International Conference
Myth and Drama: Crises, Borders, Otherness

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS[1]



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Conference Scope

Since their very beginnings, myth and drama (theatre) have been deeply intertwined, and their dynamic dialogue has given rise to rich and compelling creations and (re)interpretations. Myths, as foundational narratives and repositories of the collective imaginary, have traditionally served as the basis for numerous dramatic texts and theatrical performances. Contemporary dramatic (theatrical) production reflects the need for new readings and reconfigurations of myth, raising the question of the creation of new myths within the context of contemporary challenges.

This year's edition bears the subtitle ***Crises, Borders, Otherness*****,** thereby directing the thematic focus toward newly emerging global and local constellations, as well as toward intensified academic debates on liminality, configurations of identity, and forms of otherness. The aim of the second edition of this interdisciplinary conference—bringing together dramaturgical and theatrological approaches with philological, anthropological, philosophical, historical, gender, and other perspectives—is to examine the relations between myth and drama from antiquity to the present, with particular emphasis on issues that have emerged as especially relevant and urgent.

At the same time, the questions of crises, borders, and otherness—which today appear particularly relevant and whose challenges we seek to address—have always stood at the centre of the creative—both poetic and political—interpretations and reinventions of the cosmos, the world, and the human being as represented through myth and drama. These three thematic nodes are inscribed in the very poetics and function of myth and drama, for it is precisely through narrative and performative shaping that moments of rupture, liminal states, and encounters with the Other are articulated as constitutive points of cultural and social self-reflection.

Myth and drama, in their mutual reflections and intertwinings, not only frequently emerge as responses to profound social and political crises, but their productive dialogue also unfolds through their own internal self-interrogations—through the crisis of myth and of drama as poetic and cultural forms. Moreover, they are essentially and structurally bound to the concept of the border, at whose threshold they are inscribed, simultaneously representing and transgressing it—whether it be the border between the polis and the antipolis, between stage and audience, or among different forms of collectivity. In periods of (political and poetic) crises, borders—and their (de)construction and (de)sacralization—acquire crucial significance in myth and drama, while simultaneously foregrounding the question of otherness as their inner core. By embodying and crossing borders in the text and on the stage, myth and drama interrogate and play the figures of the Other—the non-citizen, the woman, the stranger, the migrant—in dialogue with contemporary migrational, political, and cultural crises that are redefining the contours of belonging and exclusion in today's world.

Keynote speeches:

Pierre Longuenesse,
Sorbonne Nouvelle / IRET, Paris

Myth and Politics: The Case of Philippe Malone and Michel Simonot

Keywords: contemporary drama, mythopoetics, playwriting, myth and politics, realism / imagination, dramatic poem

Abstract: Among the stage creations that have dominated the contemporary European theatrical landscape for several decades, from Jan Fabre (*Prometheus Landscape II*, 2011) to Milo Rau (*Antigone in the Am*azon 2023*, Oreste in Mosul* 2025), passing through Katie Mitchell (who staged a rewriting of *The Oresteia* by Ted Hughes in 2000) or Elli Papakonstantinou (*Bacchae*, in 2023) – and many others, of course – the recourse to mythical models, and in particular to figures from Greek tragedy, flourishes to such an extent that this recurrence takes on the value of a symptom. Illuminating the power dynamics and conflicts of our contemporary world, giving meaning to the resistances of oppressed or minority figures, the mythical reference frequently nourishes a positioning based both on the perpetuation of tragic *topoi* – through these "mythopoetics," the outcomes of these contemporary fables are known in advance – and on an ethical stance founded on the heroization of figures that have become emblems of a new humanism set against the barbarism of a contemporary world dominated by predation and violence.

It is therefore interesting to study, in this context, two examples of contemporary writers who, while not escaping this rule, radically stand out from its dominant usage. Michel Simonot and Philippe Malone both write dramas that rigorously confronts acute socio-political current events, whether it pertains to the migratory issue and north/south relations (Simonot, *Le But de Roberto Carlos*, Malone, *Les Chants anonymes*), or more generally to minorities marginalized by the Western security and liberal society (Simonot, *Delta Charlie Delta*). But for all that, they both resolutely place themselves equally far from the illusion of restoring a supposedly known "reality," as well as from the temptation of a rewriting that falls into the pathos of storytelling. Conversely, through the construction, both assumed and acknowledged, of a disillusioned gaze that is both empathetic and overarching toward their subject, and through strategies that avoid reducing a fable to a tragic news item, they critically interrogate reality and its disorders in an eminently critical manner.

In this perspective, the connection of contemporary situations and conflicts with a mythical reference that would serve as a kind of mirror is no longer the instrument of a new tragic poetics, but a tool for highlighting their political stakes. The reference to *Oedipus at Colonus* (in *Le But de Roberto Carlos*), to Prometheus or to Isaac (in *Delta*

Charlie Delta), or even to the Pangaea of a mythical prehistory (in *Les Chants anonymes*), suddenly sheds new light on situations that were thought to be understood – most often for the worse, due to their perpetually tragic reiteration. Symmetrically, the association of these references with contemporary conflicts literally reactivates or sets in motion the mythical fables, highlighting their societal functionality, their value as an ethical-political reference within a world whose failures need to be denounced, by precisely identifying the source of their scandal. Thus, by writing a theater that is not documentary but documented and poetic, Malone and Simonot make a political use of myth, in contrast to the sensationalism of spectacular forms which, believing they exercise their critical power over the world's disorders, may only be endorsing them.

Duška Radosavljević,
Royal Central School of Speech and Drama,
University of London & The University of Lund

The Myth of Singular Authority: From Gusle to Gig Theatre

Keywords: Authorship, orature, originality, collective creativity, devising, gig theatre, artificial intelligence

Abstract: This talk examines singular authorship as one of modernity's most enduring myths. While contemporary debates around artificial intelligence and digital culture are often framed as a crisis of authority, they may also reveal the historical contingency of the Romantic model of authorship. Emerging in conjunction with the Enlightenment notions of originality, genius, and intellectual property, the figure of the autonomous creator gradually eclipsed earlier traditions in which creativity was understood as collective, reiterative and relational.

Pre-Enlightenment South Slavic oral traditions documented by Vuk Karadžić, Milman Parry and Albert Lord testify to forms of authorship dispersed across communities and generations, where originality resided not in ex nihilo invention but in variations through performance and transmission. Similar dynamics of citation, adaptation, improvisation and transmission can be observed in contemporary hip hop and remix cultures as well as devising and postdramatic theatre-making.

Perceived through a long historical perspective on authorship, such processes suggest that the apparent contemporary crisis of authority may in fact represent a re-emergence of heretofore suppressed alternative traditions of cultural production. They render print culture a chapter of cultural history and authorship itself a form of historically specific technology. Furthermore, such processes unsettle borders between author and audience, original and adaptation, creation and transmission while reclaiming collective creativity from its position of cultural alterity. In this sense,

contemporary theatre and digital culture invite us to reconsider not only the future of authorship but also the myths that surround it.

Maja Bojadžievska,
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The Myth of the End of the World and Tragic Humanism

Keywords: myth, anthropological structure, ritual, apocalypse, tragical humanism

Abstract: Stories about the end of the world are as old as humanity itself. They belong to an important anthropological structure of the human imaginary, in which several narrative strands converge around the idea of an ultimate catastrophe. Whether we consider the earliest eschatological episode in the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Greek myths, the "events" recorded in the Brahmanas, the biblical tradition, or the Qur'an, there is a constant element in these narratives that deserves our attention today: namely, that the cause of catastrophe is the moral degradation of humankind. Human beings are those who fundamentally abandon the rules of an ordered world, overturn moral laws, descend into barbarism, and transform themselves into unworthy and repulsive creatures. The apocalyptic tradition in the Bible in particular—from the Book of Daniel, through the Synoptic Gospels, to the Book of Revelation—emphasizes the connection between the final catastrophe and human violence.

With regard to human violence and its fundamental role in culture, there is a Greek tragedy that unambiguously reveals the mechanism of violence as simultaneously destructive to the community and, paradoxically, constitutive of it. This is Euripides' *The Bacchae*, in which the god Dionysus embodies those forces that inflame violence to the point of the community's disintegration. The murder and sparagmos (ritual dismemberment) of Pentheus, according to René Girard's distinctive anthropology, form part of that tragic demystification of a world that remains blind to the role of violence in human society. If we follow Girard's line of thought, the essential problem explored in *The Bacchae* would not be visible had Euripides, guided by mythic, ritual, and ultimately artistic intuition, not adopted the stance that he did—namely, by offering no resolution and by refusing to place the entire burden of violence solely upon the shoulders of the new, "problematic" god. Instead, he links it to all human beings.

According to Girard, the problem presented in *The Bacchae* should be extended to encompass the dimensions of culture as a whole. The issue is that violence is never identified as the original source—a point that can be fruitfully analyzed today, given the dramatic speed with which the last sacrificial rites of so-called Western culture are disintegrating.

Some authors believe that the current global crisis, given the violence that is already spilling over in every direction—beyond the symbolic rituals that contain it—is apocalyptic, in the etymological sense that it reveals something fundamental about the human world. Although it is difficult to find an adequate literary and artistic response to this crisis today, certain directions may perhaps be found in the tragic humanism of Thomas Mann, who believed that only reason can confront barbaric irrationalism. Yet, in order to do so, reason must rely on forces and resources that reach far deeper than itself. A similar insight can be found in our contemporary J. M. Coetzee, whose work explores the limits of the human and the boundaries of our moral certainty.

Liminality, Transformation and Boundary of the Human

Andreas Markantonatos,
University of the Peloponnese, Greece,
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Narrative Density, Embedded Storylines, and Moral Imagination in Euripides' *Alcestis*

Keywords: Alcestis, Euripides, Narratology of drama

Abstract: This essay examines Euripides' *Alcestis* as a drama whose deepest meanings emerge from its narrative architecture. Rather than treating the play as a simple tale of substitution and recovery, it argues that Euripides organises the action as a densely layered system of embedded storylines, delayed disclosures, offstage realities, and mythic intertexts. Particular attention is given to Alcestis' death as the narrative hub of the play, to the role of reported action in enlarging tragic space, and to the Heracles tradition as the major secondary narrative through which the local legend of Pherae is transformed into a wider Panhellenic story of rescue, endurance, and moral renewal.

Marie Saint Martin,
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Liminal Experiences: *Metamorphoses* on Stage—Rethinking the Hierarchy of Species

Keywords: Ovid – Metamorphoses – prosthesis – puppets – unrepresentable – monstrous

Abstract: A Radio France podcast invited listeners to view metamorphosis as an inquiry into identity. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* presents shifting bodies that traverse the realms and boundaries usually taken for granted. Ovid reveals the emergence of a new way of being-in-the-world—an attempt that poses challenges within the framework of Horatian dramaturgy; the Classical era confined the Ovidian work to operatic forms, which were themselves defined by their liminality. Yet, in recent years, the *Metamorphoses* have undergone a theatrical revival. Numerous experiments have sought to euhemerize the myth, thereby restoring its political significance. This paper

examines an alternative approach to the text—one that gives form to the experience of radical alteration inherent in metamorphosis. Edzard Schoppmann's *Metamorphoses* (2021) and the production of *Dafne* directed by Aurélien Bory (2022) both employ a universe of strange creatures and prosthetic bodies, echoing the 18th-century puppet productions based on Ovid by Antonio da Silva. These projects share a common aim: to represent the unrepresentable moment of metamorphosis—in all its monstrosity—while questioning the possibility of reconciling myth with drama.

