

Humanities Research Centre
Annual Report
2023/24



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HRC 2023-2024: at a glance



4 training events



6 seminar series



6 book proposals



7 fellowships



22 conferences/workshops



806 attendees

It's been a busy year, as the data above confirm! The HRC has facilitated the work of staff, postgraduate students, and early-stage researchers, collaborating with the Depts of Classics and Ancient History, English, History, Liberal Arts, Philosophy, the School of Creative Arts, Performance and Visual Culture, School of Modern Languages and Cultures, and the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance. Alongside our usual activities in fostering interdisciplinary research activities, we have increasingly been working with postgraduates and early-stage career researchers, offering training and support in developing book proposals of both edited volumes arising from conferences and monographs being developed from PhD dissertations. We are grateful for the financial support of UKRI's Enhancing Research Culture fund, which permitted us to hold a workshop, 'Working with Publishers' (full report below). Being able to engage successfully with publishers is a fundamental professional skill which all PGRs and early-stage researchers need to develop in order to progress beyond their current career stage, whether to a postdoctoral post or permanent academic position. We hope during 2024/25 to expand this support network further, working with colleagues to offer mentoring to early-stage researchers who receive a recommendation from their examiners that they should consider developing their PhD into a book. We also hope to make the Workshop with Publishers a regular event. Thanks as always are due to members of the HRC committee, and above all to the HRC Administrator, Sue Rae.

Professor Alison Cooley,
Director, Humanities Research Centre
July 2024

In the course of the academic year, the Centre organised and supported a variety of conferences, lectures, seminars, and other events.

Doctoral Fellowship Conferences

Ambika Raja & Ruth-Anne Walbank (English)

[Divine Disasters: Exploring distressed landscapes in literature and theology](#)

Saturday 24th February 2024

What happens when belief, the sacred and the divine collide with ecological crises? How do such distressed landscapes alter our ideas of the ecological and theological? The one-day interdisciplinary conference, *Divine Disasters: Exploring Distressed Landscapes in Literature and Theology*, set out to explore these questions.



This conference asked how art and literature depicted the role of the divine in disasters. During times of ecological crisis, some turn to religion for solace, while others feel their faith shaken. These dilemmas are unsurprising as the distressed landscapes of disasters are often places of multitudinous emotions, including fear, sadness, anxiety, anger, and hope, foregrounding theological queries of evil, doubt, and suffering. Literature and creative art often act as a site for exploring intersections between theological enquiries and ecological disasters. “Divine disasters” offers a new lens for examining the interrelationship between theology, ecology, and literature, questioning human vulnerability and theology’s big questions within narratives of distressed landscapes.

The conference welcomed 77 delegates, with 43 in-person attendees and a further 35 joining us online. The hybrid conference format made the event more accessible, facilitating a range of scholars from international institutions that enhanced the cross-discipline implications of *Divine Disasters*. In turn, the conference programme boasted presentations across diverse fields, including cultural studies, history, sociology, film, and media studies, to explore the conference theme in both imaged landscapes and real-world terms.

Sadly, our keynote speaker, Prof. Patricia Murrieta-Flores, could not present her research on “*Nepantla*, between indigenous time and colonial space: Reflections about the end of the world in Central Mexico” due to illness. However, this schedule change allowed all delegates to participate in the two workshops initially planned to run concurrently. “Workshop A: Reading Eco-poetics in Divine Disasters”, facilitated by PhD candidates Ambika Raja, Nicola Hamer, and Lizzie Smith, opened the conference and invited discussions on poetry by Will Giles alongside visual art by Kaili Chun and Hongtao Zhou. In the afternoon, Catherine Greenwood from the University of Sheffield facilitated “Workshop B: Creating Responses to Divine Disasters” with Ruth-Anne Walbank, allowing delegates to write their responses to the conference theme through a series of free writing exercises and prompts from writing, including Catherine’s poetry, the Sura Qari’ah, and the Hopi Prophecies. While unexpected, the renewed focus on these interactive workshops rather than a single keynote decentered the conference’s didactic mode to refocus the event around discourse, exchange, and creativity, building a stronger feeling of academic community across the day.

The remainder of the conference encompassed six parallel panels from 17 researchers. In Room A, panels explored fictional representations of divine disasters, including ‘Dark Ecologies and Gothic Disasters’, ‘Deluge, Disaster, and Divine Deep Ecologies’, and ‘Remembering Disaster in Art and Culture’. The interdisciplinary scope of such fictional accounts enabled fresh comparisons between the mediums for imagining divine disasters, ranging from children’s animated films to Shakespeare’s plays. Meanwhile, the panels in Room B contemplated narratives from real-world disasters and the philosophical questions they raised, such as ‘Hope and Morality in the Face of Disaster’, ‘Divine Disasters and Religious Practice’, and ‘Extractions, Wastelands, and Human-made Disasters’. Papers on recent events such as the Chernobyl disaster and current topics like climate anxiety emphasised the relevance of “Divine Disasters” as an important critical lens for interpreting historic and contemporary distressed landscapes.

We would like to thank the Humanities Research Centre at the University of Warwick for their support in funding the conference. Thanks to the high-quality papers from the 2024 conference, we hope to submit a book proposal to the Warwick Series in the Humanities to develop and share 'Divine Disasters' with wider academic communities.



Yue Su (Film & TV Studies)

[Forms and Feelings of Kinship in the Contemporary World](#)

Saturday 27th April 2024

The one-day conference 'Forms and Feelings of Kinship in the Contemporary World' took place on 27th April 2024 at the Wolfson Research Exchange. The goal of this conference was to provide a platform for an interdisciplinary dialogue between screen studies and kinship studies, focusing on the following questions: How can kinship studies shed light on the representation of kinship on screen? How can what we see on-screen offer new materials and perspectives from which to investigate kinship? This event brought together researchers from both anthropology and film and media studies to address multiple audio-visual texts of kinship, ranging from fiction to documentary, from arthouse film to popular genres, and from West to East.

The conference began with the keynote address 'Creative Kinship: Extending Familial and Moral Imaginaries' from Professor Janet Carsten from the University of Edinburgh. Professor Carsten started with two recent films, *Broker* and *Parallel Mothers*, in which the issues of birth and adoption lie at the heart of their narratives. She then introduced her ethnographic research on adoptees' searches for birth kin in Scotland and experiences of marriage in Penang, Malaysia. She further proposed that cinema had the capacity to open up an expansive and imaginative terrain to further explore the culture and politics of kinship. Her keynote address successfully bridged the fields of film studies and kinship studies, establishing a vibrant discussion space to talk about the issues of narratives, memories, gestures and materials that concern both film and kinship studies.

The first panel, 'Creatures and Landscapes', examined how we can make kin from both non-human and ecological perspectives. Professor Carole-Anne Sweeney focused on the idea of 'radical tenderness' by both looking at the novel *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* and the film adaptation *Spoor*, leading to a post-anthropocentric viewpoint to consider the human-animal relationship. Shifting from Europe to Africa, Dr Monika Kukolova foregrounded the cinematic landscape depicted in the film *This Is Not a Burial, It's a Resurrection*, illustrating how kinship between the dead and the living can be made through the bond with the land. Continuing this non-human viewpoint, Killian O' Dwyer drew our attention to the role of cameras when filming animals, thus exploring the relationship between animals and moving images. This fascinating panel led all the participants to further discuss different animal species and different geographical features in relation to the various relationships between humans, creatures and lands.

The second panel, 'Queer Families and Communities', addressed the new visions of queer families and communities in terms of today's geopolitics. Airelle Amédéo and Arthur Ségard looked at the representation of monsters, wax and glitter in Alexis Langlois's work. They proposed the idea of 'trash kinship' through its aesthetic and political expressions. Dr Xi W. Liu used the Chinese independent documentary *Bad Women of China* to examine the ideology of womanhood and motherhood in China and then proposed the idea of 'stretched queer kinship'. Dr Lawrence Alexander brought in another documentary that portrays migrant sex workers from Eastern Europe. He challenged the line between 'good' and 'bad' sex by analysing how this queer community oscillates between heterosexual norms and homosexual desires. All three focus on marginal groups and independent filmmaking, inspiring the audiences to further consider how films provide creative forms of kinship that rebel or negotiate with mainstream family ideology.

The third panel moved from independent films to popular genres, obtaining a critical viewpoint to reconsider the representations of familial relationships in mainstream films. Dr Pete Deakin explored the genre of 'bromantic comedy', elaborating on the tension between hegemonic masculinity, heterosexual norms and 'male-to-male kinship'. Xinting Du juxtaposed the revolutionary model opera in the 1970s and the recent science fiction in the 2010s, revealing the continuity of family structures embedded in nationalism. Dom Thornton drew our attention to the 'fast family' of the *Fast and Furious*

franchise, addressing the issues of racial diversity and ambiguity in the representation of kinship. This panel successfully opened up a research field in film genre studies, in which the participants further questioned the kinship code and the filmmaking code across different genres.

This conference, on the one hand, challenged a rigid vision of kinship that has been embedded in anthropocentrism, heterosexism, racialism, and nationalism. On the other hand, it proposed new approaches with which to explore various forms and feelings of kinship on-screen. This event received positive feedback from the participants: ‘stimulating’, ‘well-structured’, ‘efficient’ and ‘beautifully organised’. A serialised conference and an edited collection on the topic of kinship in screen studies can be expected in the future.

Thank you very much for the excellent support from the Humanities Research Centre.

Gennaro Ambrosino & Kerry Gibbons (SMLC)
[Archaeology, Psychoanalysis and Colonialism:](#)
[The Return of the Repressed in European Culture in the Modern Age](#)
 Friday 17th May 2024



Archaeology, Psychoanalysis and Colonialism: The Return of the Repressed in the Modern Age
 (Friday 17 May 2024, University of Warwick)

09:30 – 10:00	Registration & Arrival
10:00 – 10:10	Welcome and Introductory remarks Gennaro Ambrosino and Kerry Gibbons
10:15 – 11:30	Session One: ‘Archaeology is never just digging’: Interrogating Archaeology as Metaphor and Practice (Chair: Gennaro Ambrosino, University of Warwick) Adam Lecznar (UCL) Tragedy, catastrophe, repression: Wole Soyinka, Leo Frobenius and the search for the Ori Olokun Giacomo Loi (University of Halfa) Unearthing the Unconscious: Jewish Archaeology and Yehuda Amichai’s critique of Zionism Yagmur Koyuncu (KU Leuven) How can we decolonize Egyptology? Questions and Discussion
11:30 – 12:30	Keynote Address I: Professor Stephen Frosh (Birkbeck, University of London) Psychoanalysis and Colonialism, Fort and Da Respondent: Professor Fabio Camilletti (University of Warwick)
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:45	Session Two: Haunted Colonialisms: Spectral Figures and Unsettling Returns in the (Post-) Colonial Imaginary (Chair: Luca Peretti, University of Warwick) Linda Šubertová (University of Ostrava) Trauma, Memory, and Spectrality in Richard Aldington’s <i>Death of a Hero</i> Declan Gillespie (University of Warwick) Troubled Fiction: Ghosts and Trauma in Jan Carson’s <i>Children’s Children</i> Anthony Richards (University of Lincoln) The Cryptonymics of Colpepper’s Representational Pharmacy Questions and Discussion
14:45 – 15:00	Coffee Break
15:00 – 16:00	Keynote Address II: Dr Gianmarco Mancosu (British Academy Fellow, University of London) ‘The echo of a distant time, comes willowing across the sand’. Transimperial intersections of archaeology and (repressed) colonial memories in the images of Roman remains in Africa Respondent: Professor Jennifer Burns (University of Warwick)

Archaeology, Psychoanalysis and Colonialism: The Return of the Repressed in the Modern Age is an interdisciplinary conference organised by Gennaro Ambrosino and Kerry Gibbons (University of Warwick), which took place at the University of Warwick on 17th May 2024.

The conference's aim was to examine the different forms that the 'return of the repressed' had taken over a broad chronological period ranging from the 19th to the 21st century. The idea that the material which resides in the unconscious (memories, thoughts, images) can never be completely erased but can re-emerge to consciousness is largely attributed to the work of Sigmund Freud, whose theoretical model on the repressed continues to have a significant influence on the study of the unconscious. However, while Freud's work on the repressed represents the most illustrious example of psychoanalysis' engagement with the unconsciousness, the history of the idea of repression and re-emergence can be traced far beyond the psychoanalyst in terms of both geography and temporality.

The conference explored the return of the repressed beyond the historical, cultural, and theoretical framework provided by Freud, and explored how the term oscillated between being employed as a polyvalent metaphor, philosophical concept, and theoretical method, or as all three simultaneously during the chosen time period. This was achieved through an interrogation of the 'return of the repressed' in three different areas: the history of archaeology, which witnessed the physical exhumation of relics; the psychoanalytic, which participated in the recovery of hidden memory; and finally (post)colonialism, which sought to repress colonized voices whilst being acutely fearful of their re-emergence. Indeed, the three areas were defined by their very close relationship with repression, which could be considered as personal, collective, or historical, resurfacing in the form of archaeological finds, spectres, ghosts, and the unconscious.

The event opened with registration and coffee, providing an opportunity for attendees to network and settle in. Following this, the organizing committee offered a brief introduction, setting the stage for a day of insightful discussions and presentations.

Chaired by Gennaro Ambrosino, the first session focused on the theme of archaeology and archaeological practices. Adam Lecznar (UCL) opened the session with a presentation titled "Tragedy, Catastrophe, Repression: Wole Soyinka, Leo Frobenius and the Search for the Ori Olokun". Lecznar examined the connections between archaeological discoveries and the broader themes of repression and cultural memory. Next, Giacomo Loi (University of Haifa) discussed "Unearthing the Unconscious: Jewish Archaeology and Yehuda Amichai's Critique of Zionism". Loi's talk delved into the ways archaeological practices intersect with national identity and collective memory, using Yehuda Amichai's work as a critical lens. Yagmur Koyuncu then presented on the topic "How Can We Decolonize Egyptology?". Koyuncu's presentation challenged traditional Egyptological practices, advocating for a decolonized approach that acknowledges and rectifies historical biases and power imbalances.

Afterwards we had the first keynote address by Professor Stephen Frosh from Birkbeck College, University of London, who spoke on "Psychoanalysis and Colonialism fort and da". His thought-provoking lecture explored the intersections between psychoanalytic theory and colonial history, highlighting the ways in which colonial repression continues to resonate in contemporary psychoanalytic discourse. Professor Fabio Camilletti responded to Frosh's address, engaging with his arguments and further enriching the discussion.

The afternoon session, chaired by Dr. Luca Peretti from the University of Warwick, explored the theme of colonial spectralities. Linda Šubertová from the University of Ostrava began with a presentation titled "Trauma, Memory, and Spectrality in Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero*". Šubertová examined the haunting presence of trauma and memory in Aldington's work, highlighting the lingering effects of colonial repression. Declan Gillespie from the University of Warwick followed with "Troubled Fiction: Ghosts and Trauma in Jan Carson's *Children's Children*". Gillespie's presentation focused on the portrayal of ghosts and trauma in contemporary Irish fiction, linking these themes to broader historical and cultural processes of repression and remembrance. Finally, Dr Sophie Belot from Queen Mary's, London, concluded the session with her presentation "Fadhma N'soumer (Belkacem Hadjadj, 2014): A Female Figure of Oppression, Repression, and Transgression". Belot's talk explored the figure of Fadhma N'soumer, a symbol of resistance and repression, and the ways in which her story disrupts and challenges colonial narratives.

The second keynote address was delivered by Dr. Gianmarco Mancosu, who offered further insights into the conference's overarching themes with a paper entitled: "The echo of a distant time, comes willowing across the sand'. Transimperial intersections of archaeology and (repressed) colonial memories in the images of Roman remains in Africa". Prof. Jenny Burns responded to Mancosu's address, facilitating a rich dialogue that complemented the earlier discussions.

