Department of Classics, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
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2 Stratou Avenue
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INTRODUCTION

Martin Vöhler (Thessaloniki), **"Introductory Remarks to Modern and Ancient Concepts of Ambiguity"**.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Joachim Knape (Tübingen), **"Seven Perspectives of Ambiguity"**.

The question of ambiguity leads to many perspectives. The "text" with its structures is just one of them, and that was exactly the focus of literary scholar William Empson ('Seven types of ambiguity'). The keynote, however, goes much further. It deals with the seven most important communicative dimensions of ambiguity. This way of looking at things is complex, and one of the components of the ambiguity complex is the author and his intention. The intention thus arises outside the text. But must we therefore speak of an 'intentional fallacy'?"

SPEAKERS AND TITLES

Stella Alekou (Nicosia), "The Ambiguity of *simulatio* in Ovidian *ecphrasis*".

Chloe Balla (Crete), "Intended Ambiguity in Plato's Representation of Socrates in the *Phaedo*".

Michalis Chrysanthopoulos (Thessaloniki), "Multipliers of Ambiguity: The Use of Quotations in Cavafy's Poems Concerning Emperor Julian".

Lisa Cordes (Munich), "*… ut Catonem, non me loqui existimem* – Ambiguity and Gradual Convergence in First Person Discourse".

Jacqueline Fabre-Serris (Lille), "Double Entendre, Unconscious Desire and Auctorial Intentionality in Some Ovidian Speeches *(Met.* 3.279-92; 7.810-823, 10.364-66; 440-1)".

Marco Formisano (Gent), "*Legens*. Ambiguity, Syllepsis and Allegory in Claudian's *de raptu Proserpinae*".

Stavros Frangoulidis (Thessaloniki), "Friend or Foe? Ambiguity in Apuleius' Tale of Aristomenes (*Met*. 1.2-20)".

Therese Fuhrer (Munich), "Unsettling Effects and Disconcertment − Strategies of Enacting Interpretations in Roman Historiography".

Pantelis Golitsis (Thessaloniki), "Aristotle on Ambiguity and Ambiguity in Aristotle".

John Hamilton (Harvard), "The Ambiguity of Wisdom: *Mẽtis* in the *Odyssey*".

Stephen Harrison (Oxford), "Prophecy, Poetry and Politics in Vergil's *Eclogue* 4".

Robert Kirstein (Tübingen), "Ambiguity as Provocation for Literary Studies. The Case of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*".

Anna Lamari (Thessaloniki), "Sympotic Sexuality: The Ambiguity of Seafood in Middle Comedy".

Michael Lüthy (Weimar), "The Modern Perspective: Ambiguity, Artistic Self Reflection and the Autonomy of Art".

Irmgard Männlein-Robert (Tübingen), "Between Conversion and Madness: Sophisticated Ambiguity in Lucian's *Nigrinus*".

Florian Mehltretter (Munich), "Ambivalent Allegories: Giambattista Marino's *Adone* (1623) between Censorship and Hermeneutic Freedom".

ABSTRACTS

Stella Alekou (Nicosia), **"The Ambiguity of *simulatio* in Ovidian *ecphrasis*"**.

This paper will examine the tale of Arachne and Pallas in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book 6 and will put forward the claim that the famous weaving contest reveals two contrasting conceptions of *simulatio*, in order to engender ambiguity, through a deliberate violation of perspicuity. Arachne, an artist in weaving forms, and Minerva, a master in transforming bodies, both produce antithetical images of power: the embedded *epos* of the Augustan *gravitas* in Pallas' self-congratulatory portrayal presents transformation as a form of punishment and is juxtaposed with Arachne's aesthetically and morally daring reevaluation of divine disguise as a powerful form of deception. The ambiguous nature of the ecphrastic interlude further lies in its motivation, which is both descriptive and rhetorical, realistic in the setting of the groundwork and fictional in its literary composition. Rhetoric and aesthetics are interwoven in a textual tapestry which inevitably unfolds conflicting meanings of poetic *veritas*. The artistic *certamen* results in a rather ambivalent victory for the propagandistic compositional order and a questionable punishment for boastful claims of independence from patronage. To Pallas' image-making Arachne's art responds subversively with criticism, exposing to the readers the double meaning of fictlionalized *hybris* and that of historicized *crimen*. The ambiguity of *ecphrasis* appears then, in reality, as a powerful device to escape censorship, while both Arachne's (wordless) and Ovid's (verbal) *carmina* rewrite history *consilio*. If Ovid's *simulatio* in writing is to be judged as punishable, his work will have warned the readers of the ambivalence and polysemy that lie in the politics and (il)legitimacy of *dissimulatio*. Intended ambiguity becomes then a key concept for our understanding of Ovid's *ecphrasis* in Arachne's account, but also for our reevaluation of Ovid's course of life and tragic end. By focusing on literary, rhetorical and legal ambiguities in the episode in question, this paper will disclose a variety of conflictual perspectives and ambivalent layers of 'violated clarity', which may, paradoxically, 'elucidate' the reader's perception of one of the most famous stories in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Chloe Balla (Crete), **"Intended Ambiguity in Plato's Representation of Socrates in the *Phaedo*"**.