Sabira Hajdarević,
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Not Yet, Not Anymore: The Liminality of Adolescent Characters in Greek Tragedy

Keywords: Euripides; Greek drama; teenage/adolescent characters; marginal status; Greek myth

Abstract: Although the texts of Greek tragedies rarely provide precise information about the ages of their characters, both the dramatic context and the wider mythological tradition allow for a more or less reliable reconstruction. Unsurprisingly, scholarship on ancient tragedy largely centres on *adult characters* as the principal agents of dramatic action. The study of *child characters* has received less attention (but cf. Foley 2003, Griffiths 2020, Hajdarević 2025, or Sifakis 1979), while the analysis of *liminal teenage figures* has been almost neglected.

The research proposed here addresses precisely this distinctive category of non-adult characters—figures who belong neither to the realm of childhood nor yet to that of adulthood. It will examine in detail their characterisation and function within the plots of the relevant dramas (notably Iphigenia in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Polyxena in *Hecuba*, Orestes and Electra in *Orestes*, Macaria in *Heraclidae*, and Antigone and Ismene in *Phoenician Women*). The study will demonstrate that these figures occupy a liminal or marginal status and resist straightforward binary classification. They embody manifestations of *otherness* from whichever perspective they are viewed: poised between childhood and adulthood and depicted at a moment of crisis that propels them prematurely into a transformative phase; simultaneously protagonists and objects of the action; heroes and powerless victims. In certain cases, we observe both their coming-of-age and their transformative adoption of attributes associated with the *opposite gender* (e.g. Iphigenia and Polyxena die in the manner of epic male heroes).

Marija Miteva Stojčevska, MA
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Circe and Hermes: Transformations and Transitions from Myth to Digital Worlds

Keywords: myth, ritual, video games, Circe, Hermes, digital mythologies, liminality, posthumanism, multimodality

Abstract: This research traces the transformation of myth across different media epochs—from ritual and myth, through theatre and film, to contemporary video games as multimedia systems of storytelling. At the core of this research lies the understanding of myth as a collective structure of meaning, shaped through symbolic action, ritual repetition, and dramatic performance. Particular attention is devoted to how ancient mythological patterns continue to be reactivated and reinterpreted within contemporary digital narratives.

Throughout the study, Circe and Hermes are positioned as the principal archetypal figures representing transformation, transition, magic, mediation, and passage between worlds. Circe is examined as a figure of metamorphosis, ritual, embodiment, and craft, while Hermes is analysed as an archetype of communication, liminality, and mediation. Through these archetypes, the study addresses questions of crisis, borders, identity formations, and contemporary manifestations of otherness within digital culture.

The video games *God of War*, *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, and *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* are used as illustrative case studies to examine magical structures, ritual mechanisms, and the presence of mythological archetypes within contemporary digital worlds understood as distinctive liminal spaces.

The research draws upon the theoretical insights of James George Frazer, Marcel Mauss, Mircea Eliade, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Umberto Eco, and Lev Manovich.

Staging Borders

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Bridging and Redefining Borders

Keywords: Macedonian drama, European drama, genre, myth, drama
Abstract: The paper will examine the key conference concepts through the lens of dramatic and theater arts genre spectrum (tragedy, comedy, drama, performance) and the disruption of their definitions' borders, but in conjunction with the European context of drama and its trends, as well as through the prism of the myth and its reactualization in a contemporary social European and global context.

Afrim Rexhepi
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The Stage as a Liminal Space: The Boundaries Between Dramatic Writing and Theatrical Performance

Keywords: dramatic writing, dramatic biowriting, stage act, liminal space, figure, anti-figure, actor, spectator, communication
Abstract: This paper examines how dramatic writing leaves its textual form and is transformed into a stage event, thereby creating a new field of meanings and interpretations. In drama, it is not the author who speaks, but the figures; on the theatrical stage, these figures are transformed into anti-figures, while the characters are embodied by actors. Through this transition from dramatic writing to the living stage, a process of dramatic life-writing (dramatic biowriting) emerges as an event and performance.

The aim of the paper is to demonstrate that the concept of dramatic life-writing offers a new understanding of the stage as a liminal space and as a dynamic form of communication between writing, performance, and the subject (the spectator).

Bela Gligorova
Independent Researcher

Intervening the Stage: Spatial Dramaturgy and the Performance of Borders in *Konstruktivna intervencija*

Keywords: postdramatic theatre; spatial dramaturgy; site-responsive performance; spectatorship; borders; otherness; urban performance; performative space

Abstract: This paper examines *Konstruktivna intervencija: Ovo mesto nam se mnogo dopada* (December 2025), a site-responsive performance conceived, directed, and spatially embedded by Ana Miljanić, as a contemporary theatrical practice that reconfigures staging, spectatorship, and spatial relations within urban and institutional environments. Developed within the context of post-Yugoslav independent theatre, the performance operates through a collaborative structure involving performers Sanja Marković, Miloš Timotijević, Nedim Nezirović, Vladislava Đorđević, and Dobrila Boba Stojnić, with dramaturgical-therapeutic work and performative reading by Tanja Šljivar, alongside scenographic, costume, and technical contributions.

Rejecting linear narrative representation, the performance unfolds through a sequence of spatial and performative interventions that interrogate the conditions of theatre itself. Processes of collective presence, bodily inscription, and negotiated movement become central dramaturgical strategies through which the work continuously repositions spectators in relation to performers, architecture, and institutional space. Through the interplay of performative reading, physical action, and sonic material, including compositions by Ivan Brkljačić (performed by LP Duo), the production constructs a layered and open-ended dramaturgy grounded in spatial encounter rather than narrative cohesion.

Consequently, this paper argues that the performance does not merely depict borders but rather actively produces and destabilizes them through theatrical means. Boundaries between performer and spectator, observation and participation, stage and environment are continuously renegotiated, positioning the audience within an unstable field of implication and co-presence. Drawing on Hans-Thies Lehmann's conception of postdramatic theatre (2006) and Henri Lefebvre's understanding of socially produced space (1991), this paper approaches space not as a neutral container for performance but as an active dramaturgical agent through which relations of visibility, access, exclusion, and collectivity are continuously reorganized.

Ultimately, the paper proposes that *Konstruktivna intervencija* generates ephemeral micro-mythologies of space, or rather temporary spatial imaginaries produced through embodied interaction, negotiated spectatorship, and site-responsive intervention. These micro-mythologies emerge through acts of occupation, interruption, proximity, and collective witnessing, functioning as affective counter-cartographies that

unsettle fixed distinctions between institutional and public space, belonging and exclusion, observer and participant. In this sense, the performance constructs theatre as a shifting border zone in which contemporary crises of authorship, communal presence, and spatial belonging are not resolved but continuously rehearsed through embodied encounter. By foregrounding instability, participation, and spatial negotiation, the work positions site-responsive theatre as a performative practice capable of reimagining the politics of space within the post-Yugoslav cultural landscape.

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The Roma Theatre Pralipe – Politicality and the Ritual Theatrical Framework

Keywords: Otherness, politicality, myth, imaginary, ritual theatre, cultural memory

Abstract: This paper explores the relationship between myth, ritual, and politicality in theatrical performance through an analysis of the productions of the Pralipe Theatre. Drawing on Raoul Girardet's theoretical insights on the imaginary and myth in politics, as well as on the concepts of *political theatre* and *politicality* in performance, the study problematizes the dominant dichotomy between rationally articulated political theatre and ritual, symbolic practices traditionally perceived as apolitical or escapist.

The focus is placed on the ritual matrix as a performative mechanism through which politicality is articulated not as an explicit ideological discourse, but as a structural and embodied category. Through the analysis of selected performances produced by Pralipe, the paper demonstrates that myth, symbol, and collective memory function as active mechanisms of cultural affirmation and political resistance. In this context, the performer's body emerges as a key site for the inscription of otherness—not as an object of representation, but as an active bearer of cultural and political subjectivity.

The paper positions the Pralipe Theatre within contemporary debates on myth, boundaries, and otherness, suggesting that ritual performance can function as a specific form of political articulation and as a space of cultural reaffirmation, in which myth is not a residue of tradition, but an active principle of both theatrical and social action.

Myth, Palimpsest and Adaptation

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A Palimpsest of Myths: *The Little Prince* opera in the Algarve

Keywords: opera, *The Little Prince*, Barthes, *Mythologies*, translation, opera in translation

Abstract: This paper analyses the 2024 professional production of Rachel Portman's opera *The Little Prince* in the Algarve by analysing its various layers according to Roland Barthes's 'mythology' – the critical study of how modern culture turns historically produced signs into 'natural', common-sense truths through a second-order system of meaning.

The myths invoked here include: the source work by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, with its little 'alien' encountering a variety of characters from whom he learns something meaningful about himself and about the world; opera as 'high art' and its cultural status; opera as a process asserting itself as necessary, whilst requiring skill, patience and attention to detail; the power and importance of translation, first into English to create the original libretto and then into Portuguese for this production; the programming urge striving for balance in a male-dominated field by selecting the work of a female composer; the filmic language of the music, with its dramaturgical emotional immediacy; the reach and significance of including participatory elements within a professional production through collaborations between professional artists of international renown, emerging artists, and young people from four local music conservatoires; and a 'prodigal son' element to the production with the stage director's return to the region after 30 years away.

There is a clear ideological drive in each of these layers, but the result is bigger than the sum of its parts. Over two years later, interviews with the teachers, artists and young people involved attest to its continuing impact.

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The Wandering of the Dramatic Character Through the Timeless Myth

Keywords: Myth, dramas of exile and wandering, otherness, memory, the body, Mouawad, Blanco

Abstract: This proposal aims to explore how the body functions as a boundary — political, symbolic, and mythical — in the play *Incendies* by Wajdi Mouawad (Lebanon/Canada) and *La ira de Narciso"* (*The Wrath of Narcissus"*) by Sergio Blanco (Uruguay/France). We will examine how this dramatic corpus is inscribed within the contemporary experience of exile, migration, and wandering, linking this experience with an autofictional form of writing where the body of the author-character unfolds as a surface for projection and doubling.

In *Incendies*, the body serves as a living archive marked by the violence of history and war, bearing the inscription of biopolitical (Foucault) and familial boundaries. The reactivation of the Oedipal myth thus functions as a revelatory structure, transforming exile into a tragic quest. This paper aims to explore how the body functions as a boundary — political, symbolic and mythical — in the plays *Incendies"* by Wajdi Mouawad (Lebanon/Canada) and *La ira de Narciso* (*The Wrath of Narcissus"*) by Sergio Blanco (Uruguay/France). We will examine how this dramatic corpus relates to the contemporary experience of exile, migration and wandering.