The final session of the conference, chaired by Kerry Gibbons from the University of Warwick, focused on alternative memories and challenging colonial narratives. Miriam Gordon from the University of Warwick opened with her presentation "Fouiller la Mémoire Historique: Glissant, the Sites of Memory and the Duty of the French Caribbean Writer". Gordon explored the concept of historical memory through the work of Glissant, emphasizing the responsibilities of writers in the French Caribbean. Michele Baldaro from Ca' Foscari, Venice, then presented "The Return of the Colonial Repressed and Awareness in Enrico Emanuelli's *Settimana Nera*". Baldaro discussed the resurgence of colonial memories and their impact on contemporary consciousness, using Emanuelli's work as a case study. Galadriel Ravelli concluded the session with "Exhuming Anti-Colonial Narratives in the Belly of Empire: Fairfield House (Bath) Between Past and Present". Ravelli's presentation examined the ongoing relevance of anti-colonial narratives and their representation in historical and modern contexts.

The conference concluded with remarks from the organizers, who summarized the key themes and insights from the day. The conference underlined the importance of continued dialogue and research in understanding and addressing the return of the repressed in European culture. It is hoped that the conference will lead to a publication within Routledge's Warwick Series in the Humanities, and a proposal for this is currently being drafted. Many thanks to the Humanities Research Centre for their generous support.

Other Conferences

PhD and PeerNet Symposium - 20th/22nd September 2023

Report by Professor Elisabeth Herrmann (SMLC)

We are pleased to report that the PhDnet & PeerNet Symposium: European and Literary Studies was a great success. We had 27 participants, including postgraduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior and senior researchers from seven different European countries, coming together at this symposium. About the PhDnet and the PeerNet Members of the PhDnet: European and Literary Studies pursue their doctoral studies at their home institution and one of the six partner institutions, where their projects are jointly supervised. Moreover, they are awarded bi-national degrees. As a complement to the PhDnet postgraduate training programme, the PeerNet offers its members, including researchers at all stages of their career, a platform for innovative forms of research collaboration across cultures, intellectual exchange. Peer-to-peer support is offered in face-to-face interaction in a creative and inclusive atmosphere – as opposed to anonymous peer review or informal exchanges on social media. The mission of the PeerNet is to promote international standards of excellence in the study of literature and culture, to assist its members in developing cutting-edge interdisciplinary research projects, and to foster transnational collaboration among participating individuals and institutions.

The two half- and one full-day conference hosted by the School of Modern Languages brought together for the first time in a combined event the members of the transnational PhD training programme, the PhDnet, and the newly established research network in European cultural and literary studies, the PeerNet. Both networks are based at the partner institutions, the Justus-Liebig University Giessen, the University of Graz, the University of Bergamo, the University of Helsinki, the Catholic University of Lisbon, Stockholm University, and the University of Warwick. This conference was the kick-off event of this initiative and offered a great opportunity for institutional and cross-national exchange that will continue.

The symposium identified intersections between existing projects and developed common ground for collaborative work across the partner universities. Joint funding applications, specific concepts, theories and methodological approaches were discussed on the basis of papers, chapter drafts and project proposals. Individual projects presented in plenary in

10-minute slots on day one provided the participants with an overview of what is happening across the institutions. The second day was devoted to presenting pre-circulated papers, each of which was then commented on by a pre-selected respondent, followed by an open discussion with all panel participants. Two parallel sections ran on day one and two with balanced numbers of postgraduates, junior and experienced researchers in each section. The third day of the symposium was split into two groups again, this time offering a Masterclass to the PhDnet students on time management and productivity, while members of the PeerNet met to co-ordinate and discuss their collaborative research and current and prospective joint funding applications. It was great to have Sam Cole from Research & Impact Services offering this international audience information on the UK's deal to associate with Horizon Europe, explaining what the deal implies and how it changes the current funding landscape.

The Masterclass was delivered by Warwick/Giessen Alumna of the PhDnet, Dr Anna Tabouratzidis, who also moderated a second event, the PhD/Postdoc/Alumni exchange, attended by members of the PhDnet and also offered to the SMLC and wider Faculty of Arts PGR and Postdoc community. This was a great opportunity for peer networking amongst postgraduates.

A keynote lecture entitled "Nightmares in the Library. Real and Imaginary Books in J.S. Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) and C.T. Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932)" was given by SMLC colleague Fabio Camilletti in plenary but was also open to the SMLC community.

Since colleagues from our six partner universities were visiting the University of Warwick and the Midlands for the first time, we offered a guided City tour on the morning before the conference started and we took our guests on a trip to Stratford-upon-Avon on the last day, after the conference had ended. This visit included a visit at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in the evening where we watched *Macbeth*. Participants expressed their excitement about this unique opportunity which further created a sense of community among these researchers, who had worked together intensively for three days.

On the academic side, participants discussed work in progress and reflected on aims, conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches and research foci with their international partners. The symposium fostered cross-cultural communication in European literary and cultural studies and established new ideas for and standards in project development in this field.

The intellectual exchange and discussions between peer researchers, but also between junior and senior researchers during the three days of the symposium, created a culture of inclusivity within and across the two networks and proved to be highly productive. PGRs in particular, familiarized themselves with a range of different national academic cultures and traditions while at the same time observing how these manifold and oftentimes diverse approaches and perspectives complement, speak to and interact with each other, creating a dynamic research culture that implements new ways of thinking and establishes innovative pathways in research. With this outcome, the overall conference's objective was not only met but exceeded.

The intellectual outcome of this symposium will not be documented in a single volume or any other form of immediate publication, but it has already resulted, and will further materialize, in joint grant applications. This symposium was one of a series of symposia, workshops, and conferences to follow which will be hosted in alternating order at one of the partner institutions. Two thematic conferences are planned for autumn 2024 and 2026. The outcome of these will be published in the form of conference volumes for which we will consider Warwick's Series in the Humanities with Routledge as a valuable option.

We would like to thank the Humanities Research Centre and the School of Modern Languages and Cultures for the generous support which made this very successful symposium possible. The event has helped to put research at Warwick on the European map and to foster a vibrant intellectual community and sustainable culture across institutions.

Afterlives of an Essay: 100 Years of Walter Benjamin's Task of the Translator - 29th/30th September 2023

Conference organised by: Dr Caroline Summers (University of Warwick), Dr Ian Ellison (University of Kent, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main), and Dr Arianna Autieri (Goldsmiths, University of London).

Conference report by Dr Caroline Summers (SMLC)

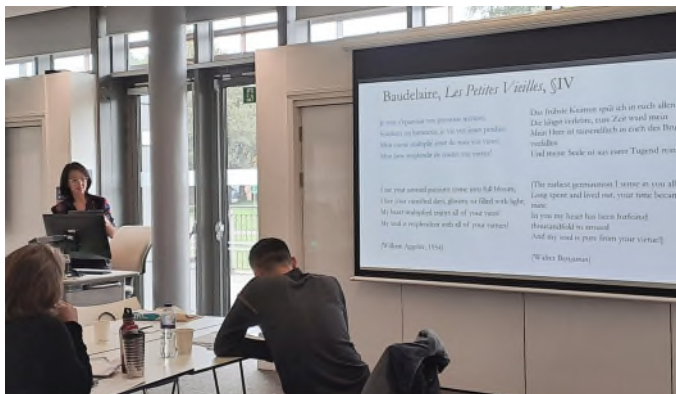
The main objective of the conference was to invite critical engagement with Benjamin's seminal essay on 'The Task of the Translator' ['Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers]. Our intention was to invite papers from across a range of disciplinary perspectives, and to engage both younger and more experienced scholars in the discussion of a key text in the discipline of Translation Studies.

Due to UCU industrial action, the original conference programme of papers and panels across 2 days was adjusted to fit all academic papers into the second day of the schedule. The first day therefore presented an opportunity for delegates to engage with the conference theme off-campus through planned activities, as follows:

- A visit to the Migrating Dreams and Nightmares exhibition at Common Ground (Fargo Village, Coventry), including a discussion with curators Nirmal Puwar and Kate Rosslin on the experience of putting together this narrative of the linguistic and physical translation of migrants between spaces.
- A visit and tour of Coventry Cathedral as a space that embodies concepts of afterlife and rebirth, with Nirmal Puwar (BA Fellow at Coventry Cathedral).
- Screening and discussion of Nirmal Puwar's film *Unravelling* (2008) in the Chapter House (Coventry Cathedral).
- The opportunity to visit the Herbert Gallery with its various holdings, including more information on the history of Coventry Cathedral and the city itself.
- Conference dinner at Bistrot Pierre in Coventry, attended by almost all delegates.

The academic focus of the conference was on Saturday 30th September, which is also celebrated as International Translation Day since it is the feast day of St Jerome. The conference programme consisted of 4 standard panels, 2 keynote papers and a dialogue between two established scholars and translators. Delegates commented favourably on the range of papers and the quality of the keynotes. Since panels ran consecutively, the audience for the various papers was not divided: while this made for a long day, it ensured that discussions from the panel sessions could flow naturally into conversations in the scheduled breaks and helped to establish a feeling of continuity throughout the day.

There were 35 official delegates, including PhD researchers, Early Career Academics, established scholars and retired members of the academic community. Participants came from across the UK and Ireland, as well as from mainland Europe, Turkey, the USA and Hong Kong. This diversity was also reflected in the range of presenters.



Dr Julia Ng



Professor Duncan Large

Traditional keynotes were delivered by Dr Julia Ng (Goldsmiths) and Professor Duncan Large (BCLT, UEA). Their different perspectives on Benjamin, from Philosophy and from Comparative Literature/Translation Studies respectively, initiated some very interesting questions in the subsequent discussion, looking across disciplinary boundaries to explore the impact of the essay. Participants were very engaged by both papers.

The 'In Conversation' session with Dr Chantal Wright (ZHAW) and Professor Douglas Robinson (CUHK, Shenzhen) was chaired by Dr Arianna Autieri and ranged from discussion of the text itself to a broader dialogue about the experience of translating Benjamin or translating in the spirit of Benjamin. This was a very valuable opportunity for delegates to hear two international scholars in Translation Studies sharing their extensive expertise on the conference topic. We are grateful to all four keynote speakers for their willingness to adapt to challenging circumstances, and for their generosity and supportive reflections on papers throughout the conference.

The standard of papers and presentations was very high throughout the conference. Panel sessions centred on the following topics:

- Theoretical readings of Benjamin
- Contemporary perspectives
- Reading 'The task' as a literary lens
- Reading 'The task' through Benjamin and his translators

Particular strands that emerged from the panel discussions included the materiality of language and text, translation as a performance, critical engagement with binaries such as un/translatability and the im/possible, and the importance of reading texts and theories in context.



Conference organisers: Dr Ian Ellison, Dr Arianna Autieri, Dr Caroline Summers (L-R)

The broad and engaged conversations that continued throughout the day meant that the conference objectives were easily met. Benjamin's essay was read and reframed from a number of different angles, and the discussions that followed panels and keynotes provided ample opportunity to develop these ideas. There was a relaxed, engaged and supportive atmosphere throughout the day, for all papers. We were delighted to be able to welcome ten students from the Warwick MA in Translation and Cultures to the keynote sessions: these students have had a unique opportunity to be part of a landmark event at the start of their postgraduate careers in Translation Studies, and we were pleased that so many of them chose to attend.

Following prior contact with Routledge, we were able to secure a discount for conference delegates on Douglas Robinson and Chantal Wright's publications on the Benjamin essay, valid for a month after the conference. We are grateful to Routledge for their generosity in this, and for sending us the sample copies.

Keynotes, presenters and attendees commented positively on their experience, describing it as stimulating, entertaining and enriching. One delegate commented: 'Congratulations ... for putting on such a wonderful event under challenging circumstances and with several contingencies! It was of course a long day but the I felt the format really did encourage conversations, and all the talks were excellent. It was wonderful to have so many great scholars together and to have a chance to discuss. Thank you once again for all your efforts in organising.'

Our intention is to publish proceedings from the conference as a 'Talking Points' volume with the *Forum for Modern Language Studies*. This is a format that invites a dialogic, open format and a narrow focus and would work well as a publication of the ideas and conversations featured at the conference. We are in touch with delegates about this and are in the process of putting together a Call for Papers. In the longer term, the co-organisers also hope to apply for funding to support a future research project exploring literary afterlives and modernism.

Spiritualism and Italian Cultures XVIII-XX Centuries was an interdisciplinary conference organised by Bart Van den Bossche (KU Leuven), Fabio Camilletti (University of Warwick) and Gennaro Ambrosino (University of Warwick) in Leuven on 29th-30th September.

The two-day conference examined the role and spread of Modern Spiritualism in Italian culture and literature since the second half of the 18th century. Modern Spiritualism and parapsychology, the discipline that seeks to explain supernatural events using scientific methods, originated in the United States in 1848 following the experiments of the Fox sisters. From the United States, spiritualism spread rapidly to Europe in the early 1850s, bringing with it the fashion for turning tables, invoking the spirits of the dead and communicating with them through mediumship. This phenomenon exerted a powerful influence on the European popular imagination, inspiring literary texts, occupying the pages of major periodicals and becoming the focus of scholarly debate.

Filling an important gap in the literature on occultism and (pseudo)science and their multiple interactions with Italian culture, the event provided an overview of the phenomenon, analysing it from different and complementary perspectives. While there is a great deal of studies on this subject in other European countries, there is no comprehensive contribution that examines the development and influence of this phenomenon in its entirety in Italy, with the exception of works dealing with the period between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century and Camilletti's *Italia lunare. Gli anni Sessanta e l'occulto* (2018), which focuses on the 1960s. Italian Spiritualism acquired original and innovative patterns due to the political situation in which it spread, the cultural background of the peninsula and its close relationship with the Catholic Church, making it a unique case study to be studied.

Bringing together scholars from different disciplines and fields (literary studies, art history, history of science and medicine), the conference deliberately covered a wide period, taking into account not only the post-unification period, which, as already mentioned, marks the explosion of this phenomenon up to the First World War, but also the study of the 'supernatural' before the advent of Spiritualism and the Spiritualist literature of the second half of the 20th century and the first years of the 21st century.

The first day of the conference opened with Gennaro Ambrosino's analysis of the origins and spread of mesmerism in Italy between 1779 and 1853, focusing on the topoi and aspects that would later feed the Spiritualist rhetoric. Francesco Paolo De Ceglia (University of Bari "Aldo Moro") and Stefano Serafini (University of Padua) then analysed the Spiritualist movement in the second half of the 19th century. The former focused on the famous Italian medium, Eusapia Palladino, describing her career and the cultural context in which she became famous. The latter focused instead on the literary fortunes of Spiritualism from the 1850s to the 1890s and the relationship between science and the occult in this period. After lunch, the conference continued with Fabio Camilletti's lecture, which shed light on the Spiritualist elements in the works of the writer Pitigrilli and described the rise of Spiritualism in the 1940s and 50s. Simona Micali (University of Siena) focused on three novels from three different periods (the 1940s, the 1960s and the 2010s), analysing the different declinations and models of Spiritualism in the three authors (Landolfi, Buzzati and Zanotti). Finally, Corinne Pontillo (University of Catania) analysed the motif of "ghosts" in the literary works of the writer Alberto Savinio, who lived in the first half of the 20th century.

The second day opened with Stefano Lazzarin's (Università Jean Monnet, Saint-Etienne) analysis and close reading of Alberto Moravia's short story "Seduta Spiritica" (1960), which has often been neglected by scholars. Martina Piperno (Università di Roma "La Sapienza") proposed a necromantic reading of *Ombre dal fondo* by Maria Corti, looking at the relationship between philology and necromancy. The last two papers focused on the visual aspect of Spiritualism in Italian culture in the 21st century: Paola Cori (University of Birmingham) analysed the art installation of the Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan, with particular attention to *Breath Ghost Blind* (2021), which shows the phantom-like atmosphere of his works; Chiara Zampieri (KU Leuven) dealt with the literary motif of "ghosts in museums" in contemporary literature.