Attention to Plato's art of writing has become an important aspect of Platonic studies. The use of ambiguity can be noted with respect to the use of terms (the lion's share goes to φάρμακον), dramatic action ('role change' among the interlocutors), argumentation (Socratic irony, practice of 'antilogic', but also intended use of fallacy), and, last but not least, characterization and representation of historical figures. After some opening remarks with regard to the importance of the study of Plato for our understanding of the use of ambiguity in early literature, my contribution will focus on the case of Socrates. I propose to argue that along with his development of 'Socratic apologetics', Plato intends his readers to think of Socrates as an ambiguous figure, a charismatic man who shared properties with the professional teachers that Plato considered as sophists, but at the same time paved the way to the unprecedented conception of philosophy that his student Plato was going to introduce. I propose to discuss Plato's representation of Socrates in the *Phaedo* a dialogue in which – as more and more scholars point out – the author uses the occasion of Socrates' death to present his own philosophical agenda. In doing so, Plato intends to claim his Socratic heritage as a 'branding' for his own enterprise. At the same time, he wishes to draw the line between his debt to his teacher and his own philosophical contribution. I argue that intended ambiguity plays an important role in Plato's representation of Socrates, with regard to (a) argumentation and the quest for truth; (b) the criticism of traditional religion from Plato's philosophical theology.

Michalis Chrysanthopoulos (Thessaloniki), **"Multipliers of Ambiguity: The Use of Quotations in Cavafy's Poems Concerning Emperor Julian"**.

C. P. Cavafy very often uses in his poetry quotations and mottos derived from writers, mainly of the Late Antiquity, in order to establish a counterpoint rather than to uphold a point. As the quotations are re-contextualised, the reader encounters two, very often diverging, or even opposed meanings that enhance the ambiguity already present in the poem: the first meaning derives from the context of the Ancient Greek text and the second from that of the Modern Greek one. This is achieved because the meaning of the quotation within the original context antagonises its meaning within the new context. An interesting example examined in the present paper is that of the Emperor Julian the Apostate, whose portrait is developed in twelve of Cavafy's poems. These poems often develop their theme in relation to quotations extracted from Julian's own writings. The issue is usually the conflict between Christians and pagans. The poems take issue with the ambiguities invested in the character of a Roman Emperor who was brought up as a Christian, but who developed a pagan ideology during his adulthood through the reading of the classics. The argument that the paper will put forward is that the use quotations from Julian's own writings creates in Cavafy's poems two opposed interpretations that enhance the inherent irony of his poetry and therefore serve as ambiguity multipliers. Reference will be made to the theoretical formulations in William Empson's study, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*.

Lisa Cordes (Munich), **"… *ut Catonem, non me loqui existimem* – Ambiguity and Gradual Convergence in First Person Discourse"**.

Who speaks? And whose thoughts does the speaker express? Literary first person discourse tends to pose such questions. From antiquity, up to early modern scholarship scholars have thus discussed the relationship between text and author from this point of view: Is the elegiac *amator* telling us about the author's love affairs? Is the author hiding behind one of his characters? Is the opinion uttered by one character to be identified with the author's? Contemporary literary studies have moved away from this kind of questions. Countering earlier biographic interpretations they have proposed several concepts to define the literary *persona* as different from the empirical author. However, debates concerning these concepts in general and individual genres and passages in particular keep flaring up. This suggests that the modern concepts do not correspond to everyone's subjective reading experience. The paper proposes that the reason for this might be that the texts themselves are ambiguous: Literary first person speech tends to blur the boundaries between the inner-textual speaker and its creator. This ambiguity might be not intentional at first. It can, however, be deliberately intensified by ambiguous wording in the text itself, by comments in a paratext or by a commenting statement written by the author in another work. In my paper, I want to give examples of such passages (i. a. from Plautus, Cicero, Ovid) where the ambiguity about the relationship between the inner-textual speaker and the author is intensified. Analyzing the textual strategies used to do that, I will show that the texts often propose a gradual convergence between the speaker and the author which, however, is not clearly defined. To illustrate this strategy of reinforcing existing ambiguity, I want to compare such passages with passages which, on the contrary, try to reduce the ambiguity by giving precise reading instructions.