Conversely, in *La ira de Narciso,* Blanco employs an autofictional strategy in which the body of the author-character unfolds as a surface for projection and doubling. While Mouawad situates the body within a framework of geopolitical exile and traumatic memory, Blanco presents a form of inner wandering where the subject is constructed within and through the narrative of the self.

Thus, the body emerges as a site of passage — a borderland — where the tensions between otherness, memory, and (dis)identification are continuously re-enacted. Ultimately, a comparative analysis of these two works reveals a fundamental convergence: myth functions not merely as a narrative legacy, but as an active mechanism for the production of meaning.

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The Destiny in the House of Alvig in Ibsen's *Ghosts* and in the House of Atreus in the *Oresteia*

Keywords: Destiny, Ibsen, *Ghosts*, Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, family guilt

Abstract: This article offers a comparative examination of the function of destiny in Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* and Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, focusing on the ways in which destiny is inscribed within the family household as an intergenerational burden, a moral trauma, and a dramaturgical mechanism of inescapable revelation. The starting point of this study is the hypothesis that, despite the historical, aesthetic, and ideological

distance between ancient tragedy and modern bourgeois drama, both works construct the household as a site of accumulated guilt, silence, and inherited violence. In the *Oresteia*, the House of Atreus is determined by a cycle of bloodshed, revenge, and divine justice, in which destiny is linked to ancestral hubris and to the gradual transition from private vengeance to institutional justice. Correspondingly, in *Ghosts*, the House of Alving is not haunted by gods or Erinyes, but by social conventions, repressed truths, hereditary consequences, and moral hypocrisies, which return as "ghosts" of the past.

The comparison demonstrates that, in Ibsen, destiny is displaced from the metaphysical sphere to the social and psychological field, without, however, losing its tragic force. The inescapable no longer arises from the will of the gods, but from the power of heredity, patriarchal authority, bourgeois morality, and silence, which corrodes the family nucleus. Thus, *Ghosts* may be read as a modern rewriting of tragic destiny, in which the household continues to function as a stage of crisis, revelation, and collapse. Through this comparative approach, the present study investigates both the continuity and the transformation of tragic destiny from the House of Atreus to the House of Alving, showing that tragedy survives in modernity not as an imitation of forms, but as a persistent dramaturgy of inherited evil.

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"The Great God Pan Is Dead": Myth, Music, and Dissidence in Tom Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll*

Keywords: myth, rockenroll, Pan, ideology, contemporary drama

Abstract: Alongside the many events of European history – from the Prague Spring and the Velvet Revolution to Perestroika – that provide the principal subject matter and narrative framework of *Rock 'n' Roll* (2006), the play is structured around a single mythical figure: the god Pan. Taking as its point of departure Pan's persistent yet mysterious presence, with which the play both opens and closes, this article examines his significance as the axis around which the central thematic elements of *Rock 'n' Roll* are organized. Drawing on both the play itself and the notes Stoppard kept while writing it – in which the name of Pan, Plutarch's *De Defectu Oraculorum*, and the phrase "The Great God Pan Is Dead" appear among the key terms – the article argues that Pan functions as a signifier that generates a series of homologies that organize the play's meaning. It demonstrates that, over the course of the drama, Pan first emerges through the figure of Syd Barrett and later manifests in the subversive yet politically disinterested practice of The Plastic People of the Universe, whom Jan, the play's protagonist, describes as "pagans." In Stoppard's play, Pan is directly associated with

rock 'n' roll and, consequently, with political dissidence. Finally, the article argues that Pan constitutes an important element of Stoppard's "imaginary museum" and of his broader practice of reinterpreting mythological and literary traditions. It emphasizes that Stoppard draws not only on ancient Greek sources and Plutarch's essay, but also on the rich tradition of Pan's presence in English literature from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Crisis in Classical Myth and Its Modern Reworkings

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Crisis as trauma, historical dead end and disintegration of the subject

Keywords: fragmentation, cultural saturation, emptiness, disintegration of the subject

Abstract: This study draws upon the philosophical views of W. Benjamin, T. Adorno, and G. Deleuze, all of whom conceptualise crisis as an inherent aspect of history, arising from continuous change—the destruction of the old order and the emergence of the new. The work analyzes how crisis manifests: as bodily trauma and isolation in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*; as apocalyptic stasis and entrapment in Beckett's *The End of the Party*, where characters are suspended in perpetual waiting; and as the reconsideration of lost opportunities and the confrontation with old age in Charlie Kaufman's *I'm Thinking of Ending Things*, depicting a journey through mental labyrinths and a quest for meaning before death. The processes of objectification, triumph of instrumentalised reason, bureaucratic absurdity, cultural exhaustion, and emotional emptiness illustrate the reduction of the human being to an empty shell in post-capitalist reality, further reinforcing the notion of crisis.
Crisis in ancient drama and myth, modern drama, and contemporary film is actualised through differences shaped by medium, era, and artistic practice. In ancient forms, crisis is defined by fate and a linear flow of events, with audio-visual intensity establishing stage relationships and memory serving recognition to drive action, while the body acts as an affective zone. In modern drama, crisis immobilises the body, fragments language, and strips down consciousness. In film, a close-up on the face isolates emotion from time and space, transforming crisis into pure affect and intensity that transcends historical context. In all forms, viewers are drawn in as active observers, their perception blurring the lines between pleasure, horror, and observation, engaging with crisis beyond the camera's gaze.

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Philoctetes as a Figure of Crisis in the Dramas of Sophocles and Ljubiša Georgievski

Keywords: myth, drama, crisis, boundaries, identity, interpretation, Philoctetes
Abstract: This paper examines the figure of Philoctetes as a paradigmatic embodiment of crisis in the dramatic interpretations of Sophocles and Ljubiša Georgievski. Proceeding from the premise that the myth of Philoctetes constitutes a narrative matrix through which various forms of individual and collective crisis are articulated, the analysis focuses on the ways in which the ancient and the contemporary dramatic texts reshape this mythical figure in accordance with their respective historical and cultural contexts.

In Sophocles' tragedy, Philoctetes is portrayed as the bearer of a multilayered crisis—physical, ethical, political, and existential. His incurable wound and prolonged exile problematize the relationship between the individual and the community, while the conflict between truth, justice, and political necessity reveals a profound crisis of the polis.

In Georgievski's drama, the mythical figure of Philoctetes is re-actualized as a metaphor for contemporary experiences of exclusion, historical trauma, and social disintegration. Through dramatic reinterpretation, Philoctetes is transformed into both a witness to and a bearer of the crises that shape contemporary culture and the identity dilemmas it generates.

Methodologically, the paper adopts a comparative approach, drawing on myth criticism, theories of cultural memory, and contemporary concepts of crisis. Its aim is to demonstrate the enduring capacity of the myth of Philoctetes to function as a cultural model through which crisis is conceptualized and interpreted across different historical and cultural contexts.

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The Ethics and Aesthetics of Chaos in *Phaedra's Love*

Keywords: In-Yer-Face Theatre, Sarah Kane, Chaos Theory, Martin Meisel
Abstract: First performed in 1996 at London's Gate Theatre, *Phaedra's Love* by the British playwright Sarah Kane problematises the normalisation of dysfunctional family dynamics and state corruption by retelling the Greek myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus written by Seneca in *Phaedra* in a radical tone. Kane's adaptation is a dark and provoking reimagining of the classical Greek myth which is represented by Seneca around Queen Phaedra's lust for her chaste stepson Hippolytus, who fiercely rejects her advances, and King Theseus, who calls down a curse that causes a monstrous sea-bull to tear Hippolytus apart as a result of Phaedra's false accusation of Hippolytus of rape. In *Phaedra's Love*, Sarah Kane transforms this royal family into a chaotic spectacle by

portraying Hippolytus as the spokesperson and critic of a societal and domestic crisis where incest, adultery, and sexual assault have become mundane. This systemic rot extends to a state ruled by a monarch who celebrates state-sanctioned massacres and a clergy driven by base sexual impulses rather than spiritual devotion. A nihilistic prince in Kane's version of *Phaedra*, Hippolytus constructs his own ethics in a world of chaos by rejecting and mocking Phaedra's passionate yet incestuous love towards him, the expensive gifts he received due to his status, the royal duty of committing mass slaughter under the guise of diplomacy, and the hypocritical respect of society that feeds on scandal and uses the suffering of the royal family at the end of the play as grotesque entertainment. This paper analyses *Phaedra's Love* based on Hippolytus's perspective and the play's grotesque atmosphere, utilising the theoretical framework outlined in Martin Meisel's *Chaos Imagined: Literature, Art, Science* (2016) to delineate the ethical and aesthetic boundaries of this chaotic realm.

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The Myth of the Atreides in Crisis: Philosophical and Dramatic Issues of the Cosmos in Euripides' *Orestes*

Keywords: tragedy, Euripides, *Orestes*, myth, crisis of representation, rationalisation, philosophy of nature, Anaxagoras, cosmos, astronomy, intertextuality, Atreides, Tantalus, sun

Abstract: *Orestes* is one of Euripides's later tragedies, in which the crisis surrounding divine representations and traditional mythical narratives is most tangible. In sections that appear to be detached from the main plot (prologue, monody), Electra recounts episodes from her family history, which illustrate the curse weighing upon the house of the Atreides (the punishment of Tantalus, the quarrel between Atreus and Thyestes, etc.). However, she seems to distance herself from the mythical tales being recounted (5, 8). Furthermore, the versions of the myths presented give new significance to the *cosmos*: the 'aerial' Tantalus is threatened by a suspended rock (4-10, 982-6), and the sun and the Pleiades have their courses reversed by Eris – or Zeus – (1001-6). However, several expressions seem to allude to the astronomical theories of the natural philosophers and point towards a rationalist interpretation of the myths, which would overlay the mythical reading: the suspended rock could be the sun, a celestial body or a meteorite, and Tantalus himself could represent the earth (or Anaxagoras) ; similarly, the alteration of the sun's path could be an allusion to the opposed annual trajectories of the stars and the sun, or to the emergence of the ecliptic. How might one explain the cosmos's prominence in *Orestes*, and in particular in

Electra's words? In other words, how should the crisis of the mythical narratives be interpreted in relation to the plot? I will try to analyse the philosophical and dramatic implications of the *cosmos'*s introduction into the mythical narratives of the *Orestes*.

Fear and the Construction of the Other

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The Myth of Kaveh in Iranian Dramatic Storytelling (Naghali): A Recurrent Lesson on the Encounter with the Other

Keywords: *Naghali*, the myth of Kaveh, Fereydun, Zahhak, the Other, Jungian individuation

Abstract: *Naghali* (Pers. نقالی 'storytelling', 'narration') is one of the oldest forms of dramatic narration of epic stories dedicated to Iranian mythological heroes. One of these heroes is Kaveh the Blacksmith, about whom the first written sources can be found in *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi, and *Garshaspnama* of Asadi Tusi. The legendary Kaveh launches a national uprising against the foreign tyrannical figure of Zahhak, reestablishes the rule of Iranians, and expels foreigners. Instead of signing Zahhak's letter of regulations, he throws it, attaches his leather apron to the spear making a Flag from it – namely, the Flag of Kaveh (*Derafsh-e Kaviani*) – gathers people and leads them to Fereydun, the Iranian rightful ruler. The Iranian people, Kaveh the Blacksmith, and Fereydun overthrow Zahhak and restore the throne.