Overall, **Spiritualism and Italian Cultures XVIII-XX Centuries** was well attended throughout the day, with many lively discussions in the various panels. From early nineteenth-century Mesmerism to the Neapolitan Spiritualist Circle, which included the world's most studied and famous medium, Eusapia Palladino, from Buzzati's writings to Maurizio Cattelan's art installations, the conference was a unique and collaborative opportunity to explore Spiritualism in Italian culture and its influence on the popular imagination. As a result, a proposal for an edited collection is being prepared.

Approaches to Teaching the #EarlyModernHispanicWorld to 21st-Century Students - Keynote speaker - Tara Munroe (Founder and Creative director of Opal22 Arts and Edutainment, Leicester) - Friday 13th October 2023

How do we continue to engage students with the early modern and pre-modern Hispanic world in innovative ways? How can we make these texts more accessible to today's learners whilst also retaining the essential differences of another culture and another era? These are some of the questions that scholars, in collaboration with students, explored during the interdisciplinary workshop 'Approaches to Teaching the #EarlyModernHispanicWorld to 21st-Century Students', which took place at Warwick on Friday, 13th October 2023. The aim of the event was to rethink approaches and pedagogical methods to open up these texts and topics to higher education students and it included short presentations on all aspects of pedagogy and strategies for teaching, learning, and assessment that encourage learners to engage with key works using a variety of means, including visual and digital media. The hybrid format facilitated the attendance of scholars and PG students; overall, we had colleagues joining us in person and online from British, Irish and US institutions.



The first panel, entitled 'Teaching Early Modern Literature', included very engaging presentations by Prof. Isabel Torres (Queen's University Belfast), Dr Anne Holloway (Queen's University Belfast), and Dr Idoya Puig (Manchester Metropolitan University). They all offered some reflections on their experience facilitating effective engagement with literature from an era which is at a double remove from the twenty-first century student. Professor Torres focused on the rationale for learning and evaluation strategies which followed Egan's 'Imaginative Approach to Teaching' (2005) and recent work on the concept of 'Salience' in Shakespearean Studies (Dadabhoy and Mehdizadeh, 2023). She concluded by showing her students' 'creative response' project work for the poetry module and reflections on 'embodiment activities' that will be further developed on the theatre course. Similarly, Dr Holloway showed the audience the potential in foregrounding the continuing resonances of the Early Modern within the modern, and in anchoring literature within more familiar or immediate contexts for students. This was then clearly illustrated in the innovative assessment options that allow students to become editors, curators, or producers of podcasts or documentaries. In the last presentation of this panel, Dr Puig showed how we can make use of new media literacies in the university context to rediscover and renew Spanish Golden Age literary texts. By focusing on Cervantes's *La española inglesa*, Puig demonstrated how literature, particularly classic texts, can be embedded in the language classroom in innovative ways.

During our second panel, we learned about the teaching of history of science and medicine in colonial Latin America thanks to Dr Yari Pérez Marín (Durham University) and Dr Fiona Clark (Queen's University Belfast). Dr Pérez Marín shared some examples from her teaching practice on how to facilitate student engagement with early modern sources on natural history and medicine at different levels, from ideas best suited for introductory undergraduate modules to more specialised postgraduate contexts. For instance, the opportunities her students have to collaborate and put into practice their knowledge at the [Spanish Gallery at Bishop Auckland](#). Similarly, Dr Clark discussed some approaches to engage students with 18th-century topics by centring assessment in real world contexts (taking examples from the *Gazeta de Literatura de México*, treatments for syphilis, art and health, and polemics around uses of chocolate). In addition to developing an understanding of primary sources, the underpinning aim of these modules is to help students develop more advanced writing and communication skills with an awareness of a specific audience and using digital technologies e.g., podcasting, digital editing, and working with interactive images.

The keynote presentation was delivered by Tara Munroe, Creative Director of Opal22 Arts and Edutainment, a historical researcher and museum curator who has been working within a number of museums and community organisations across the Midlands area in England over a number of years. Her work with Arts, Heritage and Cultural projects for the local communities has been nationally acclaimed and is being used as templates across the country. She brings a modern innovative twist to the heritage area and makes it fun for those she targets. Her presentation 'Casta Paintings through 21st-Century Eyes' was highly engaging and refreshing, particularly her work with local communities through workshops and events. Tara Munroe talked about her new exhibition, *Casta: The Origin of Caste* - which we totally recommend!-, which showcases a series of rare, historically important 18th-century Mexican paintings which she discovered in the basement of the Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. The paintings are explored by different experts that bring different approaches and readings, but her talk made us think beyond all this, looking at their legacy, their role, and how to decode and decolonise the modern world.

The last panel brought together different colleagues from Warwick that teach the early modern Hispanic world in three different departments: School of Modern Languages and Cultures, History and Liberal Arts. Prof. Rebecca Earle, based in the department of History and also an expert on Casta painting, explained how the history of food is an effective vehicle for exploring the past, particularly in her own experience of teaching Latin American history through food, and how this experience has in turn shaped her own research trajectory. Dr Liz Chant, based in Liberal Arts, explored how historical maps offer unique insights into the early modern Hispanic world, particularly to engage with issues of environmental history, historical geography and the history of science in the Spanish Empire. And finally, Dr Rich Rabone and Dr Leticia Villamediana González (SMLC) shared some pedagogical reflections on their collaborative teaching of 'Knowing Women: Gender, Education, and Power', in which students analyse strategies for engagement with or subversion of prevailing gender norms in the cultural production of two different periods: the Baroque, and the Enlightenment.

The workshop concluded with a roundtable that brought together in conversation scholars from different disciplines as well as some UG and PGR students. Some of the questions discussed were: What first attracted you to the study of early modern culture and literature? Out of the workshop sessions, have you found any new approaches to texts that you can see fitting well with their own work? For those ECRs / PGRs whose work sits between subjects like History and Languages, do they see any particular challenges? What do you see as being the greatest barriers to drawing new students into these subject areas? How important should the canon be when you design a curriculum?

Our main purpose when we first started thinking about this workshop was to initiate interdisciplinary conversations that might help participants to develop their own teaching practice. We think we achieved our goal; we were extremely pleased and impressed by the quality of the presentations, as well as the lively conversations and networking that took place during the coffee and lunch breaks. But just in case we are a bit biased, these are some of the comments of those who attended the event:



'I was really interested to hear about the use of creative writing in assessment, especially approaches to assessing commentary on the creative piece rather than the piece itself. it was a really useful and fruitful exchange that has given me lots of new ideas for my teaching.'

'It was wonderful to have an opportunity to be among like-minded colleagues reflecting on teaching. We need to acknowledge that the context in which these texts are received is always shifting and our approaches need to shift accordingly.'

'After the presentations I thought on how to guide my classes towards a more democratised learning, and importantly by establishing an affective connection that would help the co-creation of the curriculum and the educational materials.'

'I was interested in the transdisciplinary approach, and the experiences shared certainly gave me clear ideas on how to plan creative assessments in my art

historical teaching. I am really happy for having attended to the workshop which generated such rich discussions and collegiality.'

'It was helpful to see specific examples of how to engage students with different media to read some texts and produce videos, commentaries, artefacts, etc. with their own interpretations. The concept of salience was helpful to approach works from early periods of history.'

Finally, we are extremely thankful to those who generously funded the event and made it possible: the Humanities Research Centre at Warwick, School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Connecting Cultures Group at Warwick and the University Council for Languages.

Dr Leticia Villamediana González
Associate Professor in Hispanic Studies
School of Modern Languages and Cultures

Italian Gothic - 31st October/1st November 2023, organised by Prof. Fabio Camilletti as part of the Italian Seminar Series

On Halloween 2023, Italian at Warwick took part in the Warwick Festival of the Gothic (full programme of Italian-related events is available here: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/modernlanguages/research/italian/events/>). Activities included: a film night, organised in partnership with the Italian Cinema Seminar and the Department of Film and Television Studies; a student-led workshop in collaboration with the cross-faculty Warwick Comics Research Network; and a roundtable on the theme of the Italian Gothic, whose occasion was provided by the recent publication of the *Italian Gothic* Edinburgh companion, co-edited by Marco Malvestio and Stefano Serafini, which included contributions from Warwick staff and students (myself and Dr Simona Di Martino). The roundtable was also the inaugural event of the newly founded research network *The Revolving Century*, ideated by two PhD students in Italian, Gennaro Ambrosino (2nd year) and Enrica Leydi (1st year). This set of events, in sum, managed to catalyse and make interact several research units, groups, and communities that would have otherwise remained isolated, actively putting into practice a genuinely interdisciplinary research culture across the faculty.

The presence of Dr Stefano Serafini was essential for the successful management of the roundtable; his experience in the study of popular literature and the sociological angle of his research provided distinct input to the comics workshop as well. The discussion held over the day led to two parallel initiatives:

- Two **conference panels** on the Italian Gothic, to be presented at the next biennial conference of the Society for Italian Studies in June 2024
- One **special journal issue** to be presented (deadline 1st February 2024) to journal *Gothic Studies*:
- **Material and Immaterial Italian Gothic**: The proposed special issue, building on the last decade of research in Italian Studies (Foni, 2007 & 2009; Corradi, 2016; Camilletti-Foni, 2021 & 2022; Malvestio-Serafini, 2023; Camilletti, forthcoming 2024 and Serafini, forthcoming 2024) will explore the complex interplay between the Italian Gothic and the dominant classicist self-narrative of Italian culture, further shaped by the influence of the Catholic Church and a clear division between high and low or popular culture. Specifically, the proposed special issue will address the dialectical relationship between the material and the immaterial, the visible and the invisible, the prominent and the repressed - pairs of opposites that encapsulate the central characteristics of the Italian Gothic. Traditional Italian aesthetics emphasises principles such as figuration, volumetric concreteness, perspective and visual realism, with Giorgio Vasari as an example and reference, so that the values of rationality, order and balance are closely linked to discussions of Italian identity, particularly during the development of (neo)classicist aesthetics in the eighteenth century and the movements for Italian unification in the nineteenth century. Conversely, Gothic aesthetics in Italy was for a considerable period synonymous with German, Romantic and irrational traits, which were considered non-classical and therefore repressed and apparently eradicated. This self-narrative was indeed successful, as the dominant perception of Italian aesthetics from the outside had long been framed by classical and rational principles. Thus, cultural movements that sought to break away from

Italian norms promoted alternative aesthetics: Byzantine-Greek art developed a two-dimensional and perspective-less style, while German Gothic architecture developed in reaction to Romanesque art. With the emergence of the Gothic novel in the eighteenth century, Horace Walpole could then refer to Gothic architecture to emphasise features of his anti-classical and anti-Italian poetics. However, this Italian narrative conceals a significant part of Italian culture. Baroque or Jesuitic features, for example, such as ornamental and theatrical elements, visionary themes and an emphasis on fantasy, remain beneath the surface of the dominant narrative. These characteristics, which typify the Italian Gothic, have reappeared at various points, challenging the hegemony of classical ideals and revealing the nuanced nature of Italian cultural expression, as in the case of Giovanni Battista Piranesi's etchings. Therefore, seventeen years after the release of the Gothic Studies issue dedicated to the Gothic in Italy in 2006, this particular work centres on the Italian Gothic, considered a distinctive phenomenon moulded by the prevalent classical narrative, while also being impacted by the Catholic Church and a distinct demarcation between high and low culture. In conclusion, although the recognition and exploration of this complexity has been slowed by the denial of the existence of an Italian Gothic, both nationally (since the thematic critics of the 1980s: Calvino, Orlando, Ghidetti) and internationally, building on the recent Edinburgh Companion to the Italian Gothic, we call for a re-evaluation of traditional narratives. By delving into the dialectic between the material and the immaterial, the visible and the invisible, the prominent and the repressed, we contend that such a nuanced exploration of Italian cultural expressions and artifacts challenges established norms, interrogates the hegemony of classical ideals, and advocates for a more inclusive comprehension of Italian historical culture. This, in turn, contributes to a holistic understanding of the dynamic and evolving nature of the Italian Gothic heritage, showcasing its subversive and transgressive power that operates beyond normative boundaries. Guest Editors: Gennaro Ambrosino, Enrica Leydi, Stefano Serafini

Professor Fabio Camilletti (SMLC)

Annual Conference of Women in Spanish and Portuguese Studies

With LASTESIS 10th/11th November 2023

Chilean feminist theatre group LASTESIS gave two wonderful and energizing presentations at Warwick in November 2023. The first was a keynote lecture to the annual conference at Warwick of the Annual Conference of Women in Spanish and Portuguese Studies (WiSPS, <https://www.wispsacademic.org/conference-2023>) and the second was a dedicated workshop seminar with students from Theatre and Performance Studies.

LASTESIS are an interdisciplinary, intersectional and trans-inclusive feminist collective widely known for their performance 'Un violador en tu camino'. It was first staged in Valparaíso in Chile in 2019 to protest against violence against women in Latin America. Their performances have since resonated across the world in many societies in which gender-based violence continues to be an issue.

WiSPS' conference saw approximately 40 specialists in Hispanic and Lusophone Cultural Studies visit Warwick to discuss the theme of Gender/Violence. Following keynotes from María López, on women migrants crossing the Mexican-US border, and Mar García Puig, on the trials of women's publishing in Spain, LASTESIS demonstrated their working methods to delegates. Their engaging and lively presentation was extremely well received by all after a long day of discussions. LASTESIS illustrated how they draw on major currents of contemporary feminist thought, which they distil into vibrant verbal and multi-media performances. They also explored how their work is not only collaborative but also co-creative in cases where they organize street events or conduct specific workshop series for particular groups.

A group of students in Theatre and Performance Studies were given close insight into this dynamic and responsive methodology, experiencing LASTESIS' theoretical approaches and quizzing them in detail about key elements. They thus had a valuable opportunity to develop their own creative practice, thinking across cultural boundaries from Latin America to Spain and China. The following day LASTESIS took the opportunity to set off to Kenilworth in search of a castle and a traditional cup of tea.

WiSPS, Theatre and Performance Studies and the School of Modern Languages and Cultures were delighted that the HRC sponsored this event, which grabbed national academic attention. It might be fair to say, though, that the students asked more searching questions of LASTESIS than their academic colleagues!

[Locations of \(Dis\)embodied Labour in Theatre and Performance](#) - Thursday 30th November 2023. Funded by the Humanities Research Centre and Theatre and Performance Studies, organized by doctoral researchers Yangzi Zhou, Varvara Sklez and Prodosh Bhattacharya.
Report by Yangzi Zhou (SMLC)

This one-day conference brought together scholars and practitioners from across the globe to reflect as a community on how theatre and performance studies could offer novel ways to problematize an idea of the labouring body. There has been an increasingly vibrant trend to consider theatre and performance as a holistic event involving bodies that are not only seen as carriers of aesthetic techniques and dramatic actions to evoke emotions from audiences, but also as working entities embedded in the historical and contemporary web of labour and politics. The conference provided an apt occasion to unpack the veracity of such a theme and we had a good participation from academics, and creative practitioners with a rich and engaging repertoire of ideas to problematize the theme. We had a good mix of experienced professors and academics, creative practitioners, as well as early career scholars and researchers as part of this event that afforded the opportunity to build networks and opportunities of collaboration.

A hybrid format facilitated a wider participation from scholars and practitioners from UK, Europe and South Asia. The conference programme was curated and designed to elaborate on relevant subthemes that formed a constellation on our conference theme. We had a total of seventeen presenters spread across six panels, selected from more than 40 responses to the conference call.