Jacqueline Fabre-Serris (Lille), **"Double Entendre, Unconscious Desire and Auctorial Intentionality in Some Ovidian Speeches** *(Met.* **3. 279-92; 7.810-823, 10. 364-66; 440-1)"**.

My paper will focus on three passages in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In Book 3, as has been shown, the words of Narcissus, lost after hunting, who seeks to find his companions, are ingeniously used by Echo. By repeating some of these words, the nymph, who has fallen in love with the young boy, tries to create an erotic dialogue. But she succeeds only because Narcissus' words are themselves ambiguous. To be sure Narcissus wants to call a companion, but he chooses equivocal words because he is feeling a strong desire (not recognized) for the echoes of his own voice. This scene anticipates that of the source, where at the beginning Narcissus desires himself without knowing it, as stressed by Ovid with the expressions modelled one on the other: *alternae deceptus imagine uocis* (4.385) and *uisae correptus imagine formae* (4.415).

In Book 7, after hunting Cephalus is used to call the breeze. One day someone who hears Cephalus without seeing him, believes that these calls are addressed to a woman and he warns his wife. In this case also, the misunderstanding is possible because in fact Cephalus' words are in themselves ambiguous, as noted by Ovid (*vocibus ambiguis*, 7.821). In this scene, repeated day after day, Cephalus fantasizes about the breeze coming on his chest by calling this element of nature with a feminine name, Aura, as if it were a woman. In so doing he satisfies an unconscious desire which, as I would like to show, is at the origin of his recurrent hunts.

In Book 10, one may believe that Myrrha is the only one who is in love. Ovid suggests three times that her father, Cinyras is also feeling a desire (but not identified by him) for his own daughter. After asking Myrrha about her repeated refusal to marry, Cinyras responds to Myrrha's ambiguous words with equally ambiguous words. When Myrrha's nurse offers him an illicit and momentary affair with an (unnamed) young girl, Cinyras responds to the nurse's two-way words with immediate acceptance. Finally when he makes love with his unknown young lover, Cinyras spontaneously uses parental names apparently motivated only by their respective ages, but quite adapted to their familial situation.

In all these episodes, Ovid has constructed various scenes having in common that some exchanged words do not have the same meaning for the character who pronounces them and for the reader, implicitly invited to decipher the desire (unconscious) that is at their origin. This is a good example of the narrative strategies conceived by the poet for providing new psychological interpretations in his rewritings of Greek myths.

Marco Formisano (Gent), "*Legens*. **Ambiguity, Syllepsis and Allegory in Claudian's *de raptu Proserpinae***".

What is a syllepsis, i.e. the colliding of two or more meanings in a single word, if not the master rhetorical figure of ambiguity? My discussion starts from the present participle *legens* which appears in the 12 lines preface of Claudian's *de raptu Proserpinae,* in a highly prominent position indeed, namely at its very center (end of line 6). The primary sense of the participle here is "skirting" (the coast) but of course there is an unavoidable allusion to the sense "reading". The *de raptu* is largely considered the high point of Claudian's classicism, not only because of its pagan subject matter, which represents a disturbing element within contemporary triumphant Christianity, but more importantly for its poetic style and technique: the text is pervaded by references and allusions to the classical authors, Vergil, Ovid and Statius in particular. In my discussion, however, I observe this poem from a different perspective, leaving aside questions of the classical models and instead concentrating on its exquisitely late antique allegorical potential. Allegory programmatically affects both prefaces of the *de raptu,* so that they represent an invitation to read the entire poem, i.e. the story of the abduction of Proserpina, allegorically. Beyond its stylistic and formal classicism, ambiguity pervades this poem, for example in the recurrent appearance of themes of the abrupt and the unfinished.

Stavros Frangoulidis (Thessaloniki), **"Friend or Foe? Ambiguity in Apuleius' Tale of Aristomenes (*Met*. 1.2-20)"**.

Both the tale of Aristomenes on the supernatural and the frame operate on two simultaneous levels of meaning, interacting with each other: the level of the story as illustrating the frame and a meta-level of a self-reflexive mode to underscore the truthfulness of the narrative and, by implication, of what the book contains. As a textual strategy, ambiguity, employed to maintain uninterrupted interest in the book and forward the plot, is embedded in both the fabric of the tale and its frame. As regards the tale, ambiguity arises from the simultaneous presence of alternate plans, that devised by Aristomenes and that by the witches. This mingling of differing plots,

pitted against each other, undermines the conceptualization of the situation as experienced by the characters which the audience, on the evidence provided by the same text, are able to detect all along and appreciate implicit ironies. Turning to the frame, ambiguity, also takes the form of simultaneous alternate responses to the same event both as a self-referential means of enhancing the veracity and originality of the narrative and of showing potential audience reception. This is apparent in the debate between the skeptic and Lucius over the veracity and therefore the novelty of Aristomenes' travel tale. Ambiguity thus works as a narrative mechanism, both to augment reader engagement and advance the plot.