This paper argues that the myth of Kaveh is an expression of psychic integration in which the encounter with the Other within ourselves (Jungian *shadow*) is indispensable, and that its transmission to the audience through *Naghali* is one of the most profound forms in which the individuation process in theatre can be detected. In this constellation, the Other shifts in several levels: Kaveh and Fereydun (displaying both unconscious and conscious), Kaveh–Fereydun vs. Zahhak (integrated Self vs. regressive tendencies in the psyche), and the narrator (*Naghal*) vis-à-vis the audience. The recurrent yet neglected lesson is the need for a proper understanding of the archetype of apocalypse not merely as destruction, but as *apocatastasis* — restoration and rebirth.

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Enlightenment and the Construction of the Other: Mythologizing Islam in 18th-Century European Drama (Voltaire's *Mahomet* as Case Study)

Keywords: Enlightenment; Otherness; Myth; Voltaire; Mahomet; Islam; Orientalism; Theatre; Cultural Representation

Abstract: This paper examines the construction of Islam as a figure of otherness in Enlightenment drama through a close reading of Voltaire's *Mahomet ou le Fanatisme*. While often interpreted as a critique of religious fanaticism, the play simultaneously produces a reductive and ideologically charged representation of Islam, in which the figure of Mahomet functions not as a historically grounded representation of the Prophet Muhammad, but as a dramaturgical construct shaped by European polemical discourse. Drawing on theories of myth and cultural representation, the paper argues that Mahomet participates in a broader Enlightenment strategy of externalizing fanaticism onto a constructed "Other," thereby contributing to the formation of a European self-image grounded in rationality and moral superiority.

Situating the play within early Orientalist frameworks, the analysis highlights the internal tensions of Enlightenment thought, which, while seeking to dismantle religious dogma, simultaneously reproduces new forms of mythologization. A brief comparative reference to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's engagement with Islam suggests the coexistence of alternative, more dialogic modes of representation, without escaping the broader dynamics of cultural mediation. Finally, the paper gestures toward later controversies surrounding representations of the Prophet in European theatre, indicating a shift from unilateral construction to contested political representation. In this way, Enlightenment drama emerges not merely as a reflection of cultural perceptions of Islam, but as an active site in the production of enduring narratives of alterity.

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The contemporary myth of the primordial fear in the film and play *Bug*

Keywords: contemporary myth, primordial fear, play/film *Bug* (1996, 2006), psychological crisis/mental illness, borders of identity

Abstract: The presentation focuses on the theatrical play *Bug* by Tracy Letts (1996) and the film with the same title by William Friendkin (2006). The plot revolves around the characters of Agnes White and Peter Evans whose interhuman connection is intertwined with the topics of deep trauma, loneliness, mental illness, identity crisis, all of which are depicted through the lens of the contemporary myth of the unknown and the invisible enemy.

The story in the play and film focuses on Agnes, a woman who mourns the death of her son and who has experienced deep trauma from her previous relationships. She establishes an "unnatural" connection or liking of the character of Peter, a Gulf War veteran who is obsessed with the idea of the government implanting parasites ("bugs") in his home and body. The image of these bugs serves to depict the innate fear of the unknown, and both of these character's paranoia and mental illness builds their personal mythology through which they explain the chaotic world in which they live in. Their aluminum foil-lined room represents their own ritualistic, symbolic, liminal and "pure" space. In this safe haven of theirs, they avoid to be "colonized" by the outside force and through this depiction, it is evident that both the play and the film serve to mimic the role of myth as a warning, but also as a tool that distorts the boundaries between what is real and what is imagined.

In the presentation we will attempt to show that similarly to ancient myths, these two texts (both the play and the film), can be read as a warning about the fragility and the borders of human identity, especially when it is faced with systemic and existential dread. The psychological crisis and desperation of both of these characters can be interpreted as a contemporary manifestation of the mythic struggle against the unknown "Other". The story shows how the mind will create a terrifying reality instead of facing a meaningless void when it is forced to exist on the periphery of society.

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The Stranger in the Household: Women as a Source of Fear in Euripides

Keywords: Greek tragedy, Euripides, women, horror, fear, film theory

Abstract: Scholarship about Euripides's women characters has focused principally on the ways they evoke pity by bringing attention to the status of women in classical Athens. Though pity has been well researched, the other emotion integral to Aristotle's conception of tragedy, fear, has not received as much attention. My work aims to consider how Euripidean women evoke fear in the audience. I argue that Euripides constructs women as sources of horror through their disruption of the household, which is caused by their transgressions of the domestic sphere; by acting out of the norms generally accepted for women, tragic female characters, such as Medea, could destroy their husbands' households. Moreover, I argue that this notion of transgression as a source of horror stems from Athenian men's marriage anxieties. As women were liminal figures in their marriage households, not accepted as full members and believed to still maintain loyalty to their natal households, Athenian marriages were

tainted by an undercurrent of fear that the wife could disrupt the continuation of her husband's *oikos*. Since my focus is on the construction of women as sources of horror, I turned to film theory to inform my approach. My methodology follows Barbara Creed's theory of the "monstrous-feminine" as a result of male fears about the female body and stages of womanhood, and Noel Carroll's theory of the monster as a categorically transgressive being. Though my work is focused on Euripides, this particular way of looking at tragic women can be utilized to examine other Athenian tragedians.

Hybrids, Monsters and Liminal Bodies

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The Hermaphroditus Myth as a Litmus Test of Social Morals in Dejan Dukovski's Play *Black Gold (Crno zlato)*

Keywords: Hermaphroditus/hermaphroditus, morals, society, Dejan Dukovski, Oliver Frljić, *Black Gold*/*Crno zlato*

Abstract: The paper analyzes the script for Dejan Dukovski's play *Black Gold* (*Crno zlato*) and its staging by Oliver Frljić at the Belgrade Drama Theater to examine how the play transforms and manipulates the Hermaphroditus myth. With some amplification, the analysis employs a comparative approach rooted in literary theory and theoretical dramaturgy. Dukovski takes the classical myth, shaped in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, to remold and position it within a morally and materially bankrupt familial and patriarchal setting. Society's treatment of the dual-gendered heroine/hero emerges as an indicator of the dominant traits of the community to which Angela arrives after having left as Angel. The dramaturgical-ideational analysis and the focal points of conflict reveal that the narrow-minded patriarchal milieu regards and treats Angela's transsexuality as an abomination while being fully accepting of moral and various other perversions, violence, and prejudices, which persist and mold the setting and people in this small community – accepting them resignedly, with little or no resistance, largely seeing them as a sort of ill fate or problematic inevitability, but never as abomination. In other words, the sheer multitude of those seeped in moral corruption legitimizes the unacceptable, while hermaphroditism, being uncommon, stigmatizes a person as an abomination or freak, eliciting curiosity and repulsion. Introducing into the play the grotesque, human-sized Rat, who peers out at every opportunity, the director highlights the symbolic aspects of this animal, implying an association of the represented milieu with poverty, parasitism, and ill-gotten wealth but also a metaphorical pestilence – the plague or, in other words, the unstoppable spread of moral abomination.

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From Homeric Myth to Artificial Intelligence: Reinterpretation and the Hybrid Habitat of Sirens through the Lens of Posthuman Performance

Keywords: sirens, myth, persuasion, reinterpretation, hybrid character, activism, artificial intelligence

Abstract: In artistic interpretations of the siren myth, creators frequently reference the Homeric tale of Odysseus. In Homer's account, sirens are dangerous hybrid creatures whose voices and songs subjugate the listener's will, promising knowledge that leads to death (Pepe). While Homer leaves the content of the song to the reader's imagination, the myth has been cemented over centuries by the power of seduction and persuasion (Pepe). Contemporary interpretations transform the role of sirens into that of warriors and avengers (Shams), whose hybrid nature (Corti, Shams, Courrioux, and Stourdzé) is shaped by adaptation to a deteriorating environment. Today, sirens serve as a bridge between different realities and worlds (Courrioux and Stourdzé). Rising from the ocean depths, their song no longer conveys seduction to contemporaries but rather an ecological cry of alarm, transmitted by xenogenic sirens in the guise of eco-feminists (Bahaffou). Given their aquatic medium and hybridity, this new feminism articulates itself through hydro-feminism and transfeminism (Bahaffou), making their song a final bastion for the protection of seas, waters, and environmental rights. Building upon Darko Lukić's studies on the evolution of posthuman performance, and taking Kafka's interpretation of mute sirens as a starting point, this paper examines a potential meta-habitat for sirens created through artificial intelligence.

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The Supernatural Creatures as the Other in: *The Dragon's Bride* by Dimitar G. Molerov, *Labin and Dojrana* by Trajko Prokopiev, *At the Hawk's Well* and *The Land of the Heart's Desire* by W. B. Yeats

Keywords: supernatural creatures, the Other, ritual drama, Macedonian folklore, Irish folklore, monster theory, liminality.

Abstract: This paper explores the representation of supernatural creatures as the Other in *The Dragon's Bride* by Dimitar G. Molerov, *Labin and Dojrana* by Trajko Prokopiev, as well as *At the Hawk's Well* and *The Land of the Heart's Desire* by W. B. Yeats. The main aim of the study is to analyse these dramatic, operatic, and ballet works as ritual dramas through their mythological-folkloric allusions.

The methodology combines close reading of the selected works with comparative analysis of Macedonian and Irish folk songs and oral traditions that depict supernatural

beings and liminal figures. In addition to these texts, the anthologies by the Miladinovci Brothers and Kuzman Šapkarev and *The Celtic Twilight* by Yeats will also be used as important folkloristic material for understanding Macedonian and Irish supernatural traditions and their symbolic functions.

Particular attention is given to the representation of monsters and supernatural entities as the Other in opposition to the mortal protagonists, who symbolize the sphere of culture and human order. The paper draws primarily on *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, alongside other folkloric and mythological studies, in order to examine how these creatures embody cultural fears, desires, and boundaries between worlds. Furthermore, the analysis investigates motifs: supernatural beings as mediators between the human and the otherworldly realm, the (im)possibility of love between mortals and supernatural entities, and the unattainability of immortality for humans. Through a comparative Macedonian-Irish perspective, the paper aims to reveal the ritualistic, symbolic, and intercultural dimensions of these works and their treatment of the supernatural Other.

Inverted Worlds: Myth, Comedy and Tragedy

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Two Authors and the Candid Public: Aristophanes, Euripides and Dionysos

Keywords: Aristophanes, Euripides, god on scene, mythourgy, Greek tragedy; Old Comedy; paratragedy; myth; ritual; psychology of literature; Athens; performativity

Abstract: The antagonism between Aristophanes and Euripides has long been read as a literary rivalry or a clash of genres—comedy versus tragedy. This essay argues instead that their opposition constitutes a deeper psychological and cultural conflict: between collective illusion and analytical truth, between ritual cohesion and individual consciousness. Far from being merely adversaries, Aristophanes and Euripides form a mutually constitutive pair whose tension defines the limits of Athenian—and perhaps all—cultural self-understanding. Their relation must have been real in the city and among intellectuals, as represented in Plato's *Symposion*. Both authors use gods in their dramas, comedy and tragedy: Dionysos appears to be the central persona, the public – that is all citizens of Athens put on scene, performing the reception of drama as the institution of democracy. Does the mythourgical use of gods translates some of the supposed theoretical, dramatourgical and psychological conflicts?

