



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

Old Gloves - A 20th Century Saga

On Sunday October 22, at 3:00 PM, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents author *Beatriz Badikian Gartler*, in a reading from her book titled “*Old Gloves–A 20th Century Saga*”. The event will be held at the Four Points Sheraton hotel, 10249 West Irving Park Road at Schiller Park

The novel is the story of two families, one Armenian and one Greek, forced out of Turkey, uniting by marriage in Greece, and trying to assimilate into a succession of new nations and cultures on three continents over six decades. After surviving the horrific death march across the Turkish countryside, the families settle first in Greece, then in Argentina, California, and finally Chicago. The diary-like frame of the novel is in the voice of the young poet daughter who is recording the stories of the family saga. The characters are drawn with unflinching honesty and a humanity that embraces the flaws and foibles of family members and friends. The language is spare, bringing settings and action to life without sentimentality or overwrought diction. This clarity of language serves to heighten the emotions of the characters and the horror of some of the early scenes of the death march. Avoiding the prose equivalent of cinematic gore, Badikian Gartler achieves greater and more meaningful levels of expression by showing how the characters adopt strategies of diversion and indirection to cope with the unthinkable. This is the work of a seasoned writer and a careful observer of human behavior at the levels of interpersonal, societal, and historical interactions.

The story is especially poignant and timely as the history and cultures of the Middle East are more prominent and important in the minds of thoughtful Americans, as Turkey is moving closer in economic and political terms to Western Europe, and as the engagement between North and South America develops in complex cultural, economic, and technological ways.

Beatriz Badikian Gartler, a Latina writer of Greek and Armenian ancestry, was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and has lived in Chicago since 1970. In 1994 Dr. Badikian Gartler earned her Ph.D. in Creative Writing from the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she specialized in poetry and multiethnic literature.

From 1994 to 2001, Dr. Badikian Gartler was a faculty member at Roosevelt University where she taught Literature, Writing and Women's studies. In 1998 Roosevelt University's English department launched its M.F.A. in Creative Writing and Dr. Badikian Gartler participated in its organizing and curriculum development.

Currently, Dr. Badikian Gartler teaches an Introduction to U.S. Latino Literature at Northwestern University, and she writes writing seminars for the Newberry Library Lyceum Series. She has always been a popular performer around the Chicago poetry circuit of galleries, bookstores, libraries, universities, and community centers.

She is the author of two collections of poetry: *MapMaker*, and *MapMaker Revisited: New and Selected Poems*; a novel, *Old Gloves: A 20th Century Saga*, and a chapbook of poetry, *Akewa is a Woman*. Her poetry has been published in numerous journals including: *Third Woman*, *The American Review*, *Spoon River Quarterly*, *Hammers*, *Emergency Tacos*, *Pleiades*, *Lucky Star*, *Ruptures*, *Imagine*, *Shards of Light*, *Tonantzin*, *Haymarket*, *Ecos*, *The Beast in a Cage of Words*, *Iowa Woman International Issue*, *The Poetry Connection*, and *La Raza*. She has also published numerous articles, short stories, reviews and essays in publications, which vary from local newspapers to *The New York Times* and *The Journal of American Culture*.

Chicago Humanities Festival

In a spirit of unvarnished and direct inquiry, the 17th Annual Chicago Humanities Festival addresses the theme of "Peace And War: Facing Human Conflict." It examines, through the arts and sciences, the many aspects of human accord and conflict—from ancient times to the present day; from the political to the personal; on the battlegrounds, both literal and metaphorical. This year's festival is scheduled from October 28 - November 12, 2006.

In the context of the Festival, Hellenic Link–Midwest, in partnership with the Chicago Humanities Festival, present a series of events on Peace and War inspired by ancient Greece.

Homer's *Iliad* is the first great epic of war, and one of the great works of Western literature. First written down more than 2500 years ago, it retains its relevance with readers and artists today. In the spirit of the 2006 Festival theme of “*Peace And War*,” a series of lectures, readings, and performances relating to the *Iliad* will be presented, in recognition of its central place in our conception of war and its historical and cultural impact. In particular, we will consider how scholars and artists attempt to “translate” the text for a modern sensibility while working to uncover the roots of its power and mystery.

Stanley Lombardo: An Iliad for Today

Saturday, November 4; 1:30 - 2:30 PM at Chicago Public Library, Harold Washington Library Center, 400 South State Street.

