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SFOU Grant Report

On 19 December 2018 I applied to the Swiss Friends of Oxford University for a grant to attend the 8th Conference of the European Society of Comparative Literature in Lille, France, on 28-31 August 2019. I am very grateful that I was granted CHF 500.-, without which I would not have been able to cover the costs.

My conference paper, “The Work of Art in Contemporary Fiction: Yanagihara and Kang”, was scheduled for the first day of the conference on Monday, 26 August. The conference dates were changed after my application, but please take a look at the attached conference program for proof. My talk was met with a lot of interest by the international community in Lille. Indeed, in the panel discussion after all three papers it was my talk that received the most questions and comments. The two other speakers in my panel, Milián Orsolya (from Szeged) and Irene Pelka (from Bonn), held intriguing papers which helped me approach my own subject from a new angle. The three of us went for dinner that day in order to further discuss the concept of ‘ekphrasis’, which all of our papers had in common. Their helpful suggestions and the engaged conversation during our panel were incredibly helpful. Indeed, I am now in the process of transforming that talk into one of my thesis chapters and this chapter would not have the focus it has now if I hadn’t attended this conference. Apart from the networking, I was also able to extend and improve my research project by attending this conference.

I stayed for another full day to listen to other people’s papers and one more day to do a bit of sightseeing in Lille. Amongst other cultural activities, I also went to the Palais des Beaux Arts. My wonderful stay in Lille (Sunday, 25 August – Wednesday, 28 August) and conference attendance would not have been possible without the help of SFOU. Thank you very much!

With my best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Sofie Behluli'.

Sofie Behluli