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The Tragedian as a Comic Character and the Comedian as a Tragic Character: Aristophanes' *The Frogs*; and Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Life of Molière*

Keywords: tragedy, comedy, parody, boundary, otherness, crisis, intertext

Abstract: Through the prism of the concepts of "Boundaries", "Crises," and "Otherness," this paper offers a comparative reading of two (meta)dramas originating in different eras and cultural contexts: Aristophanes' *The Frogs* (450–388 BC) and Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Life of Molière* (1891–1940). The concept of the "boundary" will be examined through a comparative analysis of the dramatic action, focusing primarily on

the subtle boundaries between the comic and the tragic, the personal and the collective, and the intimate and the public. In both plays, this concept is closely linked to the notion of "crisis" - understood primarily as a need for evaluation, re-evaluation, and critical inquiry. The networks of quotations present in both plays subtly explore the concepts of Otherness and the Other, specifically through the prism of the inter-genre dialogue between tragedy and comedy. The intertextual engagement with otherness in both plays offers a critical distance and insight into the status of drama, myth and art within society.

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Cosmogony and Utopia as Constitutive Elements of the Mythical Frame of Aristophanic *Birds*

Keywords: Aristophanes, myth, cosmogony, paradise, utopia.

Abstract: The 414 BCE Aristophanic play *Birds* represents an innovative blend of mythological and political comedy. The modern scholars have underlined two main sources of the mythical contents, viz. *Titanomachia* and *Gigantomachia* (Dunbar 2005: 7), besides other minor sources (*Homeric Hymn III* and Tereus' myth: Dunbar 2005: 9). In our opinion, a major source of some of the passages can be found not in succession myths, but in cosmogonic myths that remain not only in some epic poems, but also in folktale narrations. Besides cosmogony, the search for a paradise -even provided with anthropological features- becomes a second main elements to build up the mythical frame of the plot.

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Sociolect of the Elder through Plutus' Figure as a Mythical Character and Realistic Representation

Keywords: sociolect, colloquial, archaism, character, myth.

Abstract: This paper analyzes the character of Plutus in Aristophanes' eponymous comedy. The primary objective of this research is to establish a parallel between Plutus' dual representation as mythical character and realistic representation. The selected corpus encompasses a diverse array of linguistic markers, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of how and why Aristophanes portrays Plutus in this specific manner. Methodologically, this research applies modern sociolinguistic

frameworks – specifically those concerning the sociolect of the elderly – to Ancient Greek. By examining various utterances adopted by the character, the study identifies the specific linguistic features he employs. Given the scarcity of existing literature on the sociolinguistics of Ancient Greek, this study innovatively adapts contemporary theoretical models, originally designed for modern languages, to the analysis of Classical texts. Ultimately, the findings reveal that the linguistic choices attributed to Plutus not only serve comedic purpose but also reflect deeper societal attitudes towards aging, vulnerability, and wealth in Classical Athens.

Crisis, Chaos and the Body

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Myth as Pretext, Myth as Incarnation. Rea and Pasolini in the Crisis of the Twentieth Century

Keywords: myth, crisis, borders, alterity, Domenico Rea, Pier Paolo Pasolini

Abstract: *Re Mida* by Rea (1979) and *Pilade* by Pasolini (1967) are two dramaturgical responses to the same historical crisis: the disillusionment with the communist myth in postwar Italy, precipitated by the Hungarian uprising of 1956. Both authors adopt Greek myth as a spatiotemporal distance through which to confront the present – Rea in the Phrygia of Midas, Pasolini in an ideal fourth chapter of the Aeschylean Oresteia – yet with radically opposed strategies.

For Rea, myth is pretext: not superficial pretext, but the premise underlying the text, a catalyst that abstracts reality from the contingent in order to render it in its raw universality. Religion is an almost aesthetic relic, and the mythic veil is systematically torn by references to contemporary Italy, producing an irony that makes crisis into an inescapable cyclical mechanism.

For Pasolini, myth is incarnation: Pilade does not inhabit myth from outside but traverses it from within. The boundary between present and mythic past becomes a perhaps irremediable rift, revealing through myth the tragedy of a historical condition beyond redemption. The relationship with the divine feeds on active questioning and confrontation, becoming an operative dramaturgical mechanism within the work rather than a mere inheritance of its Aeschylean frame of reference.

The figure who collides with a present in which recognition is impossible is the intellectual: Lubuck in Rea and Pilade in Pasolini embody the irreducible alterity of those who belong neither to power nor to the people they seek to defend. A solitude that drama does not resolve but lays bare as an open wound.

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At the Borders of Myth: Body, Spectacle, and Crisis in French Erotic Tragedy during the Enlightenment

Keywords: Tragic myth; erotic tragedy; libertinism; body; desire; impotence; political body

Abstract: Classical tragedy is grounded in a set of founding myths that structure both action and the representation of subjectivity: fate as a sovereign force, the mastery of passions, and the king's body as guarantor of political order. Yet in certain marginal eighteenth-century plays, now largely neglected and belonging to the genre of erotic tragedy, these myths are preserved while ceasing to produce their expected effects.

Drawing primarily on *Les Deux Biscuits*, *Alphonse l'Impuissant,* and *Caquire*, this paper will examine the forms taken by this collapse. In *Les Deux Biscuits*, the myth of foundational rape (associated with figures such as Lucretia) is destabilized: rape is produced through a pharmacological device, replacing fatality with bodily causality. In *Alphonse l'Impuissant*, the myth of the fertile king, guarantor of dynastic continuity, collapses in turn: royal impotence leads reproduction to be organized through sexual substitution, transforming power into arrangement and negotiation. Finally, in *Caquire*, the myth of the despot, traditionally associated with absolute sovereignty over bodies, is displaced: violence no longer produces moral effects, but instead becomes a spectacle of exposed and constrained bodies.

In these texts, such mythic transformations redefine the boundaries of the tragic, which becomes grotesque precisely because myths themselves have become inoperative. Fate is reduced to accident, sovereignty to a failing function, and political power to a series of constraints exerted upon bodies. These plays thus reveal a moment in which myth survives as form while no longer generating the symbolic effects traditionally attached to it. At the same time, they stage figures of alterity — women, dominated bodies, marginalized subjects ; who are no longer merely the objects of myth, now in crisis, but the very sites of its disintegration.

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The Function of Sparagmos in the Tragedies *Bacchae* by Euripides and *Penthesilea* by Heinrich von Kleist

Keywords: sparagmos; Dionysus; tragedy; ritual; will

Abstract: The subject of this study is the transposition of sparagmos, the ritual act of dismembering the body, which is central to the myth of the birth of Dionysus, in the tragedies *Bacchae* by Euripides and *Penthesilea* (1808) by Heinrich von Kleist. On the one hand, in ancient Greek tragedy the victim of the sparagmos is Pentheus, who falls prey to collective violence, as Agave tears her son apart within the Dionysian

thiasos, whose theological logic, however terrifying, ultimately accounts for the violence, which is cosmologically determined and entails an eruption of divine forces, whereby the boundaries between civilization and what lies beyond its domain are temporarily abolished. On the other hand, Kleist's Penthesilea re-enacts the same act of bodily dismemberment, but within a different constellation, one in which Penthesilea herself tears Achilles apart, beyond any ritual context, fusing desire and violence into an indissoluble whole. In this way, Kleist strips the sparagmos of its ritual function: the Dionysian collective is absent, as is the theological explanation, along with the return to consciousness that would redeem the act. All that remains is bare, unresolved violence that the dramatic structure itself cannot absorb. Hence, drawing on the studies of Dionysian ritual and ancient tragedy by Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, the aim of this essay is to show that Kleist's transformation of the sparagmos reflects a crisis of the will, for where Agave loses herself within the divine, Penthesilea loses herself in an abyss that no framework can name or contain.

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Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and Noé's *Climax*: The Crisis and Otherness of the Body

Keywords: Artaud, theatre of cruelty, body without organs, becoming-intense, Gaspar Noé, cinéma du corps, plague, Deleuze, Guattari

Abstract: This paper proposes a structural comparison between Antonin Artaud's collection of essays *Le Théâtre et son double* (1938) and Gaspar Noé's film *Climax* (2018), read through the concepts of becoming-intense and the body without organs from the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The central thesis is that Noé's film constitutes a cinematic actualization of the three fundamental postulates of Artaud's theatre: theatre as plague ("Le théâtre et la peste"), the rejection of the authority of the text ("En finir avec les chefs-d'œuvre"), and the body as pure affective intensity ("Un athlétisme affectif").

In "Le théâtre et la peste," Artaud identifies the plague as a model of theatrical experience: a force that dissolves social organization, functional hierarchies, and the organic order of the body, releasing what has been suppressed beneath discipline. Climax resonates with this analogy: the spiked sangria functions as the plague agent, attacking the nervous system of an organized community of trained bodies, dissolving their choreographic discipline and producing a state of crisis. This is not a metaphorical but a structural parallel, one that Noé establishes through a series of directorial choices

(the rotating camera, the disintegration of narrative causality, the camera as bodily participant) that directly correspond to Artaud's demand for a theatre that produces experience rather than represents it.

This structural parallel positions the liminal space between the disciplined body of the dancer and the body released from its functions as the central point of both Artaud's theatrical project and Noé's film, producing two aspects of otherness: the body estranged from itself and the community turned against itself.

Gendered and Colonial Otherness

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The Myth of the Other Woman in Frank Wedekind's *Pandora's Box*

Keywords: myth, drama, otherness, femme fatale, Frank Wedekind

Abstract: *Pandora's Box* (a tragedy in three acts with a prologue) by the German writer, actor and journalist Frank Wedekind (1864-1918), a representative of expressionism in drama and a precursor of Bertolt Brecht's "epic theater", problematizes the conflict between human sexuality, social rules and artistic freedom.

Starting from the ancient myth of Pandora ("beautiful evil"), as well as from the figure of the "other woman" (Luce Irigaray), the text will attempt to note "all the faces" of the main character, the anti-heroine Lulu - a dancer, whose free and untamed nature "sows evil" in the "male" world, exposing petty-bourgeois morality and hypocrisy, as well as all the weaknesses of social conventions.

Lulu is the prototype of the figure of a "femme fatale" - a beautiful, seductive, but "poisonous" woman who "without mercy" destroys all those who fall into her orbit. In Wedekind's drama, Lulu is the main cause of the ruin, crime, madness and death of a whole bunch of characters from her environment.

Although it dates to the beginning of the last century and is historically tied to the conditions in the then civil society, Wedekind's drama, through the treatment of themes such as fatalism, identity crisis, lesbianism, femicide, etc., is still relevant today.