In the morning session, we had two panels that ran parallel to each other and had an even participation from those present. Panel IA had the overarching theme of 'Beyond Embodied Labour' and the presenters from a wide range of expertise came together to explore how modes of concrete and abstract forms of labour may be problematized in the dual nature of embodying and disembodying performance, and to what extent existing frameworks of understanding embodiment in performance explicate its relation to racial, communitarian and caste-laden subjectivities. In panel IB titled 'Labouring through the Irreconcilable,' scholars from theatre and performance studies explored how political events marked by strife and trauma are explored through performative re-enactments in the form of cultural tourism, dance and verbatim theatre, and what remains irreconcilable about labouring bodies in artistic practice.

There were four sessions post lunch, with the first two being held as parallel sessions for one and a half hours. Panel 2A was themed as 'Global Perspectives on Gendered Labour' and explored the intersections of gender and labour in ritualistic and theatrical performances. Panel 2B was titled 'Agency of Labouring Bodies' and scholars came together to think on the artistic agency of labouring bodies in circus, dance and creative practice. One of the significant highlights of this session also lay in a performance artist and dancer Shruti Ghosh presenting her creative work to explore the relationship of the artist's body in dance with migrant workers she sought to represent. It received a good response and engagement from the audience both online and in person.

The final two parallel sessions focussed on problematising the concept of labour in theatre and dance work in the UK. Panel 3A titled 'Theatre Works' and Panel 3B - 'Facets of Aesthetic Labour' looked at the performance industry in UK, and the complex relation between aesthetic labour and professional work in freelance performance, ballet and community theatre as few examples of the various modes of performance.

A significant part of the conference was the keynote delivered by Professor Nicholas Ridout from the Department of English and Drama at Queen Mary University of London. His talk was titled 'Performance after Automation' in which he deliberated critically on how theatre in the mid-twentieth century can now be examined fruitfully as a site, in which a new regime of labour management is made visible in the actions of performing bodies on stage. The discussion following

his talk was quite engaging and spilled over into informal spaces during coffee and lunch breaks. His talk also forms part of his very recent research project funded by the AHRC, and therefore elicited the opportunity for young scholars in the field to engage with a new area within this wider theme of the conference.

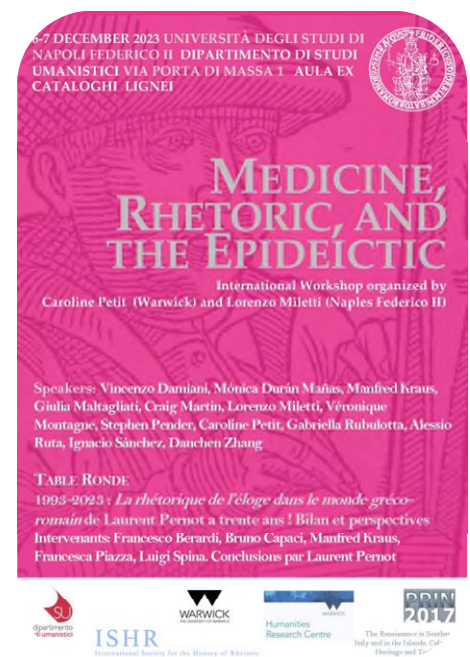
Overall, the conference was a success, as testified by the long and engaging conversations between everyone present both within the scope of the panels as well as beyond it. We gathered for our last session for rounding up and deliberating on the day, with three of our participants leading a roundtable. We all collectively came to discuss and open paths of interrogation on the theme of our conference, and its afterlife within institutions of academia and beyond. Being in a global situation marked by ever shifting regimes of work and labour, the capacity of bodies (in a range of contexts) as both the site and currency of such protean entanglements was an emerging and crucial concept in thinking about the theme and became a focal point in our final conversations.

Drawing from such a trajectory we the organizers are now in the process of working towards a publication on this theme, and the possibilities it has thrown up. We have received a positive response from the participants, and abstracts that approach our theme from diverse contexts that may navigate the complex and poignant relationship on how forms of understanding labour and its' (dis)embodiment in performance, may unpack new avenues of comprehending bodies, labour and work in their entanglements.

We are at a preliminary stage of dialogue with Brill, whose series "Themes in Theatre: New Directions in International Theatre and Performance" resonates with our theme, and we hope to make a significant publication in the process. We plan to work through this spring on the book proposal so that it suits the scope and objectives of an edited volume.

Medicine, Rhetoric and the Epideictic Across Cultures 6th/7th December 2023

From antiquity to early modern times, medicine and rhetoric share much common ground and contribute hand in hand to scientific enquiries into the natural world, the human body, causation and more; they also enable effective teaching and diffusion of knowledge whilst establishing or questioning new and past authorities. This workshop investigated various facets of this relationship. It focused on newly found or neglected material, unexpected or overdue comparisons, and how epideictic rhetoric especially served the discipline of medicine across cultures. Papers covered material from Classical Athens, imperial Greek literature, late antique literature (including in Arabic), early modern Italy and France.



Stonebreakers: A documentary by Valerio Ciriaci and Issak Liptzin

Stonebreakers: Film Screening and Roundtable Discussion

Wednesday 13 March 2024

Report by Joanne Lee

Internal webpage: [Stonebreakers \(warwick.ac.uk\)](https://warwick.ac.uk)

Coventry Cathedral webpage: [Stonebreakers - Film Screening - Coventry Cathedral](#)

On Wednesday 13th March, Valerio Ciriaci (director) and Isaak J. Liptzin (producer) visited Warwick as part of their UK tour to present their documentary film *Stonebreakers* (Awen Films, 2022). Thanks to the generous support from the HRC Visting Speaker's Fund and from the Warwick Institute of Engagement, along with contributions from departments of History, PAIS, SCAPVC and the SMLC, we were able to stage two separate events: an afternoon on-campus event open to

staff and students, and an evening event in the Chapter House theatre of Coventry Cathedral open to members of the public.

Valerio Ciriaci and Isaak J. Liptzin co-founded Awen Films in 2012 and *Stonebreakers* is their third documentary feature film. The documentary chronicles the fight around historical memory in the US that exploded in 2020 during the George Floyd protests and the presidential election. It interrogates understandings of national narratives and foundational myths (in particular Columbus and the Founding Fathers) and explores debates around contested monuments, statues and landmarks. The film premiered in 2022 at the Festival dei Popoli in Florence, where it won three awards. The afternoon screening and roundtable panel discussion took place in the Cinema Room of the Faculty of Arts Building with an audience of around 40 staff and students and was followed by a drinks reception. In the evening, a similar free event took place in the Chapter House theatre of Coventry Cathedral with around 30 in attendance. Although scheduled on a busy day in the last week of term, the film drew in a varied audience with interests in US politics, racial justice, decolonising movements, historical memory and documentary filmmaking.

The film-screenings (70 minutes) were followed by a roundtable panel discussion – the aim of which was not only to allow the filmmakers to explain the ideas behind the making of the film and respond to questions from the audience, but also to bring them into dialogue with researchers and cultural activists who specialise in different aspects of US history and politics, questions of memory and memorialisation, and cultural policy and inclusion.



Isaak J. Liptzin (producer) and Valerio Ciriaci (director)

Afternoon panellists included:

Jess Eastland-Underwood: a final year PhD Student from PAIS whose research looks at how everyday understandings of the concept of ‘the economy’ in the USA mobilised the anti-lockdown and George Floyd protests during the Covid-19 pandemic. Her published work has looked at interpretations of the economic ideology of the Founding Fathers in the Tea Party movement as well as the way popular conceptions of ‘the market’ reproduce white supremacy.

Alison Cooley: Professor in Classics at Warwick, Deputy Head of Classics, and Director of the Humanities Research Centre. Her interest in contemporary debates surrounding statues and memorials stems from her research into the cultural and political aspects of the Roman world. She has a forthcoming chapter on the destruction of ancient monuments from Pharaonic Egypt to Imperial Rome: ‘**Control: The destruction of monuments**’, in D. Agri and S. Lewis (eds.) *Cultural History of Media: Antiquity* (Bloomsbury)

Lara Ratnaraja: an independent cultural consultant who specialises in diversity, innovation, leadership, collaboration and cultural policy within the cultural, the HE and digital sectors. She co-produces a series of cultural leadership programmes for people from diverse backgrounds linked to geographical place and also curates a digital Conference called Hello Culture. Her projects include working with the 8 Welsh National Arts Companies to develop a cultural framework for diversity co-designed with creative stakeholders and residents. Lara is on the board of Compton Verney and is Co-Chair of the Coventry Biennial. She is also on the UK Council for Creative UK and the Equality Monitoring Group for Arts Council Wales.

Evening panelists included:

David Wright: David teaches and writes about cultural policy and the creative industries in the Centre for Cultural and Media Policy Studies at Warwick. His recent work has concerned campaigns for statues and memorials to figures from twentieth-century popular culture. He is currently writing a book for Liverpool University Press: *Celebrity and Public Art: Memorialising Popular Culture* and his recent open access article in the *European Journal of Cultural Studies* concerned nostalgia and statues to comedians in the North of England.

Ras Emmanuelle Henry Cottrell: founder of I&I Collective – an international collective of promoters, producers, performers, DJs, artists & activists. One of his recent projects at St Mary's Guildhall in Coventry involved exploring the history of the American civil rights activist Frederick Douglass who visited the city in 1847 where he delivered three lectures as part of his anti-slavery campaigns.

Lydia Plath: Associate Professor of US History at Warwick, where she specialises in the history of racism and racial violence. Her research projects have investigated the representation of slavery in twentieth and twenty-first century American cinema. Her teaching centres on African American history and her module 'America in Black and White' won the inaugural Historians of the Twentieth Century United States Inclusive Curricula Prize. Lydia is one of the facilitators of the [Tackling Racial Inequality at Warwick](#) Staff Development Programme.

Both afternoon and evening screenings led to lively and insightful panel discussions in which participants debated the quest for representation within the film: was the struggle really about whether a statue or monument should stand, or was the struggle for territorial rights and political space more important? Why do certain stories become central to the national narrative while other stories and voices are marginalised? How can we incorporate activism into our teaching and research? Questions to the director and producer also explored cinematography and considered how much of the intensity and beauty of the film derives from the choice to avoid a didactic voice-over, the use of music to build tension and the powerful juxtaposition of imagery. At both events, we really needed an extra hour to fully explore these aspects! The events were successful in bringing filmmakers together with researchers at Warwick and external collaborators while the subject of racial justice and political representation clearly resonated with both audiences. We hope to purchase the documentary for the library so that other members of the university can watch a film which makes a vital contribution to political debates about monuments, memorialisation and constructions of national narratives. We extend our thanks and appreciation to Valerio and Isaak for coming to Warwick and sharing their film with us – we eagerly await their next film project!

[Money and Medals Network Training Day](#)

Thursday 9th May 2024

Report by Professor Suzanne Frey-Kupper (Classics and Ancient History)



Ancient Numismatics, the study of ancient coinage, is one of Warwick's Classics Department's research strengths. The Department is an international hub in numismatics with three staff members, experts in the field, embedding their research in the wider context of Ancient History, Classical Archaeology and Ancient Economy.

The Warwick Numismatic Day has been an annual event since 2010, assembling specialists, including young researchers and students, as well as members of a wider audience, such as collectors, to share and discuss papers around topics on ancient Numismatics.

Following the success of the 2023 Numismatics Day dedicated to imitations of ancient coins and their functions, this year's workshop saw the return of the 12th Numismatic Day focused on coinage and the state.

In 2024, the Warwick Numismatics Days was once again combined with the training workshop offered by the Money & Medals Network (MMN), a museum network with over 240 members. This integration made organizing the Numismatics Day alongside the second MMN Training Day at the Department seamless.

Prof. Dr. Bernhard Woytek contributed as the Visiting Speaker with keynote talks to both events. He is the Deputy Head of Classical Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna and a lecturer at the University of Vienna. Recently appointed as Professor and Head of the Department at the Institut für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte, his tenure begins this autumn. Woytek is the author of two significant monographs in Roman numismatics: *Arma et Nummi* on the Roman Republican coinage and monetary history from 49-42 BC (published in 2003), and a two-volume reference work on the imperial coinage of Emperor Trajan (published in 2010). Dr. Woytek is also an expert in metal analysis and a member of the scientific board of Kevin Butcher's ERC RACOM Project.

[Coinage and the State](#) - An interdisciplinary Workshop on Coinage, Money and Economy - Friday 10th May 2024
Report by Professor Suzanne Frey-Kupper (Classics and Ancient History)



The concept of coinage in relation to the state encompasses the creation and circulation of money by official minting authorities. Unlike imitation coins, which are produced to resemble genuine coins but lack official sanction, state-issued coinage is a formal tool of economic policy and governance. The production and regulation of coinage by the state aimed to ensure a standardised and trusted medium of exchange, essential for economic stability and growth. Nevertheless, some coinage likely circulated without direct state endorsement, especially in regions or periods where the control of states was weaker. In many instances, states tolerated or even encouraged the use of supplementary coinages to address shortages or specific local needs, ensuring the smooth functioning of economic activities. The theme of the 2024 Numismatics Day examined the role of states and questioned the definition of "the state" or state-like entities such as the those of people in Gaul, providing both examples and developments of state-issued coinage, as well as many instances of foreign, old, or even token-made currency circulating. The main question, therefore, was how involved states were in issuing currency, and even if a state was involved at all, considering that many modern notions of statecraft and nationhood evolved in the late 19th century.

The day began with Bernhard Woytek's keynote paper titled "Julius Caesar and the Transformation of Roman Coinage". Woytek's presentation delved into the significant changes in Roman coinage during Julius Caesar's era, particularly the Civil War coinage issued by the travelling mints after the Senate had fled Caesar and Rome for Greece. Following this, Kevin Butcher from Warwick presented "Concepts of Territorial Currency", discussing the development and implications of territorial currencies in ancient economies. He examined how various regions and states managed their monetary systems, providing a comprehensive overview of the economic landscape and how concepts of money could change. He also talked about how long currency could last in circulation and whether or not it was officially driven by the state or by individuals, showing off coins with long histories of circulation that had been punched to advertise new businesses as

they continued to circulate. Butcher even discussed case studies of Roman coinage, which was still used thousands of years after the empire had left Britain.

After a break for lunch, the afternoon session, chaired by Clare Rowan, began with Simon Glenn from the British Museum presenting on "Coinage and a 'Minor' Hellenistic State: The Case of Bactria". Glenn's paper shed light on the unique coinage of Bactria, emphasising its significance in the broader context of Hellenistic numismatics and the problems with previous scholarship in arranging and understanding this extensive and unique coinage, and how it has previously been interpreted to engage with its audience.

Next, John Creighton from the University of Reading presented "The Projection of States onto Iron Age Coinage and Alternative Ways of Thinking about Early Money and the Origins of the State." Creighton examined how early states used coinage to project their identities and proposed new frameworks for understanding the origins of money and state formation. In particular, Creighton challenged the notions of nationhood and statecraft to showcase that areas outside Rome's sphere of influence had their own ways of standardising currency through trade and communication with neighbouring communities.

Clare Rowan from Warwick then presented "Economy and Exchange Beyond the State: Female Token Issuers in Rome and Ostia", exploring the economic roles of women through the issuance of tokens. This paper highlighted the contributions of women to economic exchanges beyond formal state structures, showcasing the token as an alternative paranumismatic item for driving local trade and acting as a localised form of currency outside of that issued by official mints. These tokens were often made of lead and mould cast, with many surviving, presumably from instances where people did not use the token, like a modern voucher, before it expired.

The late afternoon session, chaired by Suzanne Frey-Kupper, featured George Green from Lincoln College, Oxford presenting his paper jointly prepared with Paul Stavrinou "Analysis of Axumite Gold Coins". Green provided an in-depth analysis of these coins, discussing their historical and cultural significance and the methodologies used in the study for determining the gold content of the coins and how the kingdom's currency developed between reigns.

