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STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION
CENTRE FOR HELLENIC STUDIES

X E N O Σ

[The Stranger, the Foreigner, the Refugee]

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP
ATHENS, GREECE | 28.05.2023

Organised by the Departments of
SOCIAL THEOLOGY & GLOBAL
THE STUDY OF RELIGION HUMANITIES
[NKUA], GREECE [SFU], CANADA

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

- Professor Dr. Sotirios Despotis [NKUA]
- Professor Dr. Kirki Kefalea [NKUA]
- Dr. James Horncastle [SFU]
- Dr. Eirini Kotsovili [SFU]
- Dr. Apostolos Michailidis [NKUA]
- PhD Cand. Mr. Dimitrios Alexopoulos [NKUA]

PROGRAMME

PART I

10:00-10:50 | School of Theology Guided Tour



PART II: SHORT PRESENTATIONS

- **Place:** Multimedia Events Venue, School of Theology Building, University Campus (Panepistimiopolis), Ano Ilisia, 15772, Athens Greece.
- **Online Participation:**
<https://zoom.us/j/8199745806?pwd=V1FicExVZkJoK3Q3THB2c0MvemVMQT09>
Meeting ID: 819 974 5806
Passcode: 3KgNeY
- **YouTube Livestreaming:** https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQ_cJ0q8u4VsNgHmeSswk-Q

IN THE BEGINNING

10:50-11:00 | Opening address and welcome messages on behalf of the Organising Committee

- Welcome Message by Professor Dr. Dimitrios Karadimas,
Vice Rector for Academic and Student Affairs [NKUA]
- Opening address by Professor Dr. Kirki Kefalea [NKUA] and Dr. Eirini Kotsovili [SFU]

MYTILENE SESSION [A]

11:00-11:24 | Reflections on otherness in pre-modern material culture; from textual references to epic poetry and proto-daoist texts, to costumes and design.

- **The “foreigner”; in the Homeric epics**
By Miltiades Vasilopoulos, M.A. Candidate [NKUA]

Abstract: The mention of the “foreigner”; in the Homeric epics, on a global level, almost automatically creates an association, that of the well-known ancient Greek hospitality. The purpose of this paper is to give a different perspective on the concept of “foreigner” in the Iliad and the Odyssey. It aims to go beyond the ancient Greek institution and to show that in the Homeric epics the “foreigner” in several cases is treated with the sole criterion of the personal culture of the heroes or the personal needs of each one or even the willingness to point out the “class” differences that may exist between those involved. More specifically, at the beginning of the Iliad, the priest Chryses visits the king of the Greeks, Agamemnon, in the most formal way, so as to offer rich rewards and ask to take his daughter back. However, his treatment by Agamemnon has nothing to do with the typical hospitality of the ancient Greeks. Much further down in the Iliad, just before his conflict with Achilles, the Trojan prince Hector, in a very tender scene with his wife and child, gives a different dimension to the concept of the “stranger”; and the fate that awaits him. At the very beginning of the Odyssey, the fairy Calypso presents us with her own perspective on the “stranger”; Odysseus, who is on her island as well as herself as a “stranger”; in the ranks of the Olympian gods. It is a different look at the subject of the “foreigner”, a different perspective, far from ancient hospitality, a consideration of this concept that is closer to modern times than to Homeric.

- **Zhuangzi and the Estranged Body as Political Resistance in Warring States China (475-221)**

By Dr. Paul Crowe, Associate Professor [SFU]

- **The foreigner in 1st c. Palestine through the lens of garments**

By Evelina-Stefania Denbek [NKUA]

Abstract: This presentation aims to present some key findings on the identification of the foreigner through the different types of clothing worn in Palestine and specifically in Jerusalem during the first century. Located historically and geographically at the crossroads of ancient trade routes that connected the regions of the so-called "Fertile Crescent" (Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Mesopotamia), the Jerusalem of the 1st century was a multicultural composition with a distinct costume palette. The clothing choices, which dominated the city, naturally, came primarily from the Jewish culture. They were also associated with the Romans, the Greek and Hellenistic presence from Cyprus, Crete, both the islands and the mainland of Greece, as well as the Decapolis. Additional influences from eastern climates of Mesopotamia, Persia and Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) are observed in a significant number of costume elements. Therefore, the kind and type of clothing constituted one of the first, if not the first, element of how a ‘foreigner’ was recognized and identified, as well as his rights and obligations in the glorious city of David and Solomon.

11:24-11:30 | SESSION A - Q & A

ERESSOS SESSION [B]

11:30-11:48 | Pre-modern references to being a foreigner in the Mediterranean region

- **The "Stranger" in the Gospel of Matthew in the light of the Greek Tradition of the Mediterranean region.**

By Dr. Sotirios Despotis, Professor and

Argyro Marinopoulou, PhD Candidate [NKUA]

Abstract: The foreigner plays an important role in Matthew's Gospel (the ecclesiastical Gospel par excellence), as the Messiah Jesus himself is identified with him. We compare this role with the corresponding projection of *xenos* in ancient Greek tragedy but also modern texts of the 1st century. A.D. like those of Dion Cassius. We

attempt to draw conclusions regarding the contribution of Christianity to the treatment of the foreigner in the Mediterranean region.

