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Organized Panel Session

China and Inner Asia

J011: Performative Texts: Early and Early Medieval Chinese Perspectives on Intertextuality



Thursday, March 25, 2021



8:30am – 10:00am EDT

Organizer(s)



Tobias Zuern

Washington University in St. Louis, United States

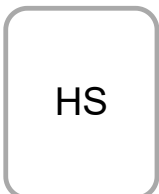
Chair(s)



Wendy Swartz

Rutgers University-New Brunswick, United States

Paper Presenter(s)



Hsiang-Lin Shih

St. Olaf College, United States



Tsung Kei Wong

Princeton University, United States



Tobias Zuern

Washington University in St. Louis, United States



Nicholas Williams

University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Discussant(s)



Wendy Swartz

Rutgers University-New Brunswick, United States

Session Abstract: Nowadays, the term “intertextuality” is mainly used as an umbrella term for any text-text relationship in philological research. While most scholars perpetuate such a logocentric perspective of the theory that Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes developed in the late 1960s, they ignore the fact that neither Kristeva nor Barthes solely focused on written or printed texts. They also had other cultural aspects in mind, for every text inevitably emerges within a system of cultural practices.

This chronologically organized panel follows their transdisciplinary perspectives and proposes that we may understand intertextuality as an interaction of “cultural textures.” Shih Hsiang-Lin, for example, proposes that agricultural references in the *Shi jing* work as hyperlinks that the *Zhou li* activated to evoke and propagate a Zhou identity. Tsung Kei Wong argues that intertextuality functions as a pedagogical device in the *Huainanzi*, allowing the reader to experience the process of accumulative learning (*jixue*) as laid out in the *Xunzi*. Tobias Zürn reads the *Huainanzi*’s intertextuality as a literary strategy to weave together an efficacious, *wuwei*-performing scripture. And Nick Williams explores how intertextuality serves as a tool in Lu Ji’s “Wen fu” to build a spiritual journey that connects the author/reader with the Way.

By accentuating intertextuality's underlying association with cultural practices like identity construction, experiential learning, weaving, non-action, and roaming in early and early medieval China, these papers provide some premodern Chinese voices with the power to illuminate, unsettle, or even provincialize our current theoretical discourse that mainly attributes rather static properties to "text-text" relationships.

Presentations:



Across the Gateless Barriers: Hyperlinked Farming Poetry in the Shi jing
Paper Presenter: Hsiang-Lin Shih – St. Olaf College



Reading Huainanzi, Becoming Xunzi: Reading, Intertextuality, and Praxis in Early China
Paper Presenter: Tsung Kei Wong – Princeton University



Writing as Weaving: Intertextuality and the Huainanzi's Self-Fashioning as a Powerful Embodiment of the Way
Paper Presenter: Tobias B. Zuern – Washington University in St. Louis



Chinese Intertextuality in Light of Lu Ji's "Wen fu"
Paper Presenter: Nicholas Williams – University of Hong Kong