Roger Bland, founder and former Head of the Portable Antiquities Scheme as well as former President of the Royal Numismatic Society from London, who is currently authoring the new volume of Roman Imperial Coinage, discussed the military nature of Gordian III's currency and how the mint responded to the needs of the army. The day concluded with a final discussion that wrapped up the presentations and allowed for final thoughts and questions.

Following this, Kevin Butcher and Eleni Papaefthymiou inaugurated the RACOM exhibition in the Antiquities Room, FAB 2.23. They set up the display to share the results of the ERC project with the University community and, in the coming months, with the wider public. This event also provided the perfect opportunity for Butcher and the Department to thank Eleni for her three years of dedicated work on the RACOM project and to offer her a farewell.

The Warwick Numismatics Day 2024 was attended by 30 participants in addition to the speakers (41 total). The event brought together scholars from Warwick, including members of the History Department, as well as representatives from other institutions such as Universidad Católica de Chile, Reading, and Oxford. Warwick students of all levels, primarily PhD students, attended, along with a postgraduate student from Freie Universität Berlin, a former Erasmus student from the MAT degree at Warwick, and a former Warwick MAT student from Cotswold Archaeology. After the event, Bernhard Woytek was available to discuss career opportunities outside the UK with students.

Overall, the event, widely shared over X/Twitter, was a significant and successful event of the highest academic standard, for which the organisers were commended. It offered a platform for scholars to share research and insights on ancient coinage with students, heritage professionals, and enthusiasts. That the Warwick Numismatics Day could bring together so many distinguished academics in numismatics and metal analysis studies underscored the event's importance in advancing the field of numismatics.

Parish Memory

The Twenty-Second Warwick Symposium on Parish Research took place in hybrid format at our Institute of Advanced Study on Saturday 11 May 2024. It featured a keynote address by Katalin Szende (Central European University) plus 15 shorter papers and attracted around 40 participants from eight countries.

Report by Beat Kümin (History)

SATURDAY 11 MAY 2024

Parish Memory

Petäjävesi Church and old parsonage in Central Finland, painted by A.F. or C.E. Soldan (1840) and burned down five years later. The Finnish Heritage Agency, Historical Picture Collection.

**INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK, 10 AM - 6 PM**

WARWICK My Parish HISTORY GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG

1840
om kösten.
Petäjävesi Kyröken (vilken sedan
och gamla prästgård (som nedbrann 1845.)

**TWENTY-SECOND WARWICK SYMPOSIUM
ON PARISH RESEARCH**

Symposium Poster designed by Kristi Flake.

Our 2024 theme intersected with the lively interdisciplinary field of memory studies, focusing particularly on when / how / why parishioners remember(ed) events, customs, people and other aspects of their locality & culture. The Symposium coincided with Miia Kuha's (Jyväskylä University, Finland) tenure as a My-Parish Fellow (to study Anglophone literature clergy widows) and Beat Kümin's project on tower capsule deposits (funded by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung).

The opening keynote address took us to Central Europe. Prof. Szende offered a splendid panorama of ways in which parishes fostered individual and community memory in the Middle Ages and early Reformation period. Clergy and laity utilized a wide range of oral, written, visual and material media alongside processions, performances and numerous forms of symbolic communication. A distinctive element from a comparative European perspective are the wall chronicles, i.e. records of reigning monarchs as well as prominent events from the fifteenth century which have survived in several churches of the region.



Miia Kuha (Jyväskylä / My-Parish Fellow), Beat Kümin (Warwick History / Parish Network), Katalin Szende (Central European University) and Angus Crawford / Kristi Flake (Warwick History PGR) at the IAS on 11 May 2024.

Pic: Andrew Foster.

The Symposium, inaugurated in 2003 and run by the Warwick Network for Parish Research (with its My-Parish research platform), has always been an inclusive forum of exchange between anyone with active research interests in parish culture from whatever background or career stage. Following a call for papers earlier in the year, we featured 15-minute contributions from doctoral students, independent scholars, early career researchers as well as senior academics. Proceedings were arranged in five sections, dedicated to the themes of ‘medieval culture’ (featuring talks on mortuary bequests, stained glass windows and chantry foundations), ‘memory sources’ (highlighting parish registers, local histories, funeral biographies and tower capsule deposits), ‘memory divisions’ (specifically in early modern Scotland and modern Ireland), ‘parishes remembered’ (dealing with case studies in Southampton, the Isle of Wight, Hungary and present-day Romania) and ‘parish spaces’ (focusing in particular on churchyards and territorial disputes; see full programme at the end of this report).

The intense but refreshingly informal event concluded with an extensive plenary session on the sources, methods, concepts, regional peculiarities and chronological evolutions emerging from the day’s presentations. Among the principal ‘take aways’ were differences of scale (from the personal / microhistorical via the regional and national to global levels) and the inherently unstable or fraught nature of memory (which could be lost, suppressed, manipulated and fluctuating as well as continuous and uncontested). Thanks to the cosmopolitan makeup of the gathering, there was also fruitful exchange on recent theoretical work beyond the ‘classics’ associated with scholars like Pierre Nora, Maurice Halbwachs or Aleida & Jan Assmann. In line with tradition, further space for informal discussion was afforded by a cheap and cheerful pub dinner on campus, accompanied by the more or less engaging Eurovision tunes blasting out from a nearby television screen (with Symposium participants rooting for many different entries).

Further details, including paper abstracts, speaker biographies and visual impressions from the day, can be accessed on the Symposium homepage at: <http://warwick.ac.uk/my-parish/parishsymposia/memory/>. The Parish Network hopes to stage the next Symposium in May 2025 and is always open for thematic suggestions and/or ideas for related research projects.

'Parish Memory' speakers and chairs, including Warwick Em. Prof. Bernard Capp (first left) and Cluj-Napoca Prof. Adinel Dinca (first right), raising their glasses to a successful 2024 Symposium. Pic: Andrew Foster.



The co-hosts gratefully acknowledge the generous support from the Humanities Research Centre (as always seamlessly mediated by Sue Rae), Warwick's History Department and the Gerda Henkel Stiftung (based in Düsseldorf, Germany) as well as the organizational help from Angus Crawford and Kristi Flake (both Warwick History PGR).

Keynote Address – Chair: Beat Kümin (Warwick)

Katalin Szende (Central European University): 'The parish as a place of memory in medieval Central Europe'

Session 1: Medieval Culture – Chair: Angus Crawford (Warwick)

Heather Falvey (Cambridge / Oxford): 'Remembering the parish (priest): Mortuary bequests in medieval England'

Jessica Knowles (Vienna): 'Commemorating Apocalypse: The Fifteen Last Days in All Saints, North Street'

Cindy Wood (Winchester): 'The Parish Church of Ludlow, the 1547 Chantry Act and Commemoration of the Dead'

Session 2: Memory Sources – Chair: John Craig (Simon Fraser)

Ian Atherton (Keele): 'Early Modern English Parish Registers as Forms of Memory'

Bernard Capp (Warwick): 'Richard Gough and his Memories of Myddle'

Miia Kuha (Jyväskylä / My-Parish Visiting Researcher): 'Remembering the pastor's wife: Roles and responsibilities of 17th-century Finnish clergymen's wives in funeral biographies'

Beat Kümin (Warwick): 'Conceal to Connect: Tower Capsules in the Deposit Culture of the German Lands'

Session 3: Memory Divisions – Chair: Kristi Flake (Warwick)

Martin Duffy (Cambridge): 'Parish Memory during the Irish Decade of Centenaries 2012-2022'

Jim Reilly (Edinburgh): 'The contested memory of religious persecution in the early modern Scottish parish'

Session 4: Parishes Remembered – Chair: Miia Kuha (Jyväskylä)

Cheryl Butler (Winchester): 'Why remember Peartree?'

Adinel Dinca (Cluj-Napoca): 'Accessing the Memory in the Pre-Modern Parish of the Transylvanian Saxons'

Aidan Jones (King's London): 'The simple, pretty little village church': Queen Victoria's Isle of Wight Parish Church'

Béla Vilmos Mihalik (Budapest): 'Memory of the Old Parish: The Case of Hungary'

Session 5: Parish Spaces – Chair: Andrew Foster (Kent)

Jason Frost (Independent Scholar): 'From Parochial Memory to Physical Memorialisation; How God's Acre became Contested Space'

Kaye Sowden (Canterbury Christ Church): 'An Ancient man of four score and ten: Bearing witness in parish disputes and the recording of happenings'

Doctoral Fellowship Competition Launch Event

This event, held in December 2024, attracted 22 PGRs from every department in the faculty. Professor Alison Cooley outlined the aims of the scheme, the application process and the benefits to PGRs.



Doctoral Fellowship Competition

- Funding (£1,100) to put on a conference, plus a small personal research grant (£400)
- Deadline 11 am Thursday 14th March 2024, for conference in 2024/5. First-year doctoral students eligible. You must be a fully registered student at Warwick during the whole of 2024/25.
- Single and joint applications are welcome
- Usually 3 awards
- Opportunity to publish via the 'Warwick Series in the Humanities' (Routledge)

This was followed by presentations from Maddie Sinclair and Niels Boender, PGRs who had won the previous year. They shared their thoughts and experiences of going through the process from the submission of an application to actual conference day. Sue Rae then gave a brief 'top tips' and 'key points' talk. Everyone then had time to enjoy a good lunch and network with everybody else there. We are pleased to say that this resulted in 9 strong applications. We normally make three awards but because the standard was so high we decided to offer an extra one – please read on to discover who won and what their conferences will be addressing.

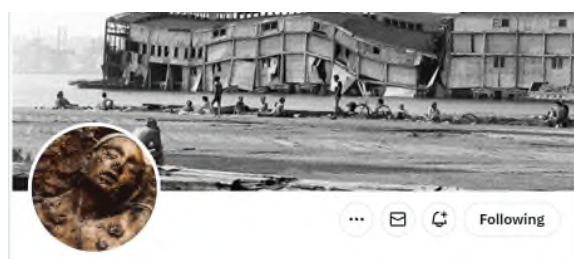
Doctoral Fellowships

This year the Centre is able to sponsor four (internal) Doctoral Fellowships. The Fellows contribute to the life of the HRC by organising a one-day postgraduate interdisciplinary conference and are given financial support for their PHD dissertation research.

This year's winners (and the conferences they will organise next year) are as follows:

Airelle Amédro (SMLC) & Enrica Leydi (SMLC)

[Irresistible Decay: Aestheticization of death and life imbrications from the 18th Century to today](#)



Decay, according to Julia Kristeva is a 'privileged site of mingling, of the contamination of life by death, of begetting and ending' (1982). As a natural process where life and death inevitably meet, decay is an irresistible metaphor for social, artistic, medical, and political investigations of life and death cross-contamination, states of the not-yet-dead, and continuations of life in death. As a dangerously malleable concept, decay's imagery has thus lent itself to both the most emancipatory and the most oppressive ideas.

Since the 18th century, morbid aestheticizations of decay have prevailed over other explorations of the matter's potential to figure the intertwining of destruction and regeneration. Giovanni Battista Piranesi's etchings evidenced an epochal lust for ruins, while Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's scientific studies conveyed a novel interest in organic matter. This fascination with degeneration soon infiltrated political discourses, participating in the proliferation of an 'undifferentiated image of "rotteness"' which became a shorthand for the 'corruption of morals as much as the decomposition of flesh' (Foucault, 1963) In the following centuries, the aestheticization of decay became a frequent means of expressing fears around atavism and eugenics, slowly instrumentalising it as a biopolitical rhetorical tool. This long association of decay and anxieties persists in the political discourse of the current moment. In our contemporary

world, metaphors of decay have become a signifier of neoliberal forms of deadliness. According to Achille Mbembe (2003), our society organises itself into death-worlds where the governing logic of capitalism turns humanity into ‘an extravagant carcass’ that is ‘struggl[ing] to escape the dust’ and where our relationship to the organic world is ‘ecocidal.’ Departing from the irresistibility of decay, this conference will explore how life and death imbrications have been aestheticised across time. This conference thus offers to pose the following questions:

- Forms of Aestheticization: How has the aestheticization of decay been manifested in different artistic, literary, and cultural contexts since the 18th century?
- Exploitation of Decay Imagery: In what ways has the irresistible imagery of decay been utilized in historical, political, social, and philosophical discourses?
- Tensions between Life and Death: How has decay served as a lens through which to explore the intricate interplay between life and death?
- Decay in the Anthropocene: What insights can decay offer concerning discussions around biodiversity, ecosystems, and the Anthropocene epoch?

Lu Feng (English) & Chun-Wai (Wayne) Kwong (English)

[After Postcolonialism: Global Theory, Local Transformations](#)



This is a one-day interdisciplinary conference accompanied by a mini-exhibition dedicated to the imagining of alternative worlds in the era after postcolonialism. It not only examines the multifaceted impacts postcolonial studies have on our perception of different postcolonial realities, but also invites academics, artists, activists, educators, and practitioners across cultures and regions to imagine how we can build an alternative world free from political struggles against postcolonial domination and global injustice through everyday climate action.

Proposing 'after postcolonialism', we believe that much-needed discussions in postcolonial studies should be place-based, future-oriented, and action-driven. As such, this conference strives to cultivate plurality, sustainability, and dignity in the epoch after postcolonialism.

Julián Harruch-Morales (Hispanic) - [Uses and Abuses of the Decolonial](#)

This conference will offer an opportunity to reflect on the varied meanings and uses that the concept of decolonisation and its verbal inflection – to decolonise – have in contemporary academic and public discourse. Integrating theoretical and practical perspectives, it aims to facilitate connections, dialogue, and debate among scholars and practitioners exploring the decolonial both within and beyond academic settings.

Confirmed Keynote Speaker: [Professor David Lehmann](#) (Cambridge)





Anna Pravdica, Himesh Mehta & Mia Edwards (History)

[Being Human: Individualism & the Self from the Renaissance to the 21st Century](#)

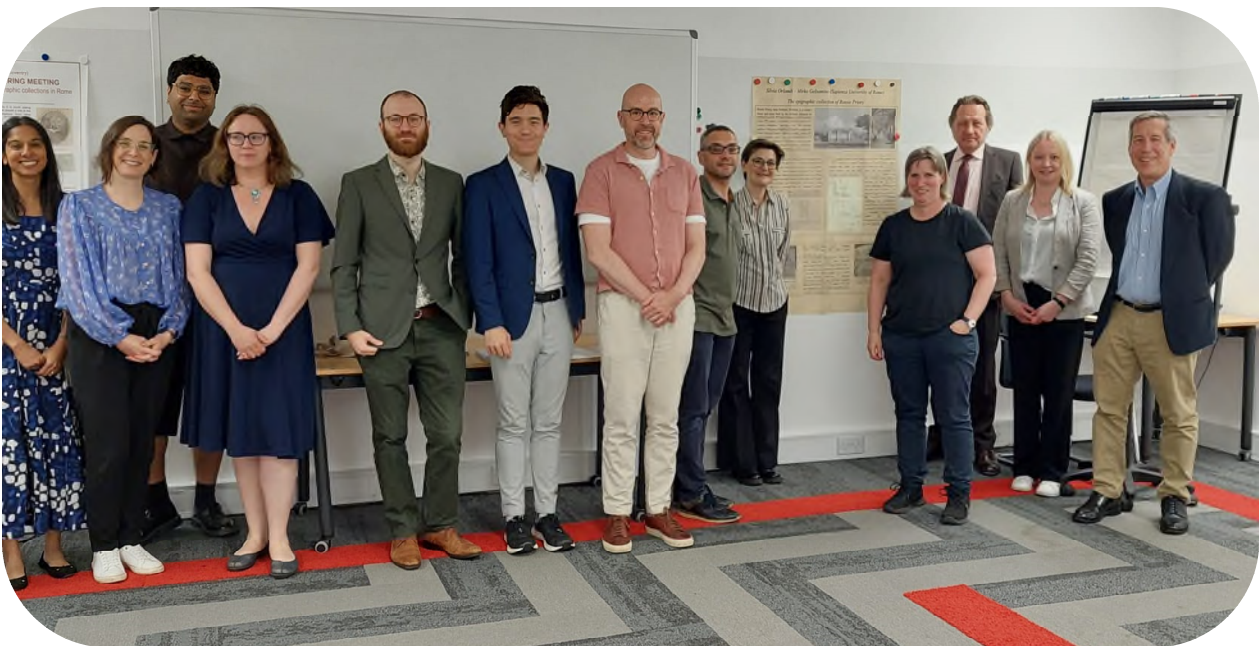
A 1-day interdisciplinary conference on the development, conceptualisation, and significance of individualism, human nature, and the self in the Western World, from the early modern period to the modern day (c.16th–21stC). Aiming to bring together a diverse range of scholars from history and literature to psychology and philosophy, this conference hopes to put disparate theoretical approaches in conversation with one another in order to facilitate a nuanced consideration of these concepts’ historicity and cultural variability in a modern-day Western society which often assumes their total universality.