Lombardo, professor of classics at the University of Kansas, began his "refashioning" of Homer's epic war poem as a set of scripts for solo performances he was giving to students and other audiences, eventually publishing it in 1997 to wide acclaim. His version possesses some of the original qualities that must have characterized the text when it existed only in oral form. Professor Lombardo will both read from and discuss his reworking of the great classic.

Aurea: War Music

Saturday, November 4; 8:00 - 9:30 PM at Merit School of Music, 38 South Peoria Avenue.

This 80-minute theater piece brings to life - through spoken word, choreographed movement, costume, song, and instrumental accompaniment - the adaptation by celebrated British poet Christopher Logue of Homer's great epic of war and violence, the Iliad. Aurea is a performing group based in Providence, R.I. that draws its artists from the Brown University community. The group's composer, Paul Phillips, is a distinguished professor of music at the school. Actors are joined by musicians onstage, with the composer "conducting" the action.

James Redfield, David Tracy: Iliad, Poem of War?

Sunday, November 12; 12:00 - 1:00 PM at Chicago Cultural Center, Claudia Cassidy Theater, 77 East Randolph Street.

Two distinguished classicists from the University of Chicago discuss the various ways modern and post-modern scholars and literary critics have approached and interpreted Homer's epic. The program will include a discussion of the seminal essay of analysis "The Iliad, or the Poem of Force" by French philosopher Simone Weil.

Derek Collins: The Iliad as Performance

Saturday, November 4; 3:30 - 4:30 PM at Chicago Public Library, Harold Washington Library Center, 400 South State Street.

This associate professor of Greek and Latin, University of Michigan, has studied the documented history of "competitive" oration and performance in ancient Greece. He recalls how the rhapsodic performance of epics such as Homer's Iliad was a great sport requiring a high degree of skill, cunning, and improvisational flair. In effect, these were the first "poetry slams."

The other 2 programs with Greek content are:

Norma Thompson: The Rhetoric of War

Saturday, November 4; 2:00 - 3:00 PM at Alliance Française de Chicago, 54 West Chicago Avenue.

The associate professor of political science and associate director of the Whitney Humanities Center at Yale considers the ancient historians Herodotus and Thucydides, tracing connections between today's American war rhetoric and the long-ago struggle in democratic Athens to face down language indicating an encroaching imperialism

Cynthia Farrar: The Collective Choice

Saturday, November 4; 12:00 - 1:00 PM Alliance Française de Chicago, 54 West Chicago Avenue.

The director of a program on deliberative democracy at Yale's Institution for Social and Policy Studies examines the role of democratic publics in decisions about war, in ancient Athens and modern America.

For more information about the complete program of the 17th annual Chicago Humanities Festival, please visit our website, helleniclinkmidwest.org, and click on *Annual Chicago Humanities Festival*. Hellenic Link – Midwest will provide 100 free tickets to its members on a first come first served basis. These tickets will be for the events: Aurea: War Music, and The Rhetoric of War. For these tickets please contact our treasures George Alexopoulos at 847 498-3686. The ticket for the other events will be \$5 to \$10. Hellenic Link – Midwest strongly encourages its members to attend as many of the events of the Festival as possible. They are a treasure of information, education and entertainment, and they are very well timed to provoke serious and critical thinking on the violence that plagues our time.

From Our History

The Destruction Of Smyrna (September, 1922)

This year, in this section of our Newsletter we will present excerpts from George Horton's book "The Blight of Asia". George Horton was Consul of the United States in Smyrna, and an eyewitness of the ethnic cleansing committed by the Turks against the Greek and Armenian population of Smyrna.

The last act in the fearful drama of the extermination of Christianity in the Byzantine Empire was the burning of Smyrna by the troops of Mustapha Khemal. The murder of the Armenian race had been practically consummated during the years 1915-1916, and the prosperous and populous Greek colonies, with the exception of Smyrna itself, had been ferociously destroyed. The idea has been widely circulated, and seems to be gaining credence, that the Turk has changed his nature overnight.