The re-actualization of the myth of Pandora in Wedekind's drama is illustrative of every act of action that triggers a series of unpredictable situations and misfortunes. Hence the universal meaning and significance, hence the relevance of *Pandora's Box* – as a metaphor for evil and hope that know no time and place.

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Rewriting Medea, Antigone, and Iphigenia: Gendered Otherness, Borders, and Crisis in Contemporary Ancient-Themed Drama

Keywords: Medea; Antigone; Iphigenia; ancient-themed drama; myth rewritings; gendered violence; borders; otherness; citizenship; crisis;

Abstract: This paper examines three contemporary rewritings of Greek myth—Medea, Antigone, and Iphigenia—as figures through which present-day drama rethinks crisis, borders, and otherness. Drawing on my work on the cultural afterlife of Medea and on my study of the new plays *Medea's Burqa* (by A. Flourakis), *Antigone [On Strike]* (by A. Raptotassios), and *Ifigenia in Argos* (by M. Passari), I argue that, in contemporary representations, these heroines function as interpretive sites where gender, violence, citizenship, and victimhood are renegotiated.

Medea is read against the stereotype of the "monstrous mother," reproduced in media discourse and challenged by contemporary theatre;

Antigone reappears within debates on statelessness, repatriation, and the limits of state power; Iphigenia returns as a speaking victim who contests sacrificial logic and patriarchal violence. Across these works, myth becomes a language for staging the woman as stranger, non-citizen, expendable body, or resistant subject. The paper shows how contemporary ancient-themed drama crosses temporal and political borders, translating classical narratives into urgent reflections on migration, gendered precarity, and the struggle to reclaim voice. Reading these three figures together, I propose that contemporary rewritings turn inherited plots of punishment and sacrifice into forms of political critique that expose how otherness is constructed, while opening space for resistance, through the cracks of "crises".

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Aeolus and the Legitimization of Inequality: Misogyny, Classism and Sexism in Euripidean tragedy

Keywords: incest, gender, misogyny, society, equality.

Abstract: The Euripidean drama *Aeolus* has as its core subject a case of incest. This paper offers through the analysis of both the direct and the indirect sources of the play an anthropological reading of the approach to this matter. The mythical plot, and especially the opinions expressed by the character of Aeolus, cast good light on the juxtaposition of different vectors within the construction of the incest situation. Abuse and violence against women appears intermingled with other forms of inequality and subjugation. Our analysis interweaves the data taken from our knowledge of society and legal law in order to achieve an entire outlook of the Euripidean presentation of incest.

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Between Humanity and Monstrosity: Caliban and Colonial Otherness in *The Tempest*

Keywords: Caliban; Otherness; postcolonial criticism; Shakespeare; *The Tempest*; colonialism; Renaissance humanism

Abstract: This paper analyzes the figure of Caliban in *The Tempest* through the lens of postcolonial criticism, as well as other contemporary theoretical approaches closely related to this framework, with the aim of examining how the play constructs the image of the colonial Other. Particular attention will be given to the historical context of the Age of Discovery and early European colonialism, in which encounters with the inhabitants of the New World were shaped through conflicting notions of savagery, innocence, and cultural inferiority. Drawing on the works of Edward Said and Ania Loomba, while also engaging with interpretations by Stephen Greenblatt and other contemporary theorists, the paper examines the relationship between Prospero and Caliban as a dramatic representation of colonial power, cultural domination, and symbolic violence. Caliban will be analyzed both as a subjugated native subject and as a product of Prospero's own imagination of the savage and the Other. In this context, the paper explores the relationship between Renaissance humanism and colonial mechanisms of exclusion, showing how ideals of civilization and knowledge may become instruments of domination. Special attention will be devoted to Greenblatt's concept of Learning to Curse, which interprets language both as a tool of colonial subjugation and as a space of resistance. The analysis will also focus on Michel de Montaigne's *Of Cannibals* and its influence on the play, particularly in relation to the tension between idealized visions of natural humanity and colonial narratives of barbarism, as well as the question of Caliban's humanity itself.

From Myth to Reality

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Myth as a Way to Confront Reality: the Claim for Justice in Tiago Rodrigues's *Hecuba, Not Hecuba*

Keywords: Euripides, Tiago Rodrigues, *Hecuba, not Hecuba*, crisis, democracy, institutional violence, care, precarity, vulnerability, interdependence

Abstract: This paper examines Tiago Rodrigues's *Hecuba, Not Hecuba*, created with and for the actors of the Comédie-Française in 2024, as a contemporary rereading of Euripides' tragedy, recounting Hecuba's fierce struggle for justice after the defeat of Troy, in light of the humanitarian, political, and social crises affecting today's democracies. In his tragedy, Euripides explores the devastating effects of war and places at the center Hecuba, "the most unfortunate" queen of Troy, who, after being enslaved by the Greeks, discovers that her youngest child and last surviving son, Polydor, whom she had entrusted to Polymestor, the king of Thrace, has been treacherously murdered by the very host who was meant to protect him, in order to seize his wealth. Rodrigues takes up at the heart of his play the struggle for justice of this "enslaved and powerless" mother who nevertheless dares to raise her voice against the violation of the sacred law of hospitality and demands reparation for the crime committed against a vulnerable child, interweaving it with the struggle in the "real life" of Nadia, the actress playing Hecuba in the production being rehearsed, whose twelve-year-old autistic son has suffered abuse in the care facility entrusted with his welfare, prompting her to initiate legal proceedings against the State. By bringing these two narratives together, Rodrigues interrogates the contemporary weakening of public institutions and services that fail in their duty to protect the most vulnerable, presenting this failure as a symptom of the broader crisis affecting democratic societies. Written "between the lines" of Euripides' tragedy – which culminates with Hecuba's and the Trojan women's furious revenge against Polymestor and his children, while also questioning the boundaries between the powerful and the powerless, perpetrators and victims, humanity and bestiality – Hecuba, not Hecuba demonstrates the enduring dialogue between ancient and contemporary theatre, in which the detour through myth offers a powerful means of confronting our reality. To address the essential questions raised by both plays, this paper draws on various interdisciplinary theoretical concepts, such as care, precarity, vulnerability and interdependence – concepts that lie at the heart of contemporary debates on democracy and justice, as developed by Joan Tronto and Judith Butler.

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Demythologization of Capitalist Realism in the Experimental Choreography

Keywords: experimental choreography, capitalist realism, pleasure, dance, demythologization

Abstract: One of the "successes" of what Mark Fisher calls "capitalist realism" is its capacity to persuade us that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the collapse of the existing system. In this paper, I discuss choreographies that challenge this condition by inviting audiences into embodied, sensorial forms of speculation about dismantling the limits imposed on imagination by instrumental and alienated rationality. I focus, among others, on Ewa Dziarnowska's *This Resting, Patience*, Flavia Zaganelli's *Placebo Dances*, Clara Furey's *Unarmoured*, and *The End* by Magda Jędra and Kasia Kania, performances in which the principle of efficiency is replaced by the principle of pleasure. By "myth," following Roland Barthes, I understand a cultural mechanism through which power naturalizes its own values and ideologies, making historically contingent social arrangements appear self-evident and inevitable. From this perspective, capitalist realism can be read as a contemporary myth that presents the capitalist order as the only conceivable horizon of social life. The dramaturgy of the performances discussed here does not lead to fulfilment, resolution, or culmination. Instead, it continually invites audiences to engage in collective practices of attentiveness as relational and aesthetic modes of being that, as Anna Tsing suggests, make it possible to move beyond the capitalist logic of progress. Above all, these works generate what Jill Dolan calls utopian impulses: fleeting yet powerful experiences of alternative social relations that emerge in the "here and now," producing temporary heterotopian spaces in which other ways of sensing, imagining, and living together become thinkable.

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A Theatre as a Form of Psychagogia: from Ancient to Modern Interconnections of Theatre, Drama and Therapy

Keywords: Myth, drama, psychophysical actor training, dramatherapy, psychagogia

Abstract: In ancient Greece, at the sanctuary of Asclepius, adjacent to the theatre of Epidaurus, people seeking healing would watch a theatre performance and afterwards sleep in the sacred space of the abaton. At the centre of this therapeutic process was myth, drama and dreaming. The attendance to the theatre aimed to awaken profound questions around the self as well as the social and political crises of the times. Aristotle identifies the art of tragedy as the greatest form of psychagogia, a concept introduced by Socrates meaning the educational art of leading the psyche towards dialectical examination of what is good or true for oneself. Furthermore, since myth and drama evoke in their representations such insightful self-reflections and sociopolitical interrogations, they have been applied in modern therapeutic processes such as dramatherapy, therapeutic storytelling, playback theatre and psychodrama. However, does theatre remain a form of psychagogia that leads the psyche towards an inner dialogue for cultural, political and personal reflections? And how is the actor prepared to embody these myths and drama raising awareness of their liminal and symbolic interpretations? In my practice based research, I argued for the addition, in the actor-training process, of the use of ancient Greek myths as vehicles to encounter creatively the actor's self and psychophysical qualities. The suggestion addressed the necessity for an embodied experience through modified methods of the Sesame Drama and Movement therapy approach, facilitated in a safe and reflexive way, for raising the actor's self awareness and expressivity.

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Disability and Otherness in Seamus Heaney's Adaptation of the Philoctetes Myth

Keywords: disability, otherness, abjection, misfitting, myth, intercultural circulation

Abstract: This paper analyzes Seamus Heaney's *The Cure at Troy* (1991), a modern adaptation of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (409 BC) from a disability studies perspective. Heaney updates the ancient Greek play for modern Irish and global audiences by keeping the classical story's mythic structure and opening it to new ethical/political ideas. In his adaptation, the mythic character Philoctetes brings a long history of physical difference and exclusion into the modern play. Heaney's work reveals how myths adapt to new cultures while still highlighting ongoing fears about vulnerability and difference. This study uses Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's idea of "misfitting" and Julia Kristeva's theory of "abjection" to explain Philoctetes as a figure of extreme otherness. His wounded body does not fit the norms of heroic masculinity, and his condition makes him unbearable to others, leading to his abandonment. By viewing

The Cure at Troy through the lens of disability studies, this paper demonstrates how Heaney turns classical myth into a key lens for examining disability and otherness in both ancient and modern contexts.

Staging Balkan Otherness and Crises

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The Intersecting Crises of Otherness in Black Gold by Dejan Dukovski

Keywords: parentification, addiction(s), toxic family, gender transition, foreigner as a key figure of otherness

Abstract: The interpretative challenge of this paper is to be found in the latest drama *Black Gold - Opium or Money* (2025) by renowned Macedonian author Dejan Dukovski, who continuously explores, presents and moves on the radical edges of actual crisis and destruction as a significant marker of contemporary epoch.
Our well recognised as well as most frequently performed playwright abroad, Dejan Dukovski (on the occasion of his cult drama *Powder Keg*) in a recent interview explicitly states: "The crisis is itself a foundational genre principle and most specific code of the drama - and the Balkans is such a topic from the ancient time until now".
Thus, the Balkans, as a paradigmatic "chronotope" of crisis, throughout history until nowadays is again in the focus of the latest play of Dukovski, which was staged with a great success this March 2026 in Belgrade Drama Theatre, confirming its relevancy both as a creative "generator" and multifaceted challenge.