Director’s Special Event

[Humanities Research Centre / British Epigraphy Society - Collecting Antiquities in the British Isles](#)

Twenty-one delegates attended this one-day colloquium held at the University of Warwick on Saturday 11th May. We heard papers from ten individuals, including postgraduates, international guests, and scholars from other UK universities. Two posters further extended the discussion.

The aim of the colloquium was to explore the mechanisms and agents whereby classical antiquities entered Britain, and how they experienced shifting life cycles. Along the way, we discussed ways in which the academic community can collaborate with institutions like the National Trust as well as private owners in explaining the importance of these antiquities to the wider public.



Colloquium participants

Charlotte Woodhead (Warwick Law School), ‘Legal perspectives on collecting in the British Isles’, explored the legal framework within which antiquities are brought into this country, drawing attention to the importance of understanding that this framework includes foreign laws, with the principle of purchasing in good faith being a distinctive part of this. She set out the ways in which time, place, the nature of transfers, the laws in force, and ethical questions are all relevant

to the transfer of antiquities. Of particular interest was the ensuing discussion around the tension between antiquities seen as private property and as belonging to cultural heritage in the public interest.

Hardeep Dhindsa (KCL), 'The classical and the colonial: visualising spatial and ideological separation in eighteenth-century collections', explored issues around cultural imperialism and trends in collecting, presenting as a case-study how the well-known painting of *Charles Townley in his Sculpture Gallery* of 1782 by Zoffany is an interpretative depiction rather than a likeness that was true to life, with non-European items from India being excluded from the painting even though they were an important part of the collection.

Alexandra Solovyev (Oxford), 'Destruction committed chiefly by the English': British and Ottoman responses to J.T. Wood's excavations at Ephesus', showed how John Turtle Wood represented himself as a heroic figure in his publication, *Discoveries at Ephesus*. She offered insights into how Wood gave a negative depiction of locals' appreciation of their own cultural heritage (a theme that was picked up in the following paper too), considering that the 'English blood spilt in their cause' during the Crimean War somehow justified his excavation and removal of antiquities on a huge scale from Ephesus. A lone voice criticising Wood's exploits in Britain was that of Hyde Clarke, publishing 'The Destruction of Monuments in Turkey' in the *Athenaeum* (8 January 1870), whilst the Ottoman regime took legislative steps to try to tighten up their control of Wood's excavation.

Peter Liddel (Manchester), 'Greek Inscriptions in the nineteenth-century British Museum' traced narratives around the addition of Attic inscriptions to the British Museum over many decades, from the nineteenth up until the twenty-first century. A strong impression of the impact of geopolitical influence emerged, with an important role played by British diplomats serving in the Aegean in contributing inscriptions to the collection, characterised at the time as acting through public-spirited motivations.

Alan Montgomery, 'Authentick Vouchers of Antiquity': collecting Roman inscriptions in eighteenth-century Scotland', explored the ambivalent attitudes of Scots towards the Roman empire, at some times taking pleasure in the idea that their ancestors had successfully resisted the march of the Roman empire, but at others wishing to align themselves with the Roman 'civilisers'. A number of case studies, including Cawder House, Cochno House, Dunnottar Castle, Kilsyth Castle, and Penicuik House illustrated how distance slabs from the Antonine Wall were displayed in different contexts, contributing to a sense of cultural heritage. The case of *RIB* 2191, believed to settle once for all who built the two Roman walls of Scotland in contrast to the inaccurate literary sources which 'documented' three walls, illustrated how even fragmentary inscriptions could be appreciated as 'authentick vouchers of antiquity'.

Shushma Malik (Cambridge) and Jane Masegla (Leicester), 'It takes a village: actors and extras in the making of the 'Bankes' collection', offered insights into the very partial account (in all senses) of the transportation and erection of the Philae Obelisk at Kingston Lacy (Dorset). Whereas the bronze inscription at Kingston Lacey commemorated the roles of William John Bankes, the Duke of Wellington, and George IV in its setting up, this paper showed that in reality hundreds of individuals were employed in transferring it from Philae up the Nile to Alexandria (a treacherous boat journey across the cataracts), then by ship to Deptford and by gun carriage to Dorset. The difficulties were multiplied by the obelisk 'slipping into' the river Nile at the start of its journey, from where it had to be retrieved. All this happened against the backdrop of keen competition between the French and English, both of whom wished to appropriate the monument.

Caroline Barron (Durham) 'A Museum of Learned Lumber: Romano-British inscriptions at Rokeby Hall', offered insights into attitudes towards inscriptions of Roman Britain, as displayed at Rokeby Park (County Durham), where, unusually, they were originally set up alongside inscriptions from Rome. Sir Francis Robinson created a purpose-built museum in his home where they were all displayed until 1769. At some point after this date, the Romano-British altars were then put up on their own in the garden, evoking the proximity of the house to Romano-British archaeological sites.

Benet Salway (UCL), 'An unpublished cinerary casket and other Roman antiquities at Nymans House, Sussex', showed how classical antiquities became incorporated into the design of the gardens at Nymans House, which became otherwise famous for its collection of exotic flora. Ludwig Messel, originally from a banking family in Darmstadt, moved to London

where he established his own banking business in 1871, acquiring Nymans House as his country residence. Three Roman inscriptions have stood in the gardens (fortunately, given that the house was gutted by fire): one can be traced back to the collection of De Criscio in Pozzuoli, whilst another was recorded found in 'recent' excavations in 1901. The exportation of these three monuments takes on particular interest in the light of changing Italian legislation in the early 1900s.

Alexander Thein (UCD), 'A verse Latin funerary inscription in University College Dublin', offered intriguing insights into some of the Latin inscriptions now in the collection of UCD, formerly of Shanganagh Castle. Ways of identifying some as original ancient inscriptions and others as modern fabrications were considered, along with reflections upon the depiction of inscriptions in the works of Piranesi.

Two posters were presented by **Silvia Orlandi** and **Maria Letizia Caldelli (La Sapienza, Rome)**, dealing with the epigraphic collection of Rossie Priory (Perthshire) and that belonging to John Kemp.

Publishing opportunities

The HRC has secured two book series showcasing the best current work in the Arts faculty.

Warwick Series in the Humanities (with Routledge)

This series will publish the varied and multidisciplinary outcomes of the projects funded by the HRC. By definition, all conferences and seminars sponsored by the HRC are interdisciplinary, and by design such events draw from the full gamut of the Faculty's strengths: literary, historical, linguistic, visual, philosophical; ancient and modern; British, European, and global. Events typically highlight the work of scholars established, new, and in training; the work itself is inflected by modes and models of thinking that show the humanities as alive, well, and intimately and intricately embedded in the wider culture.



We hope those receiving funding from the HRC (including doctoral fellowship conferences) will seriously consider publication in this series. In addition, the Series will accept proposals from the faculty community in general, with the proviso that any such proposals are interdisciplinary.

<https://www.routledge.com/series/WSH>

Warwick Studies (with Anthem Press)



This is a new series that partners the HRC with Anthem Press, a small independent publisher offering a high-quality list aimed at the academic community. Unlike the Warwick Series in the Humanities which is explicitly inter-disciplinary, the Warwick Studies will have more of a discipline-specific focus, and thus will be marketed as Warwick Studies in Literature, Warwick Studies in History etc.

<http://www.anthempress.com/>

Warwick Series in the Humanities – Titles published:

- **Classicism and Romanticism in Italian Literature: Leopardi's Discourse on Romantic Poetry (1)**
- Fabio Camilletti (Italian)
- **Rome, Postmodern Narratives of a Cityscape (2)** Dom Holdaway and Filippo Trentin (Italian)
- **Gender and Space in Rural Britain 1840 – 1920 (3)** Gemma Goodman and Charlotte Mathieson (English)
- **Picturing Women's Health (4)** Fran Scott, Kate Scarth and Ji Chung (English)
- **Knowing Nature in Early Modern Europe (5)** David Beck (History)

- **New Jazz Conceptions: History, Theory, Practice (6)** Roger Fagge (History) and Nicolas Pillai (Birmingham City University)
- **Food, Drink and the Written Word in Britain, 1820–1954 (7)** Mary Addyman, Laura Wood and Christopher Yiannitsaros (English)
- **Sing Aloud Harmonious Spheres: Renaissance Conceptions of Cosmic Harmony (8)** Jacomien Prins (CSR) and Maude Vanhaelen (Italian)
- **Beyond the Rhetoric of Pain (9)** Stella Bruzzi and Berenike Jung (Film and TV Studies)
- **Mood, Interdisciplinary Perspectives, New Theories (10)** Birgit Breidenbach and Thomas Docherty (English)
- **Prohibitions and Psychoactive Substances in History, Culture and Theory (11)** Susannah Wilson (French)
- **Archaeology of the Unconscious Italian Perspectives, 1st Edition (12)** Alessandra Aloisi and Fabio Camilletti (Italian)
- **A Quest for Remembrance The Underworld in Classical and Modern Literature, 1st Edition (13)** Madeleine Scherer (English) and Rachel Falconer (Lausanne)
- **Interdisciplinary Essays on Cannibalism - Bites Here and There (14)** Giulia Champion (Warwick)
- **Allegory Studies: Contemporary Perspectives (15)** Vladimir Brljak (Warwick)
- **Literature and Event: Twenty-First Century Reformulations (16)** Mantra Mukim (Warwick)
- **New Interdisciplinary Perspectives On and Beyond Autonomy (17)** Edited by Christopher Watkin and Oliver Davis (Warwick) December 2022

Working with Publishers Workshop

Report by Ambika Raja and Ruth-Anne Walbank (English)

The Humanities Research Centre (HRC) organized the first edition of the *Working with Publishers Workshop* on June 12, 2024, at Scarman House, University of Warwick. The day-long event sponsored by the Enhancing Research Culture Fund (ECRF) aimed at familiarizing doctoral and post-doctoral researchers with the various stages of academic publishing, providing an opportunity to enter into dialogue with reputed publishing houses, and collaborating to draw up a set of guidelines that will be beneficial for upcoming researchers. A total of 12 researchers interested in publishing either an edited volume or a short monograph from Philosophy, ECLS, SCAPVC and SMLC departments took part in this in-person programme.

Opening the workshop with an introductory remark, Prof. Alison Cooley, Humanities Research Centre director walked the participants through the functioning of the HRC, and the expected outcomes of the event. After the participants had introduced themselves to each other, Prof. Fabienne Viala, Head of Hispanic Studies and Director of the Yesu Persaud Centre for Caribbean Studies offered an enlightening talk on the challenges of a getting a monograph or an edited volume published, including finding a suitable publishing house, targeting the correct readers, ensuring an interdisciplinary work and facing rejection or criticism for the proposed publication. Following a short break, the participants had an interactive session with Tej Sood, Publisher and Managing Director of Anthem Press to discuss the various processes involved in the publishing house. Sood explained in length to the researchers the growth of Anthem Press, the academic disciplines they work with and the quality of the content they look for in a book proposal.

One of the fundamental questions that drove most of the participants to attend the workshop was “what to include in a book proposal while approaching a publishing house?”. Through the insights gained during Sood’s talk and the introductory session, the researchers were encouraged to answer this questions by chalking a list of attributes they felt an ideal book proposal should include. Working in groups, the participants drafted a set of key characteristics necessitated by a good monograph/edited volume proposal including clarity on the aim, scope and scholarly content publication, tentative structure of the chapters, a strong introduction and description of the originality of the work.

The second half of the day featured two virtual Q&A sessions with Carly Silver, Editor, Palgrave Macmillan and Jen Abbott, Editor, Routledge Taylor& Francis group. Responding to the participants’ query on what made a thesis different from a monograph, Abbot pointed out that a monograph required a solid critical voice, a style of writing that

did not rely on heavy academic jargon, and a sound argument. Subsequently, the researchers were allotted a short time to begin work on their book proposal for a monograph or an edited volume. The final activity of the day involved all the participants developing a set of [Guidelines for writing a book proposal](#). The workshop culminated with a feedback session wherein the researchers shared their learnings of the day and suggested that the event be held annually for upcoming researchers.

Visiting Speakers' Fund

The Visiting Speakers' Fund assisted arts departments wishing to bring in high profile external speakers to Warwick:

Prof. Philip van der Eijk (Humboldt University, Berlin) – 1st-3rd November 2023

Summary: The visit was articulated around three moments, the public lecture (main event), a more informal lecture as part of the module Ancient Thought convened by Dr. Caroline Petit, and a research meeting between the guest and the host

1. Public Lecture (main event). Thursday 2 November, 5-6.30 pm. Ramphal building, main campus, room 1.13
'Galen on what medicine can contribute to philosophy'.

Abstract: This paper examines Galen's views on the relationship between medicine and (natural) philosophy. It argues that while Galen considers a thorough command of philosophy of the utmost importance to good medical theory and practice, he is also of the opinion that medicine can make a valuable contribution to philosophy, especially natural philosophy. This is because doctors can draw on two sources of evidence pertinent to the study of nature: their clinical experience with diseases and patients, and their use of dissection. Accordingly, Galen confidently uses these resources in order to tackle questions of natural philosophy and to enhance understanding of the natural world, especially Nature's purposive design in the construction of living bodies; and in his work *On the Function of the Parts*, he encourages his readers/students to do the same. Yet there seems to be a tension between Galen's enthusiastic engagement with natural philosophy and the fact that on other occasions he explicitly eliminates certain questions from discussion because they belong to the domain of the 'natural problems'. Is there a contradiction here?

Comments:

Philip's lecture was introduced by Prof. David Fearn, Head of Classics and Ancient History and very well attended (the room was full), mostly by students (a mix of undergraduate and postgraduate), with a good number of colleagues from the department (Bakola, Rowan, Watson, Frey-Kupper, Butcher...). The lecture was followed by an intense session of questions and answers that lasted about 45 minutes, which demonstrates the level of engagement of the department, especially the students, with Philip's research. Some UG students rather cheekily directed questions towards set essay questions (!) – most of them attend the honours module *Medicine in the Ancient World* (taught by Dr. Caroline Petit). The lecture clearly addressed the contribution of Galen through different angles, including aesthetics, which allowed especially PhD candidates to link their research to Galen in unexpected ways (example: Elena Claudi, working on contemporary art-related texts, such as Philostratus' *Imagines*).

The lecture and Q/A was followed by a reception funded by the Department of Classics and Ancient History, and dinner at a nearby restaurant (self-funded).

2. Lecture and Q/A on 'Hippocrates Today' as part of the CX112 module Ancient Thought (first year optional module).
FAB 5.03, 1-3pm

Comments:

CX112 is a new team-taught module covering a broad range of topics, designed to introduce first-year students to many aspects and authors of ancient Greek and Roman thought (philosophy, sophistics, medicine, rhetoric, etc). The module is taken by a majority of Classics and Ancient History students, with a few additional students from Philosophy and Politics. In 2023/24 there were 30 students taking the module, and attendance has been excellent.

