CALL FOR PAPERS

Comparative Literature and Religious Studies Roundtable

XXII Congress of ICLA

July 29-August 2, 2019

University of Saint Joseph, Macau, China

Organized by

Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies Research Committee

Institute for the Study of Christian Culture, Renmin University of China

Sponsored by

School of Liberal Arts, Renmin University of China

University of Saint Joseph, Macau

**THE SACRED AND THE EVERYDAY**

Concept Note

The Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies Research Committee together with the “Humanities and Religious Studies” annual workshop supported by the Institute for the Study of Christian Culture and the School of Liberal Arts of Renmin University of China would like to announce that the theme of the Comparative Literature and Religious Studies Roundtable of XXII Congress of ICLA is “The Sacred and the Every Day.” This topic is intended to establish an interactive conversation among scholars from different fields. What is the sacred? In today's secularized world, can there still be a sacred when "God is dead" (Nietzsche) and "the gods have fled" (Heidegger)? If so, how do we revisit, talk about and present the sacred?

Is the sacred merely an empty and deceptive grand narrative, while everyday life alone is substantial and sincere? Or, does the sacred imply the sublime and the solemn, its values and status unquestionable and unchallengable, while secular everyday life is mediocre, trivial, and even, in Heidegger’s term, “falling”?

What is the everyday? An ambiguous sphere that we are very familiar with and therefore ignorant about. The everyday - ordinary people and ordinary life - took a long time to become a truly important and serious theme in literature and art. In the West, for instance, the representation of the everyday first entered art through the Dutch school of the 16th century, and then appeared in novels and dramas on a large scale during the Enlightenment. In the 19th century, the literary and artistic presentation of the everyday reached its first peak in realism; before then, it had to hide in the comedic genres to which classicism assigned it. In the words of the German comparative literary scholar Erich Auerbach, “the realistic methods of depicting daily life were incompatible with the sublime and had a place only in comedy.” Therefore, everyday life has always been considered to be far away, separated from the sacred which is solemn, serious and awesome.

Philosophically, the affirmation and analysis of the everyday comes much later. It was not until the second half of the 20th century that important thinkers such as French historian [Fernand Braudel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fernand_Braudel), philosophers Henri Lefebvre, Michel De Certeau and others, began to systematically examine everyday life in theory and found “the critique of everyday life”, “everyday life theory” and “research into everyday life.” It was in this context that the French surrealist writer and anthropologist Michel Leiris put forward a provocative topic, “the sacred in everyday life,” echoing Auerbach’s observation of the Bible: “the sublime influence of God here reaches so deeply into the everyday that the two realms of the sublime and the everyday are not only actually unseparated, but basically inseparable.”

What is the sacred? What is the everyday? What is the relationship between the sacred and the everyday? We invite participants to explore any of the above topics, or related issues arising from them, in their own fields (literature, religion, philosophy, art, cultural studies, etc.)

Application details:

• Abstracts of c. 300 words (in 12 point, single space Times New Roman), along with the presenter’s designation, affiliation, and email address, may be sent to:

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