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Otherness, the Border, and the (De)sacralisation of Space in Goran Stefanovski's Plays *Casabalkan*, *Euroalien*, and *Hotel Europe*

Keywords: otherness, border, threshold, Balkans, Europe, Goran Stefanovski, Mircea Eliade.

Abstract: In the plays *Casabalkan*, *Euroalien*, and *Hotel Europe* by Goran Stefanovski, the dramatic action takes place at and beyond the border, while the characters are shaped as Others through their clash with the institutions of power that deprive them of autonomy over their own actions, and through the disregard for difference shown by members of the dominant culture. This conference paper analyses the ways in which these characters experience migration and exile, how they articulate the feeling that they find themselves elsewhere than where they ought to be, and how

they conceive of the space they have left behind in relation to the space in which they continue their existence. In accordance with Mircea Eliade's understanding of the non-homogeneity of space, the native place functions as a sacred centre — the point through which passes the axis that connects the levels of the cosmos and by which the human being orients itself in the world. Leaving that space casts the subject into a profane, desacralised, unstructured space, into a "no man's land," as some of the characters in these plays express it. The border in Stefanovski's work carries the meaning of what, in the mythical space described by Eliade, is the threshold / limen. Crossing the border, the characters enter a desacralised in-between space (the hotel, the prison, the boat "Casabalkan") in which they feel trapped.

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The City-Devourer: Identity and Otherness in Goran Stefanovski's *Saraevo* and Igor Štiks' *Elijah's Chair*

Keywords: otherness; hybridity; cosmopolitanism; monstrosity; the City-Devourer.

Abstract: This paper examines the mythical figure of the "city-devourer" as a conceptual link between Goran Stefanovski's play *Saraevo* and *Elijah's Chair*, a dramatic adaptation of Igor Štiks' novel of the same title. Its central aim is to trace the complex interplay of otherness, coexistence, liminality, and the ambivalent meanings of hybridity in these two works.

The analysis takes as its point of departure the analogy between Stefanovski's "city-devourer" – described as a creature "with the body of a lion and the head of a man" – and the hybrid monsters of ancient mythology. As beings that destabilize fixed ontological categories through the combination of heterogeneous elements, such creatures are traditionally perceived as disturbing, dangerous, and threatening to the established symbolic order. Yet in both texts another metaphorical protagonist emerges: Sarajevo itself, portrayed as a cosmopolitan and multicultural city. Embodied in the plurality of languages, religions, and peoples, Sarajevo reveals the other, illuminating face of hybridity, one that opens the possibility of a higher civilizational achievement than that offered by monocultural and exclusionary identity logics.

It is precisely here that the central tragic paradox arises. Both in historical reality and in dramatic representation, the city becomes the target of the "city-devourer" because it stands as living proof that difference can not only coexist, but also serve as a precondition for more valuable forms of human flourishing. The paper argues that, despite significant differences in structure and dramatic expression, Stefanovski's and

Štiks' works ultimately converge on the same philosophical insight: the most terrifying contemporary form of monstrosity is not embodied in the Other, but in the impulse to destroy the very space in which different Others can live together.

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Who Is the "Other" Medea? Reimagining Otherness in Post-1990 Balkan Drama

Keywords: Medea, otherness, Balkan theatre, myth reinterpretation, post-socialist drama

Abstract: The myth of Medea, viewed from multiple perspectives, exerts a profound influence on contemporary Balkan theatre. This mythical figure, whose voice through Euripides echoes ideas that have survived from antiquity to the present day, has been interpreted by many directors and playwrights in radically different ways and repositioned on the theatrical stage in order to express new social and political realities. At the same time, Medea has become the starting point for the creation of "new Balkan tragedies" that reflect the anxieties, conflicts, and concerns of the contemporary Balkans.

This research focuses specifically on contemporary plays by Balkan playwrights that illuminate another aspect of Medea: a Medea who functions as a bearer of modern political, social, and cultural otherness in the Balkans after 1990. Through a comparative study of dramatic works that employ the same mythological material in highly original ways, the paper seeks to portray the "new Balkans" and to highlight emerging questions of political, social, gender, and sexual identity. Particular emphasis is placed on the representation of Medea as the "Other" — the foreigner, the outsider, the displaced woman — whose fragmented identity reflects broader Balkan experiences of war, migration, exclusion, and cultural conflict in the post-socialist era.

Myths and Dramatic Visions of the Balkans

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Myths of the Marginal: Otherness and Identity in the Dramas of Goran Stefanovski and Jordan Plevneš

Keywords: Macedonian drama, myth, identity, Otherness, Stefanovski, Plevneš, liminality

Abstract: Contemporary Macedonian drama occupies a special place at the crossroads of Balkan myth, the post-Yugoslav crisis and the constant negotiation of cultural identity. The paper explores how two playwrights who are at the crossroads of contemporary Macedonian drama – Goran Stefanovski (1952–2018) and Jordan Plevneš (b. 1953) – use myth and/or mythological frameworks to examine/reexamine the Other. The Other for Macedonians and the Macedonian as Other. And all this is accompanied by the precarious construction of identity in a world defined by borders, displacement and cultural crises. The paper follows how Stefanovski's dramatic universe inhabits the border zones between East and West, exile and belonging. In parallel, the paper turns to Plevneš, whose works pose the confrontation between humanistic universalism and the violence of cultural differences.

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The Myth of the Balkans Between Crisis and Otherness: Dramatic Visions in *Wild Flesh* and *The Balkans Is Not Dead*

Keywords: Balkans, identity, crisis, otherness, border

Abstract: The Balkans functions not only as a geographical or historical category but also as a cultural and discursive construct shaped through narratives of crisis, conflict, and otherness. At the same time, identity is understood not as a stable and immutable category, but as a process continuously constructed through interaction with its social, historical, and cultural environment. Drawing on Šeleva's observation that "crisis and otherness are important factors in the shaping of collective identities" (Šeleva, 2005: 76), this paper aims to demonstrate how crisis, borders, and otherness participate in the construction of the Balkan collective identity and how dramatic

discourse problematizes and deconstructs the myth of the Balkans. The study focuses on the plays *Wild Flesh* by Goran Stefanovski and *The Balkans Is Not Dead* by Dejan Dukovski in order to address the following research question: how do representations of crisis, borders, and otherness in these plays challenge dominant perceptions and established myths of the Balkans, and what models of collective identity emerge from such representations? The central thesis is that, in both plays, the Balkans is represented as a liminal space marked by constant historical upheavals, cultural transitions, social conflicts, and encounters with the Other, where crisis and otherness function as key mechanisms in the construction and renegotiation of identity. To answer this question and examine the proposed thesis, the paper employs a comparative analysis of the two plays, drawing on insights from postcolonial theory, imagology, theories of liminality, and identity studies, particularly those grounded in a constructivist understanding of identity. The analysis seeks to demonstrate that both plays critically reassess established myths of the Balkans and open up possibilities for a new understanding of crisis, borders, and otherness.

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Between Text, Paratext, and Context: *Black Gold* by Dejan Dukovski as a Paradigm of Contemporary Macedonian Drama

Keywords: text; paratext; context; contemporary Macedonian drama; Dejan Dukovski

Abstract: *Black Gold* is the latest play by Dejan Dukovski, the most widely translated and internationally performed contemporary Macedonian playwright. The play is dedicated, in the author's own words, "to my great teacher, Goran Stefanovski," and premiered at the Belgrade Drama Theatre in March of this year, directed by one of the most influential contemporary European theatre directors, Oliver Frljić.

Written as a form of travesty, dramatic recycling, and critical commentary on several seminal works of Macedonian dramatic literature, most notably *Money Is Murderous/Parite se otepuvačka* by Risto Krle, the play demonstrates how a contemporary playwright can engage creatively and critically with national dramatic tradition and cultural heritage. Through his profound respect for both his intellectual predecessors and his personal mentors, Dukovski illustrates how contemporary drama can reinterpret cultural myths and dominant national narratives without relinquishing their historical and aesthetic significance.

This paper offers a theatre studies analysis of the dynamic relationship between text, paratext, and context in the creation of *Black Gold*. In dialogue with the central

thematic framework of this conference, the study argues that theatre achieves its greatest artistic potential when stories, myths, and dramatic traditions are approached with both critical awareness and profound respect. By examining the interplay between literary inheritance and contemporary dramaturgical strategies, the paper demonstrates how new dramatic writing emerges through an ongoing dialogue with the cultural memory embedded in canonical texts.

Drawing upon contemporary theatre studies scholarship, the paper identifies and elaborates some of the key dramaturgical procedures that characterize contemporary Macedonian drama and theatre.

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From Myth-Making to Metatheatre: Borders, Otherness, and Affective Regimes in Macedonian Drama (*The Macedonian Bloody Wedding*, *The Balkan Is Not Dead*, *Černodrinski Returns Home*)

Keywords: affective theory, Macedonian drama, cultural memory, national identity, demythologization, metatheatre, collective trauma, nostalgia, Balkans, Černodrinski, Stefanovski, Dukovski

Abstract: This paper examines the transformation of myth in Macedonian drama through three representative plays from different historical and poetic contexts: *The Macedonian Bloody Wedding* by Vojdan Ćernodrinski, *The Balkan Is Not Dead* by Dejan Dukovski, and *Černodrinski Returns Home* by Goran Stefanovski. The central argument is that the Macedonian dramatic tradition can be understood as a dynamic field in which myth is not a static cultural given but an ongoing process continually reshaped in relation to historical crises, symbolic borders, and figures of otherness.

The analysis adopts an interdisciplinary approach combining myth criticism, theories of otherness, and affect theory. Particular attention is devoted to the ways in which these dramatic texts generate collective affects—fear, grief, shame, anger, nostalgia, and irony—as mechanisms through which identity boundaries are constructed and sustained.

In *The Macedonian Bloody Wedding*, myth functions as the foundation of national identity, with ethnic and political borders emotionally reinforced through suffering, sacrifice, and collective trauma. *The Balkan Is Not Dead* demythologizes Balkan historical narratives, foregrounding affects of cynicism, violence, and absurdity that expose the crisis of traditional myths. In *Černodrinski Returns Home*, the drama turns toward cultural memory itself: the founding figure returns as a stranger within his own canon, activating affects of nostalgia, distance, and cultural uncertainty.

Through a comparative analysis, the paper demonstrates how the model of otherness undergoes a significant transformation: from the external enemy, through a fragmented historical space, to the otherness of one's own cultural heritage. In this way, Macedonian drama emerges as a space in which myth is simultaneously created, deconstructed, and affectively renegotiated across different historical moments.

Crossing the Border

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Enacting Borders: Myth, Crisis, and Performance in Girish Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain*

Keywords: Myth and Drama, Girish Karnad, Borders and Exclusion, Ritual

Abstract: Myths continue to feature in contemporary dramas, reconfiguring contemporary identity and crises. The interactions suggest new possibilities of interpretation and resilience. This brief paper examines Girish Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain* as a contemporary reworking of myth that foregrounds the intertwined relationship between myth and drama through ritual, performance, and social exclusion. Drawing upon Hans Blumenberg's interpretation of myth in his Work on Myth, as an ongoing response to modern existential uncertain reality, the paper argues that Karnad's adaptation of myth situates myth as a dynamic framework through which crises of identity, desire, and power are negotiated.