Therese Fuhrer (Munich), **"Unsettling Effects and Disconcertment − Strategies of Enacting Interpretations in Roman Historiography"**.

Disconcertment or the intention to cause it can, in the production of literature and art, be considered the signatory feature of the modern era. My paper is based on the premise that such an approach in ancient literature presupposes a distinct rhetorical and poetic practice and can be brought to light by a textual analysis focussed specifically on these features. Its object are the moments (*moventia* or triggers) that produce ambiguity in the process of conveying information in the factual description of events in Roman historiography, focussing on passages in the Nero books of Tacitus' *Annals*. I am interested in the question to what degree the process of 'sending and receiving information' itself offers possibilities for structuring the facts and contents in such a way that the reliable knowledge expected is at once cast into doubt or fundamentally called into question, i.e. to what degree the process of conveying factual knowledge can produce unsettling effects and disconcertment.

Pantelis Golitsis (Thessaloniki), **"Aristotle on Ambiguity and Ambiguity in Aristotle"**.

Aristotle addresses ambiguity proper (παρὰ τὸ διττόν) chiefly in the field of his dialectics, that is, in the *Sophistical Refutations*, but also in the *Rhetoric*. Ambiguity is there seen as a sophistical device with which both the dialectician and the philosophically trained rhetorician should be acquainted, so as to rebuke it or to avoid it. At the same time, the notions of 'said-in-two-senses' (τὸ διττῶς or διχῶς λεγόμενον) and of 'said-in-many-senses' (τὸ πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον) play a crucial role in Aristotle's metaphysics without being directly associated to a vice of language or reason. The present paper aims at discussing both concepts and at providing the background to their distinct use in Aristotle's writings.

John Hamilton (Harvard), **"The Ambiguity of Wisdom: *Mẽtis* in the *Odyssey*"**.

A re-reading of the Polyphemus episode in the *Odyssey* emphasizes the perfect homonymity between "non-identity" (*mẽtis*) and "wisdom, craftiness, counsel" (*mẽtis*) in order to test the limits and expand the scope of Aristotle's discussion of homonymy, synonymy, and paronymy in the opening chapter of his *Categories* and subsequently in his *Metaphysics.* In so doing, the paper not only demonstrates how

Aristotle's conceptions oscillate uneasily between logical and metaphysical considerations, but also shows to what extent the Homeric example undermines the very distinction between a purely linguistic and a decidedly metaphysical account of ambiguity. Moreover, the example of *mẽtis*, which concisely and provocatively links non-identity and cunningness, manifests itself as a paradigmatic case that sheds fresh light on the form and function of intended ambiguity in poetic texts. Finally, in taking the fluid, unstable qualities of the cunning mind at its word, the interpretation of the epic myth as an illustration of poetic ambiguity reveals the inadequacy of any philosophical dichotomy that would cordon logical and rhetorical approaches off from metaphysical concerns.

Stephen Harrison (Oxford), **"Prophecy, Poetry and Politics in Vergil's *Eclogue* 4"**.

The debate about the identity of the male child whose birth is predicted in *Eclogue* 4 in 40 BCE is one of the longest-standing discussions in Vergilian interpretation, going back even before Servius' commentary. Candidates proposed range from potential sons of the future Augustus and Antony, the actual son of Asinius Pollio, Saloninus, and Jesus Christ a generation later.

      This contribution follows recent suggestions that the poem is deliberately ambiguous between possible future children of the young Caesar and Antony, and argues further through a close reading that this ambiguity derives from two particular sources. The first of these is the traditional tendency of Greek and Roman prophecies to be ambiguous in order not to be disproved ('tomorrow a great army will be defeated'); in the case of *Eclogue* 4, this is related to the poem's well-known interaction with contemporary Sibylline prophecies, hexameter poems which influence Vergil's hexameter poem; this connection also in fact explains its resemblances with Isaiah's prophecies of the future Christ child. The second motivation for ambiguity is contemporary political pressure; I argue that the Vergil of 40 BCE is concerned to stay in favour with both the young Caesar and Antony, and therefore produces an encomiastic prophecy which both dynasts might reasonably interpret as being about themselves.