The destruction of Smyrna happened, however, in 1922, and no act ever perpetrated by the Turkish race in all its bloodstained history, has been characterized by more brutal and lustful features, nor more productive of the worst forms of human sufferings inflicted on the defenseless and unarmed. It was a fittingly lurid and Satanic finale to the whole dreadful tragedy. The uncertainty which at one time existed in the public mind as to the question, "Who burned Smyrna?" seems to be pretty well dispelled. All statements that tend to throw doubt on the matter can be traced to suspicions and interested

sources. The careful and impartial historian, William Stearns Davis, to whom reference has already been made in this work, says: "The Turks drove straight onward to Smyrna, which they took (September 9, 1922) and then burned".

Also, Sir Valentine Chirol, Harris Foundation lecturer at the University of Chicago in 1924, made this statement: "After the Turks had smashed the Greek armies they turned the essentially Greek city (Smyrna) into an ash heap as proof of their victory".

Men of this stamp do not make assertions without having first gone carefully into the evidence.

We have already seen by what methods the Greeks had been eliminated from the coastal region of Asia Minor. The murders and deportations have been described by which a flourishing and rapidly growing civilization had been destroyed, villages and farmhouses wrecked and vineyards uprooted. Large numbers of Greek, however, who had managed to escape by sea, returned to their ruined homes after the landing of the Hellenic army in May of 1919, and set to work industriously to restore their ruined properties.

Mustapha Khemal now determined to make a complete and irretrievable ruin of Christianity in Asia Minor. *Carthago delenda est*. The plan, revealed by its execution, was to give the city up for some days to lust and carnage; to butcher the Armenians, a task which has always given a special pleasure to the Turk; to burn the town and to carry the Greek men away into captivity.

The main facts in regard to the Smyrna fire are:

1. The streets leading into the Armenian quarter were guarded by Turkish soldier sentinels and no one was permitted to enter while the massacre was going on.

2. Armed Turks, including many soldiers, entered the quarter thus guarded and went through it looting, massacring and destroying. They made a systematic and horrible "clean up", after which they set fire to it in various places by carrying tins of petroleum or other combustibles into the houses or by saturating bundles of rags in petroleum and throwing these bundles in through the windows.

3. They planted small bombs under the paving stones in various places in the European part of the city to explode and act as a supplementary agent in the work of destruction caused by the burning petroleum which Turkish soldiers sprinkled about the streets. The petroleum spread the fire and led it through the European quarter and the bombs shook down the tottering walls. One such bomb was planted near the American Girls' School and another near the American Consulate.

4. They set fire to the Armenian quarter on the thirteenth of September, 1922. The last Greek soldiers had passed through Smyrna on the evening of the eighth, that is to say, the Turks had been in full, complete and undisputed possession of the city for five days before the fire broke out and for much of this time they had kept the Armenian quarter cut off by military control while conducting a systematic and thorough massacre. If any Armenians were still living in the localities at the time the fires were lighted they were hiding in cellars too terrified to move, for the whole town was overrun by Turkish soldiers, especially the places where the fires were started. In general, all the Christians of the city were keeping to their houses in a state of extreme and justifiable terror for themselves and their families, for the Turks had been in possession of the city for five days, during which time they had been looting, raping and killing. It was the burning of the houses of the Christians which drove them into the streets and caused the fearful scenes of suffering which will be described later. Of this state of affairs, I was an eye-witness.

5. The fire was lighted at the edge of the Armenian quarter at a time when a strong wind was blowing toward the Christian section and away from the Turkish. The Turkish quarter was not in any way involved in the catastrophe and during all the abominable scenes that followed and all the indescribable sufferings of the Christians, the Mohammedan quarter was lighted up and gay with dancing, singing and joyous celebration.

6. Turkish soldiers led the fire down into the well-built modern Greek and European section of Smyrna by soaking the narrow street with petroleum or other highly inflammable matter. They poured petroleum in front of the American Consulate with no other possible purpose than to communicate the fire to that building at a time when C. Claflin Davis, Chairman of the Disaster Relief Committee of the Red Cross, Constantinople Chapter, and others, were standing in the door. Mr. Davis went out and put his hands in the mud thus created and it smelled like petroleum and gasoline mixed. The soldiers seen by Mr. Davis and the others had started from the quay and were proceeding toward the fire.

7. Dr. Alexander Maclachlan, President of the American College, and a sergeant of American Marines were stripped, the one of his clothes and the other of a portion of his uniform, and beaten with dabs by Turkish soldiers. A squad of American Marines was fired on.