Based on a narrative drawn from the Mahabharata, Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain* stages multiple forms of crisis that operate through borders and structures of exclusion. These include the boundaries of caste and ritual privilege, the marginalization of performance and performers within a Brahminical social order, providing a metatheatrical dimension to exclusion, and the constrained position of women whose desires and identities remain subject to patriarchal control.

Through ritual action, embodied suffering, and elemental imagery of drought, fire, and rain, Karnad transforms myth into a performative space where social and existential tensions are dramatized. The paper further argues that *The Fire and the Rain* demonstrates how modern Indian drama continually reworks myths in order to interrogate borders and limits—between purity and pollution, recognition and exclusion, responsibility and power.

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Dreaming at the Border: Myth, Liminality, and the Negotiation of Crises in Calderon's *Life Is a Dream*

Keywords: Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Life Is a Dream*, early modern drama, dream tradition, liminality, power and sovereignty, Counter-Reformation theology

Abstract: Dreams occupy a central place in the cultural imagination of the early modern world, functioning as literary motifs, theological allegories, philosophical thought experiments, and vehicles of mythic meaning. This paper examines the role of dreams in Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *Life Is a Dream*, arguing that Calderón transforms the dream into a liminal space where political, moral, and spiritual crises are negotiated. Rather than serving merely as an illusion or epistemological puzzle, the dream becomes a symbolic threshold where identities are suspended and authority tested. Situating the play within classical, biblical, medieval, and early modern dream traditions, the paper shows how inherited motifs acquire new significance in the intellectual and religious culture of seventeenth-century Spain. The instability between waking and dreaming reflects broader uncertainties about sovereignty, free will, providence, and human existence. Segismundo's passage from imprisoned outcast and feared "other" to legitimate ruler follows an initiatory journey: suspended between opposing states of being, he inhabits a liminal space where identity, authority, and moral responsibility are tested before his reintegration into the political and moral order. Finally, the paper argues that Calderón reinterprets dream symbolism through the lens of Counter-Reformation theology. The proposition that "life is a dream" does not simply question the reliability of perception but presents earthly existence as a provisional condition in which human freedom is realized through moral choice. Read as a convergence of mythic tradition, theology, and dramatic representation, *Life Is a Dream* explores the borders between illusion and truth, tyranny and justice, otherness and community, and ultimately the temporal and the eternal.

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Transgressing and Establishing Borders: Dionysus, Theatre and the Nietzschean Dionysian

Keywords: Nietzsche, Dionysus, borders, theatre, wilderness and civilization

Abstract: The Nietzschean concept of the Dionysian remains alive in drama theory and has become a common place even in popular culture. However, research into borders and transgression in the cult of Dionysus, as well as the origin of ancient theatre and its development, shows that the Nietzschean conceptualization based on opposition between Dionysus and Apollo, and their respective domains (of chaos vs. order, emotion vs. reason) is not supported by recent historical and anthropological studies of Greek religion and theatre. Dionysus is a complex divinity who embodies unifying oppositions related not only to the wilderness, but also to civilization. He is celebrated at nights, in

forests, behind the borders of civilized world, but at the same time he functions as a civilizing force. It is precisely in the domain of his cult, during the festival of the Great Dionysia that the theatre emerged, as an institution of Athenian democracy where critical thinking and civic identity were cultivated. In this presentation I will focus on the opposing aspects of Dionysus and of his cult that enabled the definition of dramatic genres.

Additionally, I am interested if it is possible to reflect on the misunderstanding that originates in Nietzschean concept of Dionysian? Does it have to do with a form of cognitive determinism that operates through binary oppositions? What might the cults and myths of Apollo and Dionysus reveal about Greek models of cognition and are they different from ours? In what way do these questions relate to Athenian theatre?

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Tête d'Or or the Myth of Redemptive Exile: Exodus to the East and Refoundation in Paul Claudel

Keywords: Myth – salvific exile - exodus - East – refounding – *Tête d'Or*.

Abstract: French writer of the nineteenth century, Paul Claudel experienced a sudden conversion to Catholicism that upsets his worldview. Drawing inspiration from the theological myth of Exodus, he bases his perception of humanity on the journey of an exile on his way back to his homeland, eternity. The myth of exile and refounding now appears as the main matrix of the Claudelian work. *Tête d'Or* thus presents this myth, through the character of Simon Agnel who, fleeing the decadent West, resolutely migrates to conquer a dreamlike East. But his imperialist project fails to the Caucasus, a hostile land representing the place of the torture in the myth of Prometheus. The hero, confronted with his finitude and recognizing his weakness, however, ultimately achieves self-reconstruction. The failure of his conquering enterprise stripped him of his pride, which gives him a metaphysical refounding, a spiritual kingship. Grace triumphs in this geographical exile, which becomes a salvation.

Following a multidimensional approach essentially combining the dramaturgic approach, postcolonial concepts, mythocritics, thematic analysis, intertextuality, poetics of space, we can realize that the departure for the East, in *Tête d'Or*, represents the break with an old world declining. This world in crisis instigates the conquest of the East that is not, in reality, a real geographical destination. It symbolizes the origin, the sun, happiness, the dream land to conquer for his salvation. But it is paradoxically in the very collapse of this conquest that its meaning lies, access to spiritual salvation.

Antigone, Resistance and Dissidence

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Saying No or Dying: Woman, Otherness, and Political Resistance in Anouilh's *Antigone* (1944) and Beauvoir's *Les Bouches inutiles* (1945)

Keywords: Female Otherness, political resistance, 20th-century French theatre, gender studies, liminality, the Occupation and Liberation

Abstract: Within a few months of each other, against a backdrop of turbulent historical events, two French plays emerged on the theatrical stage: *Antigone* by Jean Anouilh, premiered in February 1944 in occupied Paris, amid Nazi repression and clandestine resistance, and *Les Bouches inutiles* (*Useless Mouths*) by Simone de Beauvoir, performed in autumn 1945, following the liberation of Paris, the revelation of the concentration camps, and the granting of women's suffrage.

At first glance, they appear to have nothing in common; yet their juxtaposition reveals a shared concern, deeply rooted in their historical moment: the place of the feminine in the face of a political order that excludes it. One invokes the Theban myth of Sophocles, the other resurrects a medieval practice, but both challenge, in their own way, the same symbolic violence — that which renders woman a radical alterity, a stranger to collective decision-making, a stranger to the law. Thus, Antigone refuses alone, at the cost of her life, while the women of Vaucelles refuse together, in the name of a solidarity that finally includes women.

Our study, focusing on the two forms of resistance and the two relationships to myth, aims to show how these two works anticipate and nourish contemporary debates on liminality, identity, and forms of alterity.

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Staging Ethical Resistance: Biopower, Governmentality and the Politics of the Bodyin Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*

Keywords: sovereignty; bare life; biopolitics; governmentality; ethical resistance; otherness; liminality; border; Antigone; post-tragedy

Abstract: This paper examines *Antigone* (1944) by Jean Anouilh through post-Foucauldian perspectives, drawing on the works of Giorgio Agamben and Thomas

Lemke on biopower and governmentality to explore the intersection of the body, governance, and resistance. The study argues that sovereign power reduces the human body to mere bare life; however, paradoxically, this reduction simultaneously reveals the body as a site of potential resistance. Within this framework, Antigone emerges as a figure of the Other, positioned at the threshold of the political community. From a biopolitical perspective, power operates not only through prohibition and law but also through governmental rationalities that regulate and administer life itself. In the post-tragic reinterpretation of Antigone, the body becomes a space where control, violence, and potentiality converge. Here, the body can be understood as a border space between law and life, sovereignty and resistance. Within governmental rationality, resistance emerges as both an ethical and aesthetic gesture. Antigone's decision to commit suicide operates as a withdrawal from sovereign legitimacy, revealing resistance as an aesthetic interruption. Thus, the body paradoxically becomes a site that exposes the limits of regulatory system and signals a crisis of the governmental order. However, her act does not establish an alternative political order but only momentarily suspends the rationality of the administrative system, as the body ultimately withdraws from the possibility of life itself. The paper contributes to existing readings of Antigone by offering a biopolitical interpretation that foregrounds the vulnerability of resistance as an ethical gesture within contemporary configurations of power.

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Against Antigone: Myth Translation and Collective Agency in Andrea Jiménez's *Contra Antígona*

Keywords: Antigone; myth adaptation; translation studies; contemporary theatre; participatory theatre

Abstract: Classical myths continue to circulate intensively in contemporary theatre, where adaptations frequently work as a territory of cultural and political negotiation. Among these myths, Antigone occupies a prominent place as a transhistorical figure associated with civil disobedience and moral justice. While translation studies have extensively examined modern and intercultural rewritings of Antigone, less attention has been paid to performances that challenge not only Sophocles' text but also the interpretative tradition that has canonised Antigone as an unquestioned democratic model.

This work engages with this underexplored dimension through an analysis of *Contra Antígona* (Teatre Lliure, 2026), created by Andrea Jiménez and Victoria Szpunberg. Rather than modernising Sophocles' tragedy, the production explicitly

positions itself against dominant readings of Antigone, questioning heroic individualism and proposing instead what Jiménez calls “collective intelligence”.

Drawing on adaptation theory and translation studies, this work analyses *Contra Antígona* as a multilayered act of translation operating across linguistic, ideological and performative borders. The production transforms the chorus into a participatory civic body composed of volunteer spectators, displacing authorship and destabilising theatrical hierarchy to produce a contingent form of collective myth-making. At the same time, figures traditionally marginalised in canonical interpretations, such as Ismene, gain renewed relevance, complicating the opposition between courage and compliance and foregrounding the unstable limits of democratic disobedience.

Situated within current debates on crisis, borders and otherness, this work argues that *Contra Antígona* reveals myth as a contested and collectively negotiated space where questions of belonging, dissent and institutional critique are continuously translated and reimagined.

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The Antigones: when the revolts overflow the myth

Keywords: myth, theatre, dramaturgy, Antigone, rebellion, rewrites

Abstract: Antigone has been rewritten and adapted countless times, from Sophocles to Milo Rau, without forgetting Anouilh and Carson, always a symbol of the precious balance between rebellion and resilience. Antigone is presented as the culmination of the Labdacids' crimes, the last victim of the lineage's tragic fate. But she far transcends her status as a tragic heroine to embody the struggle against authority and the established order. Antigones, therefore, necessarily exist "on the margins" and become representatives of a chosen, embraced, and militant otherness, but also—and this is their true strength—of loving daughters and sisters for whom love of family is the primary imperative. Claude Lévi-Strauss emphasizes the possibility of myth, a foundational narrative, to develop, insofar as it contains within itself all its variations. The political significance of the Antigone myth is undeniable, and its relevance is evident. This presentation offers a dramaturgical and cross-disciplinary study of contemporary rewritings and adaptations of the figure of Antigone, across several plays and performances, as a feminist symbol of resistance and revolt.