Robert Kirstein (Tübingen), **"Ambiguity as Provocation for Literary Studies. The Case of Ovid's *Metamorphoses"***.

The lecture introduces concepts and models that are developed and discussed in the Tübingen Research Training Group 1808 "Ambiguity". Ambiguity can be found in a wide range of oral and written communication, ranging from everyday language to highly complex literary texts and text corpora. The focus of the lecture is on the analysis of ambiguity phenomena in literature, because here the art character of the text stands in the foreground. Fundamental aspects are the production and reception of ambiguity as well as their strategic and non-strategic occurrence, but also processes of generation and resolution of ambiguity. As a cross-sectional phenomenon which occurs in wide variety of media, ambiguity invites in a special way to interdisciplinary and diachronic comparative studies. In the second part of the paper, passages from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* shall serve as examples. The Augustan poet Ovid seems particularly suitable for this because his poetry is characterized to a large extent by (strategic) ambiguity and, moreover, has a characteristic iconic quality which have

earned him the title of a "visual poet" (Stephen Hinds 2002). In particular, it will look into the ambiguity of the heroic. It is not so much an evaluation of individual figures from the viewpoint of heroism ('Actaeon is a hero *or* anti-hero') that is in the foreground, but the question of how – a level of representation deeper – a language of ambiguity is produced by the text. The starting point is provided by linguistic units which characterize aspects of the 'half', such as words on *semi-* / 'half' (like *semi-vir* / 'half-man').

Anna Lamari (Thessaloniki), **"Sympotic Sexuality: The Ambiguity of Seafood in Middle Comedy"**.

This paper will explore Middle Comedy's use of seafood as reference to obscenity and sexuality. Through a close examination of comic-seafood fragments, my aim is to show how sea foods were desired and fetishized in a sexual way and how the comic references to seafood encompass allusions to the sexual act or sexual objects and aphrodisiacs, and even work as nicknames for a number of *hetairai*.

Michael Lüthy (Weimar), **"The Modern Perspective: Ambiguity, Artistic Self-reflection and the Autonomy of Art"**.

If ambiguity occurs in artistic productions of all epochs, as suggested by the conference organization, the question arises as to whether the same types of ambiguity are involved in the respective epochs. Perhaps the difference between pre-modern and modern art epochs is not found in whether ambiguity occurs or not. The epochal difference is more likely to be found in *other manifestations* of artistic ambiguity. My paper focuses on artistic modernism and will discuss the ambiguity forms that occur here in connection with other concepts that determine modern art production – in particular the explicitness of artistic self-reflection and the insistence on the autonomy of art. When we extend the focus beyond ambiguity to these other essential aspects of modern art production, it will be possible to examine whether there are any modern-specific versions of ambiguity that stand out from pre-modern versions.

Irmgard Männlein-Robert (Tübingen), **"Between Conversion and Madness: Sophisticated Ambiguity in Lucian's *Nigrinus*"**.

Lucian's *Nigrinus* is a complex text which exhibits narrative ambiguity (in the sense of Shlomith Rimmons 1977) and is therefore perceived by modern interpreters either as an autobiographical and authentic portrayal of a conversion to philosophy or as a satirical hyperbole of such a conversion. In a letter from Loukianos addressed to the philosopher Nigrinos, a dialogue between two speakers is embedded, in which one speaker enthusiastically describes his experience of conversion to philosophy, initiated by Nigrinos in Rome, and thereby sweeps along his interlocutor and also evokes his conversion to philosophy.

Recent studies on the *Nigrinus* have focused primarily on the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy, on the identification and evaluation of the numerous linguistic images, literary allusions and pretexts, on the literary embedding in the

contemporary scene of the Second Sophistic of the 2nd century A.D. or on comparisons with late hellenistic and imperial conversion stories. In this contribution, however, the aim is to examine Lucian's *Nigrinus* for his *intended* ambiguity, which requires a satirical and ironic reading of this text. The *Nigrinus* shows numerous ambiguous linguistic-stylistic, generic and compositional irritations, which - so it is argued - are to be evaluated as markers of ambiguity: e.g. cracks or disbalances between rhetorical-stylistic presentation and narrative content, the mixture of different genres (e.g. letter, Platonic dialogue, Protreptikos, comedy), ambiguous masquerades with a view to the speaker ('Loukianos') or the two (anonymous) dialogue partners as well as the addressee of the text, the philosopher located in Rome named 'Nigrinos'. Such intended ambiguity markers are to be analyzed and interpreted as subversive strategies and planned sophisticated interfering tactics that allow learned recipients a satirical reading and a thoroughly critical-sober view of inappropriate, seemingly mad enthusiasm for philosophy.