(to be continued)

From The Riches Of Our Cultural Heritage

Poetry by Zoe Karelli

Η ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ

Εγώ γυναίκα, η άνθρωπος,
ζητούσα το πρόσωπό Σου πάντοτε,
ήταν ως τώρα τού ανδρός
και δεν μπορώ αλλιώς να το γνωρίσω.
ποιός είναι και πώς πίο πολύ μονάχος,
παράφορα, απελπισμένα μονάχος,
τώρα, εγώ ή εκείνος?
πίστεψα πως υπάρχω, θα υπάρχω,
όμως τότε υπήρχα δίχως του
και τώρα, πώς στέκομαι, σε ποιό φώς,
ποιός είναι ο δικός μου ακόμα καϋμός?
Ω, πόσο διπλά υποφέρω, χάνομαι διαρκώς,
όταν Εσύ οδηγός μου δεν είσαι.
Πώς θα δω το πρόσωπό μου,
την ψυχή μου πώς θα παραδεχτώ,
όταν τόσο παλεύω
και δεν μπορώ ν' αρμοστώ.
«Ότι διά Σού αρμόζεται γυνή τω ανδρί».
Δεν φαίνεται ακόμα το τραγικό
τού απρόσωπου, ούτε κι' εγώ
δεν μπορώ να το φανταστώ ακόμα, ακόμα.
Τι θα γίνει που τόσο καλά,
τόσα πολλά ξέρω και γνωρίζω καλλίτερα,
πώς απ' το πλευρό του δεν μ' έβγαλες.
Και λέω πώς είμαι ακέριος άνθρωπος
και μόνος. Δίχως του δεν εγινόμεουν
και τώρα είμαι και μπορώ
κι' είμαστε ζεύγος χωρισμένο, εκείνος
κι' εγώ έχω το δικό μου φως,
εγώ ποτέ, σελήνη,
είπα πως δεν θα βαστώ απ' τον ήλιο
κι' έχω τόσην υπερηφάνεια
που πάω τη δική του να φτάσω
και να ξεπεραστώ, εγώ,
που τώρα μαθαίνομαι και πλήρως
μαθαίνω πως θέλω απο κείνον τίποτα
να δεχτώ και δε θέλω σ' εκείνον ν' αντισταθώ
και δεν θέλω από κείνον τίποτα
να δεχτώ και δε θέλω να περιμένω.
Δεν κλαίω, ούτε τραγούδι ψάλλω.
Μα γίνεται πίο οδυνηρό το δικό μου
ξέσκισμα που τοιμάζω,
για να γνωρίσω τον κόσμο δι' εμού,
γιά να πω το λόγο δικό μου,
εγώ που ως τώρα υπήρξα
γιά να θαυμάζω, να σέβομαι και ν' αγαπώ,
εγώ πιά δεν του ανήκω
και πρέπει μονάχη να είμαι,
εγώ η άνθρωπος

MAN, FEMININE GENDER

I, woman, "man in the feminine gender,
have always sought Thy face;
it was, until this moment, man's,
and I could not otherwise know it.
Who is more alone now,
and in what way, intensely, despairingly alone,
he or I?
I believe I exist, shall exist,
but when did I exist without him,
and now, how do I stand, in what light,
what is my sorrow still?
O how I suffer doubly,
continuously lost,
when Thou are not my guide.
How shall I look upon my face
how shall I accept my spirit
when I struggle
so yet cannot find accord.
*Because it is through Thee
that man and woman find their concord.*
The tragedy of the impersonal is not yet revealed, nor can I
even
imagine it still, still.
What can I do since I know so well
so many things, and know better than to think
that Thou plucked me from out his side. And I say that I am
"man," completed
and alone. I could not have been formed without him
but now I *am* and am capable,
and we are a separated pair,
he and I, and I have my own light.
I was never the moon,
but I said I would not depend on the sun,
and I have such pride
that I am trying to reach his and to surpass myself, I
and again I, who now in learning about myself, learn
completely that I want to resist him,
that I want to accept
nothing from him, that I do not want to wait.
I neither weep nor chant a song,
but my own violent separation, which I am preparing,
is becoming more painful that I may know the world
through myself,
that I may speak my own word,
I, who until this moment existed
to marvel and to esteem and to love.
I no longer belong to him,
and I must be alone,
I, "man" in the feminine gender.