, the collapse of one's business, and the loss of status, honors, and military or governmental position. Illness and pestilence (including the plague) are everywhere and afflict everyone—no one is safe. In such circumstances, dreambooks offered a way for a reader to know whether he would live or die, whether he would prosper or be penniless, whether his life would be filled with despair or with joy. Dreambooks were a method of divination (and a Bible-based method at that) which allowed people in the final centuries of Byzantium a way to cope with the disasters and systems-collapse all around them. In post-Byzantium, another type of text, called the *yiatrosotion* (a text of medical therapeutics and remedies written by practical doctors), served the same purpose. The kinds of problems we read about in the *yiatrosotion* are the same anxieties seen in the dreambooks. *Yiatrosotion* offer medical recipes as well as religious-magical rituals, spells, and amulets to overcome fear, illness, and anxiety and to restore mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. More

importantly, *yiatrosofia* give advice on critical personal and family matters like marriage and divorce, childbearing and sterility, health and disease, animal care, and tips on farming. Texts like *oneirokritika* and *yiatrosofia* allowed one to feel as though they had some control over their destiny and that a good and healthy life, prosperity, and happiness were possible if the strategies outlined in the texts were followed. The dreambooks and the *yiatrosofia* provided mechanisms for navigating a dangerous outside world, and they were invaluable for preserving the safety and preservation of the inside (domestic) world. Far from being superstitious nonsense (as medical and cultural historians have often portrayed them), these texts offer important insights into the psyches and lives of the people of the second millennium CE.

Justinus Pieper

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The Classical World Revisited: Some Benefits for Today and Tomorrow

As specialists and managers of the future engineers need leadership skills. They should contribute to the social discourse in an explanatory and creative way and present their arguments convincingly. As managers and especially as leaders, their education needs a broad horizon. Hence, I focus mainly on Greek and Roman antiquity: under the condition of what can be derived and learnt from the classical world for managers in today's comparable problem constellations. This is based on the idea of Thucydides, who wanted to create a *ktema es aei* by providing a timeless background to the Peloponnesian War, as well as by analogy with the Chinese stratagems (Thucydides 1991, v. Senger 1996): Prospective engineers learn about timeless historical problems. In the following, transfers to current economic and social contexts are tested. Through the reference to related stories within real history, problem constellations and possible solutions in present and future conflicts and crisis situations are more easily remembered by the prospective manager and leader. In addition, the human need to deal with questions of meaning, of past and future, tradition and religion is also addressed and placed in a reciprocal context. Besides of shaping a responsible, prudent leader, a higher level of what I'd like to call civic maturity can be achieved as a side effect. These courses at universities and in business are based on the Homeric epics and Xenophon's *Anabasis*, which is not just a mere army journal or an elegantly written "Eastern" (Rood 2004). All of them were already read as leadership manuals in ancient times (Pieper 2023). For such a versatile author as Xenophon e.g., who in his versatility seeks to come close to Odysseus or Zeus, "Anabasis" can be translated as an ascent in the sense of a career (Higgins 1977, Pieper 2017, 2023). Its content can be understood as a leader's career guide, which Xenophon exemplifies with his own example: leadership by example, leadership by credibility (Tuplin 2003, Wood 2007, Buzzetti 2014, Pieper 2017, 2023). The author of this abstract has derived many other leadership principles in various scientific publications and taught them in a number of courses and workshops for today's managers, including at the VDI and the Audi Academy (Pieper 2022). These principles include the goal-orientated creation of win-win situations, the "Great Vizier Principle" (Weber 1980)