On the same day as Philip's public lecture, time was thus carved out in the schedule of the module to allow for engagement with 1st-year students. The lecture was planned to discuss Hippocrates in the history of ancient thought. Following an introduction to Hippocrates by Dr. Petit, Prof. van der Eijk addressed the students through a thought-provoking question about "Hippocrates Today". Students were in turn allowed to ask questions (they had many). It was originally planned to hold a seminar on the next day, but this option appeared more likely to attract a good number of students as it simply used an available slot and pre-existing syllabus. A two-hour slot also allowed ample time for proper discussion.

3. Research meeting between Prof. Philip van der Eijk and Dr. Caroline Petit (Friday 3 November 11-1pm)

We had a meeting to discuss informally current research projects and mutual interests, notably the work of John Philoponus, a late antique intellectual whose oeuvre is currently being reassessed. Both Prof. van der Eijk and Dr. Petit work on unpublished material in Greek scientific manuscripts which attributes authorship to John Philoponus, against the printed tradition. This work is partly arising from older projects but was thought to be potentially worthy of future applications.

This was a most cordial and profitable meeting where more collaboration was discussed (for example a workshop in Berlin in February/March 2024 on 'Medical Definitions').

Speaker short biography:

Philip van der Eijk (1962) is Alexander von Humboldt Professor of Classics and History of Science at the Humboldt University in Berlin. His research interests include ancient medicine and science, ancient philosophy (especially Aristotle), early Christian literature, and comparative literature.

Professor van der Eijk held Fellowships at All Souls College, Oxford (2009), the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS) (2000–2001) and was Member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton (2006). He was awarded the Ausonius Prize from the University of Trier for outstanding achievements in classical scholarship (2006). He is Associé Etranger de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Institut de France (since 2023), Foreign Member of the Koninklijke Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen (Royal Netherlands Society of Sciences) (since 2014), Member of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (since 2012) and Corresponding Member of the Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences) (since 2006).

Dr Caroline Petit (Classics and Ancient History)

Professor Nicholas Ridout (QM, London)

Nicholas Ridout 'Critical Theory between Criticism and Critique': Theatre and Performance Studies PGR seminar, 7 February 2024

On 7 February 2024, Professor Nicholas Ridout from Queen Mary University of London visited Theatre and Performance Studies for a seminar with PGRs and Dr Bryony White, the Director of Graduate Studies. The seminar started out with participants sharing their thoughts on the set reading – Terry Eagleton's essay 'Mutations of Critical Ideology'. Prof Ridout invited participants to consider the question of 'what counts as research', especially in the humanities where there has been the growing pressure to do more 'research-like' research, which entailed the methodisation of techniques such as close reading, historical contextualisation, and aesthetic preferences of a bourgeoisie nature. Thought currents such as western Marxism were brought up due to its attention to cultural production and reading for symptoms and clues that texts express despite themselves. Ridout aptly summarised these examples as 'practitioners of critique which operate through practices of criticism'.

The session then moved to discussion of critique and criticism in the field of theatre studies, which shared a close association with natural sciences since the development of bourgeoisie culture in the 19th century. Led by Ridout, participants deliberated over the subtlety of 'critical spectatorship', the idea that theatre itself can attain to the violence of the status quo, and the widely existing belief that criticism in theatre qualifies as a form of activism.

In the seminar participants also shared the critique and criticism in their own research, after Ridout's introduction of the general trends in academia, which included theorists such as Perry Anderson, Lee Robson, Rita Felski, T. J. Clark, Sylvia Wynters, etc. Prodosh Bhattacharya reflected on the limitations of critical approaches in his field research of Indian

circuses, which lied in an non-western context. Varvara Sklez talked about how her research was situated in the contingent political contexts after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Yangzi Zhou discussed how her research on National Theatre Live changed from the post-critique perspective to a criticism from the angle of institution. Nora Wardell, whose research was practice-based, enquired about the possibility of performance practice as a non-textual form of criticism.

Professor Valentina Carla Re – (University of Link Campus, Rome) - January 2024

The Humanities Research Centre supported the Italian Cinema Group to bring Professor Valentina Carla Re (Link Campus University of Rome) to the Warwick campus as a guest speaker. The event was co-organised by Dr Luca Peretti (British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow, School of Modern Languages and Cultures), Jacopo Francesco Mascoli (PhD Candidate, School of Modern Languages and Cultures) and Ilaria Puliti (PhD Candidate, Film & Television Studies) and funded by the Humanities Research Centre, the School of Modern Languages and Cultures and the Institute of Advanced Studies. The event was part of the annual seminars organised by the Italian Cinema Group, an interdepartmental research group co-convened by Ilaria Puliti (F&TV Studies), Luca Peretti (SMLC) and Jacopo Francesco Mascoli (SMLC), which promotes and organises seminars on Italian cinema and television. This was the first in-person event organised by the group after a series of seminars held on Microsoft Teams in the autumn semester. The visiting speaker has presented a keynote address at a regular seminar series and has been involved with one teaching activity and a workshop whilst here.

On Monday 22 January at 12.00 in the Faculty of Arts building, Prof. Valentina Carla Re participated in a lecture within the undergraduate module "Mediterranean Cinema", convened by Luca Peretti. The class was divided into three parts with a hybrid format: the guest speaker presented her recent research on Mediterranean noir looking in particular at how the Mediterranean crime fiction is not simply a subgenre that showcases criminal organisations and beautiful landscapes, but also a formulation that overcomes the exclusionary European borders. The presentation also covered aspects such as the role of locations and the Mediterranean cities that might be included in this categorisation. Professor Alberto Zambenedetti (University of Toronto) (online on Microsoft Teams) gave an additional 20-minute presentation based on his recent work on cinematic representations of Algiers and its Casbah; and finally, a Q&A session allowed students to ask questions.

At 5pm in the Faculty of Arts building (2.25), Professor Re gave a talk entitled "Bella da morire / Drop-Dead Beauty: Women's On-Screen Representation and Behind-the-Scenes Employment in Italian TV Crime Drama", as part of the H2020 project 'DETECT' (<https://www.detect-project.eu/>), which aimed to analyse the impact of popular culture, specifically crime narratives in film, literature, and television, on the creation of a cross-cultural European identity. The event was moderated by Ilaria Puliti and was attended by academic staff and postgraduate students from Italian Studies and Film and Television Studies, as well as Microsoft Teams attendees. The talk has questioned European identity as a network of values and a space of dialogue between different identity constructs, including gender, adopting both top-down and bottom-up perspectives. From a top-down perspective, the values of equality, diversity, and inclusion are explicitly stated in European treaties and declarations and in the audio-visual sector are now supported by a variety of policies. From a bottom-up perspective, serial dramas, and notably TV crime series, can be seen as 'mediated cultural encounters' that promote and spread shared values across borders. Within this general framework, she has combined quantitative social research tools, text-based analysis, and production studies to analyse the portrayal of female characters and women's employment in key behind-the-scenes roles in Italian TV crime dramas distributed from 2015 to 2023. The lecture had two main goals: first, to understand how crime narratives address gender equality and diversity from a twofold perspective – behind-the-scenes and on-screen; second, to understand how a sample analysis, targeting a specific case study, can help identify general trends such as those coming from the analysis of large datasets. A Q&A session and a reception followed the event.

On Tuesday 23rd January at 13.00 in the Seminar Room of the Institute of Advanced Studies, the guest speaker participated in a workshop entitled "How to apply for Fundings in Film & TV Studies (EU/UK)", which saw the participation of Professor Stephen Gundle (Film & TV Studies) and Dr Luca Peretti (School of Modern Languages and Cultures) and was chaired by Jacopo Francesco Mascoli (School of Modern Languages and Cultures). During the event, Prof. Re shared her experiences with the Horizon 2020 research programme funded by the European Commission and with the GEMINI Observatory on Gender Equality and Diversity in Audiovisual Media (<https://linklab.unilink.it/osservatoriogemini/>), supported by the

European research project 'GEMINI. Gender Equality through Media Investigation and New Training Insights'. Their established experience with European funding schemes has provided interesting inputs for the creation of research networks capable of obtaining research grants that could eventually fund research positions. Then, Professor Stephen Gundle spoke of his long experience as Principal Investigator on two major AHRC research projects. The first was on the cult of personality of the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. The second, in collaboration with the *Cineteca di Bologna*, examined the role of producers and production practices in the history of the Italian film industry. He also acted as an external examiner for postdoctoral funding schemes such as the British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships and the Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship. He has, therefore, provided feedback and suggestions on how to develop a strong and successful proposal. Prof. Gundle emphasised the importance of a proper timeline: start making academic contacts a year earlier and produce several drafts (paying particular attention to the appeal of the first paragraph). Dr Luca Peretti, currently a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, followed Prof Gundle's inputs and shared his experience with the funding scheme. He has given a presentation based on the key aspects to develop a successful proposal. He particularly focused on the role of the mentor identified; the institution chosen; and the drafting process. Finally, the event was followed by a Q&A session in which PhD students at different stages of their research asked questions.

The two-day event was advertised on the internal mailing lists of the School of Creative Arts, Performance and Visual Cultures and the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, on external academic mailing lists for Film and Television studies (e.g. BAFTSS) and on the social channels of the Italian Cinema Group (link to ICG page: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/scapvc/film/research/italiancinemagroup/>). The event successfully reached its purposes to host an established scholar in Film and Television Studies at Warwick campus, to present cutting-edge research at different academic levels (undergraduate and postgraduate studies), and to provide inputs and collegial support to early career scholars to successfully apply for funding in the UK and in Europe.

[Professor Yannis Hamilakis](#) (Brown University)

- 1) Keynote lecture for the Classical Association Annual Conference, the field-leading conference in Classics in the UK.
- 2) Research and Career-Development Seminar for Postgraduate Students in the Department of Classics and Ancient History at Warwick.

Funds from the HRC Visiting Speaker's Fund in combination with a contribution from the Department of Classics and Ancient History supported the travel and accommodation of Professor Yannis Hamilakis, a world-leading scholar, to deliver the keynote lecture at the UK field-leading Classical Association (CA) conference which Warwick hosted during March 22-24, 2024.

Professor Yannis Hamilakis is an extremely high-profile archaeologist and scholar in the area of the socio-politics of the past (Greece especially) and is currently the Joukowsky Family Professor of Archaeology and Professor of Modern Greek Studies at Brown University.

Professor Hamilakis' keynote lecture, entitled, Undoing Monumental Racecraft: The Acropolis Otherwise was delivered on the afternoon of Friday March 22, 2024 on Oculus 1.05 to an international audience of approximately 270 Classicists. Professor Hamilakis' talk presented a dissection of the Athenian Acropolis as it is traditionally presented – a monument to Classical Athens. He presented how and why the acropolis was 'cleansed' of its non-Classical past during the 19th century in order to present very specific messages about these monuments that were heavily informed by European nationalisms of the time. The lecture then presented would-be 19th century plans for the Acropolis that were proposed by a Bavarian architect who was employed by the newly established Greek monarchy. These plans included locating a royal palace, and even a horse-racing track on top of the hill.

Professor Hamilakis then presented evidence from the traditionally overlooked Medieval and the Ottoman periods, and presented a very strong case for why we need to re-consider these traditions as valuable stakeholders in the history of this monument. Two of the particularly fascinating case studies presented related to the largely discarded remains of Ottoman-era headstones from a cemetery at the entrance to the Acropolis, as well as evidence for a community of enslaved people of African origin who lived at the base of the Acropolis in the 18th century. Both communities have been more-or-less completely written out of the history of the Acropolis in favour of the traditional presentation of a 'pure' Classical Greek monument which has been heavily informed by 19th century nationalism which has its origins in a different part of Europe. This lecture calls for a reassessment and a considered decolonisation of the Acropolis by those

of us who teach using its monuments. Presenting a longer-term and diverse history/archaeology of the Acropolis enables a more careful contextualisation of the monuments, and enables us to question the historiography around, and the reception of, what is all-too-often framed as an iconic feature of 'western' culture.

The keynote lecture did not have a question session, but The Classical Association (CA) run a promotional campaign for this conference, part of this strategy includes Twitter/X. On Jan 30, 2024, as requested, I sent the @HRCWarwick to the organising committee to pass along to the CA communications team for use in promotions regarding the keynote lecture. The CA conference held a drinks event in the Agora of the Faculty of Arts Building during which Professor Hamilakis fielded a range of questions about the lecture from colleagues across our discipline.

On the morning of March 23, Professor Hamilakis held a hybrid-seminar in the Faculty of Arts Building for Postgraduate Researchers in the Department of Classics and Ancient History. This even was attended by seven postgraduate (PG herein) researchers, Professor Hamilakis and the author. The seminar discussion began with questions from the postgraduate community about the keynote lecture that took place on the previous night. That particular discussion focused on the would-be 19th century development plans for the Acropolis as well as the active process of prioritising specific archaeological and historical phases of a site for presentation. On Professor Hamilakis' direction, the seminar discussion then moved on to cover more practical topics that were of specific interest to the postgraduate community in Classics and Ancient History.

These topics included:

- Developing an academic career.
- Strategic publishing.
- Navigating disciplinary boundaries in research.
- Developing PhD projects.

The seminar discussion was lively and lasted slightly beyond the scheduled 1-hour time slot. Online participation was facilitated using Microsoft Teams and a 'Meeting Owl', which proved to be an excellent tool for ensuring both audio and visual participation by the online attendees. The postgraduate students from Classics and Ancient History were happy to ask questions and to listen to advice/suggestions from Professor Hamilakis. Oral feedback provided to me from the participants indicated that this was a helpful and engaging session.

The original aims of this application were to secure financial support from the Visiting Speaker's Fund in order to bring a field-leading scholar to the University of Warwick. This speaker, Professor Hamilakis, was to deliver a keynote address at the largest annual UK conference in our discipline (the Classical Association Conference) and to lead a seminar discussion with postgraduate students from the Department of Classics and Ancient History. These aims were all met, and the number of attendees and engagement at both the keynote lecture and the seminar exceeded our initial aims.

[Professor Francesco Paolo de Ceglia](#)

The Italian section of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures is grateful to the HRC's Visiting Speakers' Fund for their generous contribution to fund Professor Francesco Paolo de Ceglia's visit to Warwick in May 2024.

On this occasion, Prof. de Ceglia gave a lecture on his latest work, *Vampyr: Storia naturale della resurrezione* [Vampyr: Natural History of Resurrection], published by Einaudi in May 2023. De Ceglia's visit to the University of Warwick presented a unique opportunity for fruitful collaborations and networking, offering potential for long-term academic exchange, furthering joint research projects and fostering scholarly relationships between institutions.

Francesco Paolo de Ceglia is professor of History of Science at the University of Bari Aldo Moro, where he also directs the Centro Universitario di Ricerca Seminario di Storia della Scienza. He is a scholar of modern scientific thought, particularly in its relations with theology and cultural history. His extensive research contributions have earned him international recognition. Throughout his academic career, he has demonstrated a keen interest in exploring the intersections of science, corporeality, religion, and science communication, illuminating their impact on European societies. In the realm of science, corporeality, and religion, de Ceglia's research primarily centres on Italian and German contexts. His investigations focus on the connections between scientific thought and religious beliefs, exploring topics such as science and miracles. His other field of interest is the interplay of science, image, and communication: he researches the significance of anatomical representations, particularly anatomical waxworks, offering valuable insights into the history of

science communication and its impact on public understanding of scientific concepts. His latest and notable books are *Il segreto di San Gennaro. Storia naturale di un miracolo napoletano* [The Secret of Saint Januarius: Natural History of a Neapolitan Miracle] (2016), *La pitonessa, il pirata e l'acuto osservatore. Spiritismo e scienza nell'Italia della belle époque* [The Pythoness, the Pirate, and the Keen Observer: Spiritism and Science in Italy during the Belle Époque] (2018), *I fari di Halle. Georg Ernst Stahl, Friedrich Hoffmann e la medicina europea del primo settecento* [The Lighthouses of Halle: Georg Ernst Stahl, Friedrich Hoffmann, and European Medicine in the Early Eighteenth Century] (2009).