- **Non-verbal communication as a way of approaching the Stranger**

By Dimitra Tounta, PhD Candidate [NKUA]

Abstract: Communication is a basic and fundamental element of human existence and life, acting as a survival mechanism; between people. Carrying out the communication process comes from the need to connect and interact with each other, within and outside their socio-cultural group. A percentage of our communication with others is verbal while the rest is done non-verbally. Communication elements as non-verbal messages are the nods, the smile, the look, the grimaces, the handshake, the gestures, the gait, as well as the distance from the one we are communicating with. The elements of non-verbal communication are a basic way of approaching the stranger, the person lacking in verbal communication. However nowadays these act as a kind of substitute or supplement for the “real”; message. In the ancient world gestures were not relegated to such a secondary role, but served as means of conveying information that was often either partially or completely different from that conveyed orally. The handshake, the similar arm-to-arm gesture and other gestures were symbolic acts in the ancient world, with varying meanings depending on the occasion. Gestures of recognition or supplication were a vital function of initiating contact between people who until then might have been strangers and the supplicant was usually accepted and enjoyed immunity as a “foreigner”, a guest. The form of non-verbal communication in the Jewish world depended on the relationship between persons. For example, the greeting could express interest and sympathy, love and affection, or reverence and honor. Jesus Christ living in the Jewish environment and in the context of the Greco-Roman world used non-verbal elements and approached people in an extraordinary way.

11:48 – 11:55 | SESSION B - Q & A.

11:55-12:00 | SHORT BREAK

MANTAMADOS SESSION [C]

12:00-12:16 | On identity and politics in 19th c. - 20th c. music and literature

- **Wagner’s Greek and the Estranged German Volk**

By Caedyn Lennox, M.A. Candidate [SFU]

Abstract: My presentation will argue that the 19th C operatic composer Richard Wagner (1813-1883) uses Ancient Greek society as an idealized other to develop an argument that the German people (Volk) have become estranged from their national essence or Germanness. To make this argument, I will briefly situate Wagner’s position within its historical, social, and intellectual context before exploring Wagner’s writings from 1848-52. I will draw upon Wagner’s use of Greek mythic figures such as Antigone and Apollo and Wagner’s idealization of Greek festivals such as the Dionysia to show that Wagner uses Greek culture as a foil through which he crafts his critique of German aesthetic society. My presentation will show that Wagner idealizes Greek society by claiming that the external socio-political structure of Greek culture is a reflection of the people’s (Volk) inner desires and self-identity, which he juxtaposes against an image of German Volk who have become estranged from their authentic self due to the inauthenticity of the culture’s aesthetic production. This argument is important for two reasons. Firstly, Wagner believes that cultural growth within a society is actualized through the artist

and the artist's aesthetic production. Secondly, Wagner's obsession with an authentic national art form is central to his anti-Semitic philosophy, which would ripple throughout Germany in the 19th century.

- **Strangers in a Stagnant World: A Parallel Reading of Angelos Sikelianos and Mark Twain**

By Angeliki Korre, PhD Candidate [NKUA]

Abstract: Angelos Sikelianos' poem "The Stranger" and Mark Twain's novel "The Mysterious Stranger" both center on the figure of an anonymous stranger who interacts with the people of a closed society that seems to be stagnant. Although the two texts are completely different in terms of style and subject-matter, influences, and aims, the two strangers that are presented (as well as the two societies) have a lot in common, such as their motives, their opposition to religious systems, and their probable impact on the society they penetrated. We will outline the physiognomy of these figures and take a view of them in comparison with one another, in order to examine the very concept of the "stranger" in its relation to a society.

12:16-12:20 | SESSION C - Q & A

MITHYMNA SESSION [D]

12:20-12:36 | Becoming the foreigner; exploring the legacies of the Asia Minor Catastrophe

- **From Gateway to Shield: Greece in the EU's perception on Migration**

By James Horncastle, Assistant Professor [SFU]

Abstract: In 2015, European officials, in the middle of one of the largest migration crises to face the continent since the Second World War, frequently blamed Greek officials for not doing enough to stop the migrant flows. European officials cited the Dublin Agreement, and Greece not meeting its obligations, as one of the causes of the crisis. Five years later, in 2020, when the EU once again faced the threat of a migration crisis, however, EU officials' perspective changed. Instead of Greece being the source of the problem, European officials instead argued that Greece was 'Europe's Shield'. This paper argues that the fundamental difference in European officials' perspectives was due not so much to actions within Greece, but rather re-evaluations within the EU. In 2015, Greece was seen as the problem child of the union, with some officials openly floating the idea of removing them from the Eurozone. Between 2015 and 2020, however, circumstances changed within the EU. Specifically, Brexit demonstrated the vulnerability of the organization. As a result, EU officials reassessed Greece's role, and contributions to the organization, and saw Greece not as a potential other, but valuable member.