Florian Mehltretter (Munich), **"Ambivalent Allegories: Giambattista Marino's *Adone* (1623) between Censorship and Hermeneutic Freedom"**.

Marino's epic on the love between Venus and Adonis contains certain elements that were judged problematic in the counter reformation context of its publication in the early seventeenth century; and indeed the book was put on the *index librorum prohibitorum* in 1624. On the surface of it, the objections raised concerned the mixture of sacred and profane subject matter characteristic of the poem, but this in turn can be read as an outward manifestation of the philosophically provocative blend of Platonism and sensualism peculiar to Marino. In an ultimately futile attempt to render his poem immune against censorship, Marino had integrated an allegorical level of meaning into the text itself and, at the same time, furnished it with a paratextual 'allegoria', allegedly written by Lorenzo Scoto, but very probably by the poet himself. Modern readers have tended to marginalize these paratexts, not least because they seem to contradict what the poem itself says, but this seemingly irritating relation between literal and allegorical meaning should rather be read as a case of intended ambiguity, meant to serve a specific purpose. The talk tries to unfold the rich texture of ambivalence and irritation resulting from the interference of the literal meaning of the text, its possible internal allegories, and the external allegory provided by the paratexts, with a view to establishing which were the hermeneutic options offered to the discerning reader and which of the strategies deployed aimed at keeping the censors in the dark. But beyond this horizon of pragmatics, it will also be asked to what extent and in which way the ambiguities produced in this manner form part of the aesthetic texture of the poem as a work of art.

Susanne Reichlin (Munich), **"The Ambiguity of the Unambiguous. Figures of Death in Late Medieval Literature"**.

In late medieval religious poems, dialogues, and plays dead persons and figures of death are omnipresent. They remind the living of the transient nature of man and confront them with their own destiny. On the one hand death is represented as a final fact, which is inevitable, not negotiable and clearly unambiguous. On the other hand the dead and the figures of death deceive the living with their impermanent and

protean nature. The encounter of the dead and the living takes usually place in an unreal atmosphere. Often the texts do not specify, whether the encounter is a dream, an illusion, a vision or reality. Especially the personification of death is a figure, which is highly protean. Frequently, it appears as a beautiful maiden or as a wealthy man and makes offers or promises to the living. As soon as they accept, the figure turns into the personified death. In my presentation I would like to examine this ambiguity of the figures of death, which ambiguously represent an unambiguous fact.

Ruth Scodel (Michigan), **"The Sacrifice of Iphigenia (?)"**.

At Aeschylus *Ag.* 248-9, the chorus begins the final antistrophe of the parodos and concludes the narrative of Iphigenia's sacrifice:

> τὰ δ᾽ ἔνθεν οὔτ᾽ εἶδον οὔτ᾽ ἐννέπω:
> τέχναι δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄκραντοι.

The most recent commentary of Thomas and Raeburn sees the chorus as eumphemistic, unwilling to say that Agamemnon cut his daughter's throat. Others have recognized an ambiguity here (Sourvinou-Inwood in the *OCD*: "In Aesch. *Ag.* 218–49 it is suggested that she died at the altar--or at least that the spectators thought she did.") Yet in the *Cypria* she was rescued (*Cypria argumentum* Bernabé, *PEG* p. 41), while Iphimede in the *Ehoeae* was replaced by an eidolon (*Cat.* fr. 23a. 15–26 + b M–W). So the participants in one version certainly thought she had been killed, and there is no reason to think that they were aware of Artemis' intervention in the *Cypria*, either. Nothing in the prophecy of Calchas at 125-57 states clearly that the sacrifice will be completed as it is demanded, and the later visions of Cassandra do not include Iphigenia.

This choral break-off is therefore a calculated ambiguity of the most basic kind. The chorus surely intends only to avoid narrating the horror, and even if they had reported seeing Iphigenia killed, it would not be entirely certain that she had died. The narrative leaves the hearer with that impression, and yet for an external spectator who is familiar with other versions, the evasiveness of the chorus is a reminding prompt. And if the actual sacrifice is uncertain, while the τέχναι Κάλχαντος are indeed fully reliable, they are also incomplete. There is no doubt of a single past reality—Iphigenia was killed, or she was saved—but there is no certainty what it was.