In his latest book, *Vampyr: Storia naturale della resurrezione*, published by Einaudi, de Ceglia presents an exploration of the European origins of vampire beliefs. Rejecting common misconceptions, he engages with anthropological, theological, and medical studies to substantiate his findings. Through chronicles, essays, and accounts of the protagonists of various struggles against “returning” beings, de Ceglia presents a comprehensive panorama of society haunted by the idea that the deceased might come back to life. The work concludes with an intriguing exploration of Count Dracula, a seminal character that continues to resonate in the collective consciousness, spawning a plethora of modern vampire narratives, from the alluring figures of *Twilight* to contemporary young adult fiction.

De Ceglia’s talk offered a historical inquiry into vampire beliefs, while exploring the social and cultural implications of this enduring fascination. From folklore to literature, de Ceglia unveiled how vampires became embedded in European cultural consciousness and collective imagination, reflecting society's fears, desires, and attitudes towards life, death, and the supernatural. The lecture was followed by an interesting conversation on the topic with Professor Fabio Camilletti, who has also extensively published on vampires in Italian literature and culture. He published in 2018 the book *L'uomo che credeva ai vampiri* on Emilio de Rossignoli and has been working on the figure and oeuvre of John Polidori for many years, having published in 2019 the first critical edition of his novel *The Vampyre* in the book *Villa Diodati Files. Vampiri E Altri Parassiti (1818-19)*. The talk and the conversation were followed by a drink reception, during which doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows and faculty had the opportunity to continue the conversation with prof. de Ceglia.

The day after his lecture, Professor de Ceglia attended the HRC conference “Archaeology, Psychoanalysis and Colonialism: The Return of the Repressed in the Modern Age”, organised by Gennaro Ambrosino and Kerry Gibbons. This conference aimed to explore the various manifestations of the concept of the “return of the repressed” over a broad chronological span from the early 18th century to the Second World War. The conference sought to examine this notion through three different discourses: archaeology, which focuses on the physical excavation of the past; psychoanalysis, which deals with individual memories; and postcolonial theory, which explores the resurgence of repressed colonised voices in collective spaces and discourses. By investigating these fields, the conference underlined the interdisciplinary nature of the “return of the repressed” and examined how it has been used metaphorically, philosophically, and methodologically. A nature that was further explored thanks to de Ceglia’s methodological insights, which linked the conference themes to his own work in the history of science and cultural history. In particular, the vampire emerged in the discussion as an uncanny figure symbolising the resurgence of social fears and desires, reflecting the unconscious and repressed fear of death and resurrection. This connection underlined the interdisciplinary nature of the conference, highlighting how the concept of repression operates across different fields, from archaeology and psychoanalysis to literature and cultural history.

Overall, De Ceglia’s visit to Warwick fostered dialogue between scholars within the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, strengthened the existing collaborative relationship between de Ceglia and Camilletti, and offered possibilities for future collaborations between the University of Bari's History of Science department and Warwick's Faculty of Arts. His attendance at the conference “Archaeology, Psychoanalysis, and Colonialism: The Return of the Repressed in the Modern Age” provided an additional opportunity for both Warwick and non-Warwick scholars to build connections, exchange ideas, and explore interdisciplinary research avenues. We renew our thanks to the HRC for their fundamental support in funding this visit and the two related events.

Warwick PhD and Early Career Research Fellowships

Warwick has long-standing links with many North American universities, and to strengthen and deepen those ties the HRC instituted a Research Fellowship programme in 2013. With financial support from the CRS the HRC awarded 2 fellowships

for Warwick PhD students and early career scholars to spend a short period conducting research at a variety of high-profile North American or European universities and colleges including the Newberry Library and Johns Hopkins University. The 2 students who made their trips in 23/24 were:

Elena Claudi - Johns Hopkins University - March-April 2024



I am particularly interested in the reception of Classics, especially of the *Imagines* of Philostratus, an ancient Greek text I am analysing for my PhD thesis. What motivated me to apply for this award was the opportunity to work in an interdisciplinary environment, collaborate with eminent scholars at JHU with similar research interests and consult relevant books from the JHU special collections with the support of the Singleton Center. Not only did I achieve these goals but this experience also exceeded my expectations: I was welcomed with great kindness and received full support from academics, postdocs, administrative staff and students of JHU to conduct my research and explore new perspectives.

Tudor and Stuart Room in Gilman Hall

I had the opportunity to engage with the Stern Center for the History of the Book in the Renaissance and I was warmly welcomed by Prof. Earle Havens and the PhD fellows of the Center in its wonderful location in the Evergreen Museum and Library surrounded by a splendid garden. I was given a tour and was particularly impressed by the rich collection of rare books and manuscripts in the Center's library. The collaboration with the Stern Center also allowed me to take part in its events during my stay: I attended the presentation of the book by Prof. Walter Stephens *How Writing Made Us Human, 3000 BCE to Now* which was a great chance to discuss the history of the book with members of the Stern Center and PhD students from various departments. Moreover, the talk *The Terrestrial and Celestial Globe Gores of François Demongenot (1552) at JHU* in collaboration with the Department of Conservation and Preservation of the Sheridan Libraries showed interesting discoveries and acquisitions of JHU and the participants could create their facsimile of terrestrial and celestial globes in the stunning location of the Peabody Library. I also attended a roundtable discussion of *Voidopolis* with the author Kat Mustatea, an augmented reality book retelling Dante's *Inferno*. During my research visit, I had the opportunity to give a talk with a rare book show-and-tell at the T&S Society. I found fascinating material in the special collections of the JHU library, especially one of the early editions of the *Imagines* of Philostratus (1522) and the comment and representation of this Greek text by Blaise de Vigenère (1629). The T&S Society talk was a wonderful experience not only for showing the findings of my explorations of the rare books collections at JHU but also for receiving useful feedback and thought-provoking ideas from fellow students in a friendly atmosphere.

During my research period at JHU, I also collaborated with the Department of Classics. Here I had the chance to attend a lab of my tutor, Nandini Pandey, and meet her bright students from different programs and backgrounds who are building an inspiring online educational resource on race and power in antiquity. I felt very lucky to be welcomed by this brilliant community, learn about different ways of engaging with Classics and see how we can actively create a fresh perspective to highlight the relevance of this discipline in modern debates. As well as working with Dr. Pandey, I met other academics of the Department of Classics such as Alan Shapiro, Karen ní Mheallaigh and Matthew Roller. Moreover, the Department promoted various stimulating talks: Emily Wilson talked about her experience of translating the *Iliad* by Homer; Giulia Sissa presented the 37th Annual Poultney Lecture and analysed the representation of beautiful bodies in Greek erotic culture.

This research period was extremely productive and important for me in developing my thesis and being involved in the activities and events of the Stern Center and the Department of Classics. Since my first day, I have been fully supported and felt part of the wonderful community of JHU. I am enthusiastic about my experience, and I am very grateful to have met such wonderful and inspiring academics, postdocs and students at JHU. I cannot thank them enough for their help in navigating the city of Baltimore and what JHU has to offer. I highly recommend this opportunity: JHU special collections and the Stern Center have extraordinary resources that are fascinating for everyone working in Classical reception, Renaissance, History of the Book and Early-Modern Culture. I made significant progress in my research and my experience as a PhD student has been greatly enhanced: I could find useful and unique texts that I will use for my thesis and laid the foundation for a future project and investigation of Philostratus' reception. This fellowship was fundamental to meeting wonderful people who supported me with great kindness and significantly enriched my experience.



Globe facsimile

Sophie Hartles – Newberry Library - March 2024

Thanks to generous funding from the HRC and Warwick's Centre for the Study of the Renaissance, I was able to undertake a three-week long research trip to the Newberry Library in Chicago this spring. The main purpose of this research was to consult their collections of sixteenth-century Italian plays in order to contribute to my current research project which examines the theme of the *beffa* in sixteenth-century Venice and Bologna. The *beffa* was a cruel type of joke that was used as a literary motif in many of the comedies and was intended to viciously mock certain comic characters.

In particular, they hold a rare Venetian one-act comedy by an unknown author entitled *Comedia piacevolissima da ridere de un Bravo chiamato Rouinazo* (Special Collections: Vault Case Y 712 .C735) that was brought to my attention during my research at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, which holds a photocopy of this play in their Walter Bullock collection. To the best of my knowledge, this short comedy has never been written about previously. It has only been referenced in a nineteenth-century French catalogue, where the author admits that this was the only comedy he did not see. It is written in Venetian dialect, and I argue that it is a rare, cheaply printed survival of comedies written in the *villanesca* genre that was specific to sixteenth-century Venice. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to see this item in person, as I am currently engaged in the process of writing a journal article about this play and I will be including a transcription as an appendix in my thesis. Therefore, it was essential for me to consult the original to gain a sense of its materiality and size. Additionally, I was also able to consult the other items that this comedy was originally bound with, which enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of its significance to the original collector and the works considered to be related to this comedy.



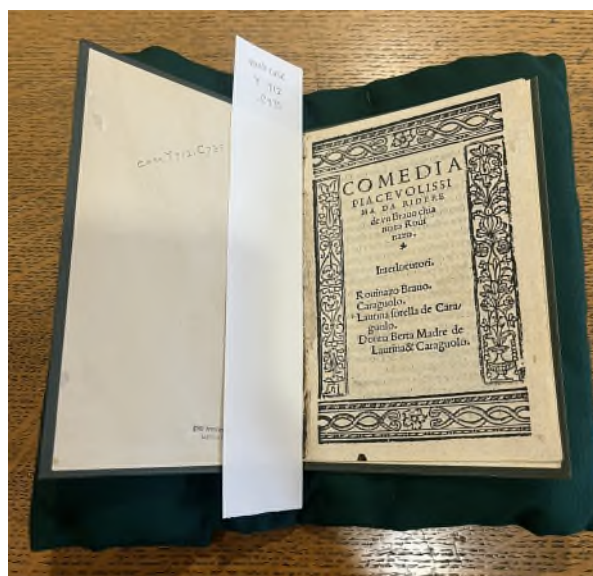
The Newberry Library

As I was fortunate to spend three weeks in Chicago, I was able to discover other comic works that I had never seen before, some also written in Venetian dialect. These included an intriguing comedy in five acts, of which the title and author are both unknown (Special Collections: Bonaparte 4745). This play includes numerous themes that are discussed in my PhD thesis and will be of particular use in my chapter on the mockery of the elderly. As a fellow, I was also assigned my own desk space, which permitted me to order books for my personal library. This allowed me to read secondary literature that

I could not access in the UK and to make use of the hours, such as early morning and evening, when the manuscript reading room was closed.

During my time at the Newberry, I was also afforded the opportunity to engage in discourse with a number of esteemed scholars, such as Suzanne Karr Schmidt, the Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts, and Paul F. Gehl, a retired historian of manuscript and printed textbooks of the Renaissance. The Newberry also hosted a series of events designed to facilitate networking with other fellows, including research seminars and lunchtime work-in-progress meetings. A particular highlight was a workshop hosted by Suzanne, which showcased various manuscripts and rare books held at the Newberry.

Furthermore, the fellowship was scheduled for March 2024 so that I could make the best use of my time in Chicago and participate in the annual Renaissance Society of America conference, a highly regarded three-day international conference that brings together thousands of scholars specialising in the Renaissance period. As part of this, I collaborated with another student of the CSR, Eva van Kemenade, to organize a two-panel series titled *Emotions, Senses, and Space: Experiencing Performances in the Renaissance City*, where I also presented my own research. It was an invaluable experience to organise a panel series at such an esteemed conference. The panels were very well attended, and we organised a lunch with our panel presenters and chairs to discuss these aspects further. This proved to be a highly intellectually stimulating experience, allowing us to make important connections in our field. I was also able to establish new connections with many Renaissance scholars at the conference and strengthen previous relations built at other conferences, which will be important for my future academic prospects. Additionally, the RSA conference held a GIS training workshop, during which I was introduced to the making of digital maps for historical purposes. This is a technique I am interested in using in future research projects.



Comedia piacevolissima da ridere de un Bravo chiamato Rouinazo

In summary, the three-week period spent in Chicago proved to be highly productive and valuable, allowing me to conduct research that is crucial for my current PhD project as well as a future publication. The relationships I established at the Newberry and the RSA conference will also prove to be beneficial for any future projects and my overall academic prospects.

This successful scheme will be open for applications in March 2025.

Details are available online: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/hrc/irf/wtf/>

Future Events, Plans and Funding Programmes

Conferences including the Doctoral Fellowship winners:

- [Being Human: Individualism and the Self from the Renaissance to the 21st Century](#) - Saturday 22nd February 2025 (tbc)
- [After Postcolonialism: Global Theory, Local Transformations](#) – 26th March 2025
- [Irresistible Decay: Aestheticization of the death and life imbrications from the 18th Century to today](#) - March 2025 (tbc)
- [Uses and Abuses of the Decolonial](#) - Saturday 17th May 2025
- In Search of Lost Futures: Visual Media Narratives of Economic Migration in the Mediterranean - 1st September 2024

- Speaking with the Dead: Italy and the Legacy of the Past in the Revolving Century (1750-1850) - 26th/27th September 2024
- Radical Traditions: The Role of Contemporary Arab Women in Revolutionising Arab Patriarchal Society - 12th October 2024
- Emotions and Labour in the Early Modern World - 10th March 2025 with Keynote Speaker Prof Katie Barclay (Macquarie)
- The Cultural Legacies of Corruption in Europe, 1500-today – 27th/28th March 2025 (Warwick in Venice)

Publications in Progress

- ***Spiritualism and Italian Culture XVIII-XX Centuries***; Fabio Camilletti, Bart Van den Bossche and Gennaro Ambrosino
- ***Theory, Politics, and the Present: Troubled Encounters***, Paulo de Medeiros
- ***Crisis and Body Politics in Twenty-first Century Literature: Territorial Bodies***, Charlotte Spear and Madeleine Sinclair
- ***Love, Desire, and Stanley Cavell***, Michelle Devereaux and Dominic Lash
- ***Homecoming Veterans in Literature and Culture: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Perspectives***, Neils Boender
- ***The Politics of Sedition in Long Nineteenth-Century Britain – Gender, Activism, Spatial Politics and Legality***, Dave Steele

Workshops

- Doctoral Fellowship Competition Launch Event – November 2024 tbc
- Publishing workshop - tbc
- Humanities Book Launch – Spring 2025 tbc

Director's Special Event

HRC/BSR lecture 2024/25 – Spring 2025 tbc

The Newberry Library

The HRC remains committed to Warwick's continued involvement with the Newberry Library via the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance. Each year the HRC shoulders £2,000 as part of the annual financial commitment that Warwick makes to be part of the Newberry consortium. In addition, we reserve one of the Warwick PhD and Early Career Research Fellowships to be held at the Newberry.

Johns Hopkins University Fellowship

The HRC will continue to partner with the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance to offer a fellowship linked to Johns Hopkins University, along similar lines to the one already offered at the Newberry Library in Chicago. The fellow will be working on an early modern topic and make use of the facilities and expertise at JHU.

Warwick PhD and Early Career Research Fellowships

Next year we will be able to fund two USA/Europe Fellowships as well as the usual Newberry Library and John Hopkins Fellowships.

Faculty Seminars – continued sponsorship to:

- Caribbean Studies Seminar
- Early Modern and Eighteenth-Century Centre Seminar
- Italian Research Seminar
- Parish Research Symposium [History]
- STVDIO Seminar [Renaissance]
- Translation and Transcultural Studies Seminar
- Warwick Workshop for Interdisciplinary German Studies

Contact us

For further information on the activities of the HRC,
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