- **A Hundred Year Friendship: A Greek refugee family meets a Turkish one after the Asia Minor Catastrophe (1922)**

By Dr. Apostolos Michailidis, Laboratory Teaching Staff [NKUA]

Abstract: The Greek army landed in Smyrna (the present-day Izmir) on May 15th 1919. In October 1920, it advanced further east into Anatolia, coming into conflict with the armed forces of the National Turkish Movement led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922) was - like all wars - disastrous for both sides, mainly for the defeated Greeks, who called its outcome "Asia Minor Disaster". It resulted also to the exchange of Christian and Muslim populations, according to the Convention on Exchange of Greek and Turkish populations, signed in Lausanne on January 30, 1923. But what happened when a Greek Christian family

and a Turkish Muslim one were forced to live for some time together? The presentation aims to demonstrate the conceptual content of the term “refugee”, narrating the adventures of a Greek refugee family.

12:36 - 12:40 | SESSION D - Q & A

PLOMARI SESSION [E]

12:40-12:56 | On identities, as explored in contemporary literature.

▪ **The (g)hostliness of Strangers: On Albert Camus's Exiles and Guests"**

By Dr. Alessandra Capperdoni, Lecturer [SFU]

▪ **Nikos Kachtitsis; a prominent writer of the Greek Diaspora**

By Eleni Kyriakou, Lecturer, University of Lisbon

Abstract: This paper draws on my ongoing research into the relationship between gender, history, memory, translation and trauma in twentieth-century European and Canadian Holocaust literature. In particular, I discuss my translation-in-progress of Kachtitsis' work titled “Works” published in 1976 by his long-time friend and poet, Takis Sinopoulos. The translation that has already been concluded that of the main novella of the three included, *Hē omorphaschēmē* (The Ugly Beauty; 1960) by Greek-Canadian writer, Nikos Kachtitsis (1926-1970)—considered by some to be Greece’s answer to Pessoa or Kafka. In addition to this, I further attempt to examine the Here, Kachtitsis’ biographical subject blends in with his own persona, thereby problematizing memory and its un/reliability. To what extent can the author’s ventriloquized merging of history and fiction be considered a kind of ‘authorship’, as suggested in feminist theories of translation? Additionally, I attempt to bring to the surface the concept of inception in the Kachtitsis work titled “In the dream” (“To Enypnion”). Both these novels are bridged under the title “Works” (“Erga”), including the first novel “Which friends”.

12:56-13:00 | SESSION E - Q&A

AGIASOS SESSION [F]

13:00-13:16 | 21st c. perspectives and new directions on understanding self and other.

▪ **Decolonizing Self and Other in Kamel Daoud’s *Meursault, contre-enquête***

By Alexandra-Katerina Bacopoulos-Viau

Clinical Instructor of History in Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College (NYC)

Abstract: How can a reading of Kamel Daoud’s 2014 novel *Meursault, contre-enquête* confront us with imagined pasts and imagined selves? In this talk, we will explore Daoud’s text – a postcolonial retelling of Camus’s *L’Étranger* – as a lens through which to approach questions of trauma, writing, and otherness.

▪ **Strangest Beings: Bioethical reflections on religions and mankind in outer space**

By Demetrios Alexopoulos

MSc. Social Anthropology, LSE, PhD Candidate [NKUA]

Abstract: This presentation aspires to briefly showcase in terms of astroethics and astrobioethics the nature and level of strangeness encountered by religions and human beings in Outer Space. On the face of planet Earth,

humans have evolved to become the ruling species. Likewise, religions of the world have risen through the millennia to become a recognised and respectable, when not decisive, element of human cultures and civilisations. The Space Age, however, had apparently quite different tags in store for both these two earthly power-players. In the cosmic web of vastness and alterity untold that constitutes the observable universe, humans and religions seem to fall among the rarest and strangest occurrences. They seem to demonstrate every sign of not belonging, of not fitting in well with the larger cosmos, not in the long-term the very least. Biological origins as well as essential bioethical issues attached to this unexpected turnout are discussed, and roadmaps are offered that may work towards meaningful human and religious growth in celestial new abodes. Possible options deflecting cosmic strangeness and alterity, is argued, should draw upon interdisciplinary and comparative frameworks informing astroethics and astrobioethics of religions, two emerging and interconnected disciplines of the space sciences family with an ear for the humanities, planetary ethics, religious sciences, and the actual voices and interests of religious actors and institutions themselves, when it comes to their future in the starlight.

13:16 - 13:20 | SESSION – Q&A

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

PART III

16:00 | In the Footsteps of St. Paul: Exploring and Experiencing Athens of Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond.

Fieldwork Team Leader: *Professor Dr. Sotirios Despotis [NKUA]*



18:00 | [Optional] Visit to shelters of the “Synyparxis” Ecumenical Refugee Programme, a Non-profit Organization of the Church of Greece.

Guided by: Archimandrite Fr. Panteleimon Papasynefakis, General Director of the Programme.