and, above all, in line with the Homeric epics, “versatility” (regarding the term, cp. Sullivan 2001; Pieper 2017, 2023). For even today, these works can serve as a guide for a successful career for both the leader and the organisation as such, in which this leader works according to the corresponding principles (Pieper 2024). They can also serve as a practice-saturated, tried-and-tested basis for European leadership theory. As practically applicable educational content, they deepen European cultural understanding and self-awareness. In addition, they can largely contribute as an integration moment for students and managers with a migration background (e.g., from the Mediterranean region and the Levant to Persia, Pieper 2024). For Knauth and Nadjimabadi 1975, Hirsch 1985 and, for example, the author 2017 and most recently 2023 and 2024 have already pointed out the analogies between Socratic-Xenophontic and Persian leadership principles. All of this does not only make the classical world more topical but let it become a career and integration driver that is beneficial for Europe as a business location and a peaceful “place to be”, as well as one of the beacons for the world. Why shouldn't we use it for this?

Evangelia Sarlak

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&

Ruhiye Onurel

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Integration of Icon Symbolism in Contemporary Turkish Art and Stylistic Experiences

In the tradition of belief, icons, sacred images, or representational forms that carry significant spiritual or religious meanings are considered an integral part of worship. The creation of icons and iconography is regarded as a sacred art. Traditionally, the symbols and meanings found in religious icons are known to be used in modern and contemporary art. This approach allows artists to go beyond traditional religious symbols, creating new meanings, and relating them to the contemporary world. The use of icon symbolism in contemporary art combines traditional icon elements with modern and contemporary artistic perspectives, evaluating religious motifs not only within a religious context but also within a broader cultural, political, or social context, aiming to create a new artistic expression. Contemporary artists often breathe new life into classical symbols and icons, injecting them with meanings that speak to the current moment. Through the reinterpretation of historical symbols, they underscore the ongoing narrative of human experience and the enduring relevance of particular themes that transcend time.

The article focuses on contemporary Turkish art and on artists such as Balkan Naci İslimyeli, Günseli Kato, Gülsün Karamustafa, Bubi who apply icon symbols, styles, and characteristics in their works of art. After identifying the stylistic features of traditional icons and the symbols they contain, the article will turn its attention to contemporary Turkish artists and their works. Has the use of religious symbols allowed Turkish contemporary artists to address societal and political issues? Have these artworks provided the audience with a thought-provoking perspective on existing challenges or conflicts in the contemporary world? In this context, each artist's unique perspective and expressive style will be examined. Their understanding of using icon symbolism, reinterpreting cultural reflections, and thus aiming to establish an individual connection with the audience will be discussed.

Anisha Saxena
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Group of Lovers or RApe: Narratives of Sexual Assault from Premodern South Asia Literature

Premodern literary texts from South Asia are assumed to represent an unblemished foregone civilization. They are celebrated for their enlightened knowledge and instruction. The texts also narrate stories about sexual assault, interestingly these narratives of rape are often weaved within the notion of romance. This is further revealed by the employment of *uddīpanavibhava* or a secondary excitant in Sanskrit literature, a condition that motivates emotion, especially sexual desire. My paper aims to draw a comprehensive comparative gynocentric analysis of premodern South Asian texts from a diverse literary heritage with special focus on critically evaluating narratives on sexual assault and how they are justified through notions of romanticism.

By examining accounts of rape from premodern literary texts from South Asia, my presentation will highlight a distinctive aspect of these celebrated texts. I will discuss the complexities that these narratives and the various texts represent and their relationship to one another, which is especially highlighted by the several versions of the same story that appear in different texts. This demonstrates that how authors of these texts struggled while setting, navigating, and justifying narratives of rape. Further, I will demonstrate how the reoccurring themes in the narratives of rape are blaming and shaming of the victims and women were denied any personal agency.