At 104-6, the chorus claims an authority θεόθεν, yet the audience must be aware that the elders do not have the knowledge provided epic poets by the Muses. They have no access to the divine except through prophecies and signs, and they have no special ability to intuit the mental states of characters. Throughout the trilogy, however, all communication with the gods is limited, and in *Eumenides*, both the Erinyes and Apollo present their own claims and narratives, and there is no authoritative version. The jury's divided verdict means that Athena's vote decides, but the decision cannot resolve the open questions. Is Apollo's account of human reproduction correct? If so, what conclusions should be drawn? If Orestes was purified, how can the Erinyes smell blood on him? The *Oresteia* can be interpreted as an extended meditation on the irresolvable ambiguities of mortal life and moral choice, ambiguities which only become more as the trilogy progresses.

Evina Sistakou (Thessaloniki), **"Postmodernism in Alexandria? Modes of Ambiguity in Hellenistic Poetry"**.

The paper aims at demonstrating how and why ambiguity as a literary device is of paramount importance to the making of what we might call 'Alexandrian aesthetics'. Since it is usually regarded as an equivalent to the broad as well as vague concept of 'double meaning', the first part of the paper discusses matters of definition and also the uses of the term in regard to the analysis of Hellenistic poetry in the related bibliography. The main part of the paper divides the different modes of ambiguity into three main categories: a. those deriving from the language and rhetoric of a literary work; b. those pertaining to narratives and genres; and c. those concerning the various reference levels of the literary discourse. To illustrate these categories of ambiguity it draws telling examples from the entire range of Hellenistic poetry (Callimachus' *Aetia*, *Hymns* and Epigrams, the idylls of Theocritus, the poets of the bucolic corpus, Lycophron's *Alexandra*, Hellenistic epigrams, Apollonius' *Argonautica*). The last part of the paper offers perspectives on how the dynamics of ambiguity informs Alexandrian aesthetics on the whole. Eventually, it draws a parallel between the rhetorical, generic and referential ambiguities of Alexandrian aesthetics, as exemplified by Callimachus' *Aetia*, and postmodernist concerns with epistemology and ontology.

Janja Soldo (Swansea), **"'*Vitae aut vocis ambigua*': Seneca the Younger and Ambiguity"**.

Philosophical writing naturally seeks clarity and precision, defining (and redefining) the terms on which it builds its hypotheses, outlining the purpose and structure of its arguments, convincing its readers or listeners that its claims are true. Hence, ambiguity must be anathema to the expression of philosophical thinking. However, philosophical writing does not always live up to this ideal, most obviously in the work of the Younger Seneca.

My paper will disclose the role that ambiguity plays in Seneca's greatest and longest work, the *Epistulae Morales*. I will show that Seneca pays close attention to ambiguity in his letters and that his concept of "ambiguity in life and in word" (*Ep.* 90.29: "*vitae aut vocis ambigua*") is an innovative contribution to the Stoic theory of ambiguity. Decoding ambiguity, I argue, is an essential aspect of philosophical thinking and writing.

Jenny Strauss Clay (Virginia), **"Traversing No-Man's Land: *Outis* in the *Odyssey*"**.

The name of the hero of the *Odyssey* has been much discussed (e.g. Dimock 1956, Clay 1983, Peradotto 1985). Its absence from the proem is already striking, as is the ambiguity of its etymology. When Autolycus arrives on Ithaca to christen the child in Book 19, the nurse Eurykleia hints that the babe should be named Polyaretus, "Much Prayed For," but his grandfather has other ideas. He derives the name he chooses from the verb o*dyssasthai* and interprets it as "to cause pain and suffering," but the verb elsewhere has a different sense: "to suffer by being an object of divine wrath." One can say that the *Odyssey* as a whole elaborates on the double meaning of the hero's name.

A recent article on the use of *keinos* to refer to Odysseus by Oliver Passmore ("From ΚΕΙΝΟΣ to ΟΔΕ: Deixis and Identity in the *Odyssey*," *CCJ* 2018; 1-27) demonstrates a similar ambiguity in the use of the distal deictic, which suggests that the protagonist's name is ill-omened and hence to be avoided. But *keinos* is also used to describe the absent hero – often, however, in circumstances where he is in fact present, and thus leads to a confusion between presence and absence. Now you see him; now you don't.

Which leads me to my main focus and a special case of intentional ambiguity that constitutes the theme of this conference. I begin from the passage where the Phaeacian king, finally asks the mysterious Stranger his name (*Od.* 8. 550-554) and asserts the universality of human naming. Unbeknownst to Alcinoos the man before him has, at least for a time, been *OUTIS*.   The anonymity of the proem's *andra* and the absent presence of *keinos* culminate in the   cunning (*metis*) disappearance of *Outis*.   I will trace the poem's repeated intentional ploys, plays, and puns, its calculated ambiguities, in traversing the No-Man's Land of *Outis*.

