

Dr. Petya Ivanova, Webster University, Geneva, Switzerland

Reading Gestures: Exemplarity and Embodiment in Late Medieval and Early Modern English texts.

This thesis applies the tools of kinesic analysis in order to examine the relationship between the artistic and literary expression of verbal and non-verbal gestures and their larger cultural encoding in texts featuring the rhetorical approach of exemplification.

The related notions of “example” and “exemplarity” are used to allow for a discussion of the rhetorical genre of the exemplum and of the gestural and linguistic cluster designating the notion of “manner”.

The first chapter considers the paradigmatic relation from the perspective of Malory's self-reflexive authorial gestures of exemplification of earlier Arthurian tradition in the "Morte Darthur". The second chapter examines the resonance of the theological paradigm of the glorious body within literary texts such as Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and the anonymous popular romance "Le Bone Florence of Rome". The third chapter focuses on Gower's use of the notion of “manner” in his "Confessio Amantis" from a perspective intersecting the narrative use of exempla, the literary convention of *fin amor* and the phenomenology of fiction and the creative imagination.

This analysis is extended to Shakespeare's *Pericles*, which stages the author John Gower as a fictional character, thus offering new perspectives on reading Shakespeare's play. The analytical framework draws on conceptual approaches from philosophy (Agamben, Wittgenstein, Deleuze), literary and cultural theory (Iser, Macé, Bolens) and literary criticism.