Monika Szczot

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Between Imitation and Emulation: The Ancient Symposium in Polish Literature - An Attempt to Describe the Cultural Phenomenon on Selected Literary Examples

The history of the symposium (συνπόσιον, convivium) as a genre shows that elements of the ancient symposium (such as feasting rituals, table discussions, the role of wine, entertainment elements, etc.) can be found in works of the post-classical period, but these are only more or less conscious imitations, serving to show contemporary (sometimes different from the classical) ways of feasting. Symptotic literature not only describes feasting customs, but also serves comic, satirical and educational purposes. Polish literature contains descriptions of feasts which, on the one hand, refer to the ancient symposium and, on the other, show the Poles' own ways of feasting in different epochs. The main aim of this paper will be to describe selected and representative Polish symptotic literary works and to determine their imitative and emulative potential. The subject of the research will be the works of Jan Kochanowski, Krzysztof Opaliński, Ignacy Krasicki and Leopold Staff.

Aleksandra Tryniecka

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**Is Marrying Ernest a Bad Idea?
Women's Desire and Men's Self-Image in Oscar Wilde's
The Importance of Being Earnest (1895)**

Women in Oscar Wilde's Society Plays act as mirrors reflecting social absurdities and hypocrisy. In his plays, Wilde throws a light on the complexities of women's lives and natures while not judging them, for there is no place for ultimate moral judgment in the realm of multilayered truth and perspectivism. In this sense, the portrait of a woman arising from Wilde's plays is relatable also in the modern day. Wilde's literary woman is a universal figure who, regardless of the passing time and changing epochs, remains suspended between her desire to be a free agent and the inevitability of adapting to the social life in a way that would allow her to preserve at least a part of her integrity and separateness. It is a woman that might be hastily judged and criticized, but whose complexities, difficult choices and tragic fate remain hidden from the public eye. Thus, it is a woman with whom we can empathize and whose struggles remain our struggles in the present-day world. In my paper, I shall present how Wilde's literary female protagonists in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) – Gwendolen and Cecily – are seemingly angelic and withdrawn from men's life yet, at the same time, remain responsible for the structuring of the men's world "behind the scenes". As the play progresses, their seemingly absurd desire to marry "a man named Ernest" paradoxically transforms into a metaphorical, universal and liberating notion of selfhood and separation from the limiting social norms.

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**A Study on Lost Wax Casting in China from the Casting
Method of the Bronze Chariots Unearthed from the
Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang Di**

In 221 BC, Qin Shi Huang Di defeated the six kingdoms, thus creating a unified Qin Dynasty. Qin Shi Huang died and was buried in a huge luxurious mausoleum on the edge of Mount Li. In 1980, two chariots made of metal materials were unearthed from the tomb of the First Emperor of Qin. These two chariots are the largest and the most complex bronzes unearthed in China, and their casting techniques arose a greater scholarly attention. The current paper examines the piece-mould casting and the lost-wax casting technologies used in Greece, Rome and other civilizations from a comparative perspective. We found that the armatures, bronze patches and core pins present unique craft working practice of the lost wax casting technology. Based upon the technological study of the bronze chariots, we conclude that the bronze chariots unearthed from the Qin Shihuangs' Mausoleum were cast by the lost-wax method. This conclusion not only solves the problem of casting process of bronze chariots, but also provides clear evidence to the question of whether there is lost wax casting in ancient China.

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**Technological Study of Ancient Gilded Copper
Granulations during the Sui and Tang Periods
(6th-10th Century)**

Granulation is an ancient decorative technique. It involves a process ranging from melting metals and making beads after natural shrinkage and solidification, to joining tiny grains to metal substrate to create specific patterns. Gold granulation occurred as early as the 9th-7th century BCE as seen in the gold artefacts found in the Dongtaledede cemetery in the Haba River in the Xinjiang Altai region. Such a genre of decorative technique became very popular from the 4th century BCE onward, and it was continually used till 16th century BCE. Apart from rich findings of ancient gold granulations, gilded copper granulations were very rare in China. Combining archaeological research with scientific analyses, we investigate the manufacturing techniques and chemical composition of the gilded copper granulations from the well-known headgear found in the tomb belonging to the Empress Yang of the Sui dynasty in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, and other samples from the elite burials of Tang dynasty. This new research enhances our understanding of ancient metalworking technologies, imperial power and ritual arts in early medieval China.

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