Richard F. Thomas (Harvard), **"Catullan Ambiguity"**.

This paper will explore instances of ambiguity in Catullus, at the levels of syntax and diction, and in connection with naming and characterizing the various figures who appear on the Catullan stage. The paper will give special attention to the activation of ambiguity by means of intratextual poetics. Finally, the paper will focus on the critical struggle over the very presence of ambiguity and situate that struggle in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, a text with which Catullus may have been familiar.

Bram van der Velden (Leiden), "**The Latin Commentary Tradition on 'Inclusive' Intended Ambiguity**".

In the Latin commentary tradition, we find comments on types of intended ambiguity familiar to us from ancient rhetorical criticism, such as jokes and puns or 'safe' criticism. These ambiguities can be said to be 'exclusive' ambiguities, whereby there is a 'surface' and a 'hidden' meaning of a word or phrase. The 'hidden' meaning in these cases is the more 'real' one, and a successful interpretation consists in the reader 'discovering' that this is the case.

In this talk, however, I will focus on 'inclusive ambiguities', whereby there is no such hierarchy. In this case, the 'text producer' is seen as providing multiple meanings simply to say several things at once. The canonical texts of ancient literary criticism do not mention this kind of ambiguity, probably because they would consider it a form of unclarity which a text producer should avoid.

The Latin scholia, by contrast, often remark on this kind of 'intensification of meaning' with phrases such as *utrumque conuenit ad intellectum* and *utrumque hoc loco significat*. They do so both for semantic and for syntactic ambiguities. Often, they will even explicitly praise this use of intended ambiguity as 'elegant' or 'good'.

In my paper, I will focus on the discrepancy between the commentary tradition and other forms of ancient literary criticism in this regard. I attempt to explain it with the following contentions: (1) not all rhetorical precepts apply to the ancient criticism of poetry; (2) ancient commentaries need to deal with the text as a whole, line by line, and therefore also to tackle material that could be conveniently left out of a treatise;

and finally (3) ancient commentaries generally operate from the assumption that the poet is 'right' and will therefore often not speak of interpretative problems but of intended ambiguities indicative of the poet's skill instead.

Martin Vöhler (Thessaloniki), **"Intended Ambiguity? The Presentation of Empedocles in Diogenes Laertius (VIII, 51–77)"**.

From ancient to modern times, both scholars and poets considered Empedocles' life and work as paradoxical and contradictory. In "On Nature" the philosopher explains the laws of nature in a scientific way. On the contrary, in his "Purifications" the narrator (a "fallen god") promotes a religious program including prohibitions against certain foods and the reincarnation of souls. In Empedocles' thinking science and religion, heaven and earth, love and hate are deeply connected. Presenting his life and death, Diogenes Laertius applied some ambiguities, that attracted his famous readers (Brecht, Nietzsche, Hölderlin) to reinvent the fascinating character. This paper investigates these ambiguities in Diogenes' biography.

Antje Wessels (Leiden), **"'*Liber esto*'– Wordplay and Ambiguity in Petronius' *Satyricon*"**.

Petronius's *Satyricon* presents a highly sophisticated mix of genres which aims at opening up new, hybrid spaces of expression on multiple levels. Combining verse and prose, the work playfully addresses and intermingles features of the novel, the satire, and the satyr play. In re-reading the tradition, it reformulates and unsettles conventional ascriptions of material and meaning, exploring possibilities for undermining unambiguous interpretations. Among the many techniques employed in the *Cena Trimalchionis*, the centrepiece of the fragment transmitted, is the application of wordplay.

Wordplay enables a collision of conceptual areas that basically belong to different fields and cannot be conjoined or synthesized, be it for logical or moral reasons. At the same time, in resulting from the material properties of words themselves, wordplay disrupts the common function of language as representing a pre-existing thought and thereby appears to absolve the author from any moral responsibility. Specifically, this absolution seems to obtain with examples of wordplay that are based on a word's alleged ambiguity—that is, with wordplays that succeed in opening up a new semantic space, without, however, changing the sequence of letters that compose the terms. Yet even in these cases, there is arguably some intention at work: If a word's alleged ambiguity discloses a new or unexpected thought, this indefiniteness must be regarded as somehow purposeful. A word's potential may be made responsible for the production of an illicit thought, but it is still the extradiegetic author's or an intradiegetic character's decision to make the word's potential discernible in the first place.

In my paper I shall discuss the relation between ambiguity, wordplay and responsibility by demonstrating how Petronius' *Satyricon* employs intended ambiguity in order to question common ascriptions of meaning or even to re-arrange crucial elements of the social setting, including the social status of a character.