

ISECS SEMINAR FOR JUNIOR SCHOLARS: CENTRE FOR EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST 16-20 AUGUST 2010

SIEDS SÉMINAIRE DES JEUNES DIX-HUITIÉMISTES: CENTRE FOR EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST 16-20 AOÛT 2010

Danna Agmon (University of Michigan)

Where is the Colony? Relocating French Empire in the Indian Ocean

Colonial histories have long charted how metropolitan centers have attempted to exert control over the far-flung outposts of empire, with varying degrees of success. But how does our perception of colonial politics shift if we move beyond the familiar metropole-colony binary, and offer instead a cosmography in which the colony is deeply and irrevocably situated within a local, regional context? This paper is concerned with the early days of the French-ruled colony of Pondicherry on the Coromandel Coast of India, and argues that the Indian Ocean arena is the setting against which the relationship between Pondicherry and Paris can best be understood. It then moves to examine how Pondicherry's local intermediaries (the commercial brokers and religious interpreters employed by French traders and missionaries) could travel between India and France and across the Indian Ocean, thereby coming to play a unique if unacknowledged role in the French imperial project.

Vanessa Alayrac-Fielding (Université Lille 3- Charles-De-Gaulle)

Cultural transfers of exotica: material exchanges between China and Europe through trade, mission and art.

The eighteenth century witnessed an increasing number of exchanges between China and Europe. The well-known philosophical and moral image of China, together with the popularity of *chinoiserie*, testified to these growing contacts. In this paper I would like to examine how travellers to China (English merchants, French and Italian Jesuits and the diplomats of the 1792 English embassy), as well as Chinese objects and artifacts, served as cultural intermediaries and contributed to the cultural and material encounter with China, thus shaping the taste for this country but also fabricating its image, whether authentic or fantasized. Conversely, I would like to examine some instances of cultural transfers from Europe to China operated by the Jesuits or the merchants, notably through the arrival of European objects to see how they fashioned a representation of Europe in China.

I will argue that objects fulfilled the role of intermediaries between their makers and their consumers and that they did not carry a fixed meaning but rather offered a "topology" of their originating country that remains open to interpretation, rewriting and appropriation.

Angela Byrne (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin)

“No longer to be gazed at as a distant glimmering star”: Irish-born British diplomats’ accounts of Russia, 1733–1767’

The period in which three Irish-born diplomats represented Britain’s interests in Russia was one when all things French and English were fashionable amongst the Russian upper classes. This cultural phenomenon (initiated by Peter I’s improving laws) should have facilitated interaction between the diplomats and their Russian hosts, yet these authors freely criticised Russians for slavishly aping other cultures. Ironically, upper-class Russian attempts to emulate French and English social and cultural life met with as much scorn from these observers as did the ‘merchants’ or boyars who preserved more of ‘traditional’ Russian life – proving themselves a little too Russian for these gentlemen’s tastes. Quite a task it was then, for these diplomats to mediate between their Western traditions and the crippling bureaucracy and ceremony of the Russian court.

Florence Catherine (Université de Nancy)

Albrecht von Haller (1708-1777), acteur du transfert culturel entre les espaces français et germaniques au XVIIIe siècle.

Fort d’une grande renommée, le physiologiste et homme de lettres bernois Albrecht von Haller est un intermédiaire culturel privilégié entre les espaces français et germaniques au XVIIIe siècle. Outre le rôle de l’*Helvétia mediatrix*, la présente étude permet de dégager les multiples interconnexions réticulaires qui rendent possible la circulation des idées au sein de la République des Lettres. Haller participe pleinement à la communication et la confrontation des idées à l’époque des Lumières, grâce à la maîtrise d’un vaste réseau épistolaire et à la rédaction de très nombreuses recensions pour les périodiques savants. La réflexion sur les formes de diffusion et de production des savoirs qu’il développe, ainsi que l’usage qu’il fait des écrits français éclairent les trois étapes du processus de transfert culturel que sont la circulation, la sélection et l’appropriation des biens intellectuels.

Marianna D’Ezio (University of Rome)

Cultural and Literary Intersections between British and Italian Women Writers and *Salonnières* in the age of the Grand Tour (1700-1799)

The phenomenon of the British Grand Tour took a vast number of travellers to the “warm South”: following a well-established “beaten track” the travellers would then return to Britain and write a narrative documenting their adventures. Initially an experience restricted predominantly to men, it very soon came to be enjoyed and exploited also by women who meanwhile had achieved a social status previously denied to them: that of intellectual leaders of their literary coteries. Women emerged as distinguished *salonnières* who utilized their private circle of friends to “advertise” their works through publication by subscription. The result was a wide circulation not

only of British women's works, but also of translations from French, German and Italian works.

The flourishing of literary circles was not a trend unique to Britain: this paper looks at intellectual British women travellers to the continent investigating their relationship and interaction with the Italian women *salonnières* they encountered on the Grand Tour. The purpose is in exploring the link established between British and Italian intellectuals in order to trace possible literary influences on their works from both directions and perspectives.

Sébastien Drouin (l'École Pratique des Hautes Études -Sorbonne Paris IV)

Journalistes, érudits et informateurs au Refuge : les réseaux intellectuels de l'Histoire critique de la République des Lettres (1712-1718)

L'Histoire critique de la République des Lettres est un périodique paru à Utrecht puis à Amsterdam de 1712 à 1718. Son principal rédacteur, le ministre presbytérien Samuel Masson, fut très tôt sensible à l'importance de recevoir des nouvelles d'Angleterre. À ce titre, la correspondance qu'il échange avec Pierre Des Maizeaux, qui avait immigré à Londres, est particulièrement riche. L'étude des réseaux savants qui se structurent autour de ce périodique permet également de mettre en lumière d'importantes correspondances demeurées inédites, dont celle de Gisbert Cuper, Jean-Paul Bignon, Anne Dacier et Mathurin Veysseyre de La Croze. Ces érudits commentent dans leurs lettres plusieurs dissertations parues dans *l'Histoire critique de la République des Lettres* dont l'orthodoxie avait été mise en doute par les autorités calvinistes. La lecture comparée de ce périodique et des correspondances savantes contemporaines de sa publication permet dès lors de poser un regard neuf sur la diffusion de l'hétérodoxie religieuse dans l'Europe des Lumières.

Olivera Jokic (John Jay College, City University of New York)

The Death of a Beautiful Moor Woman: Obstinate Clerks and the Form of Evidence in the British Colonial Archive

This paper focuses on an instance of interpretive commotion among readers and writers of the East India Company papers in 1776. The stir was occasioned by the circulation between India and England of a cluster of documents treating of an alleged murder of a "beautiful Moor woman" in the provincial colonial town of Madras. Rather than help us understand whether the woman lived or died, the papers document the scene of negotiation among the East India Company bureaucrats over the conventions of documentation appropriate for the emergent colonial domain. Their acrimonious debate over the convergence of narrative techniques found in literary texts and those found in late eighteenth-century Company papers suggests that ostensibly marginal literary genres played a pivotal role in shaping the formal possibilities of documentation available to institutional colonialism.

Eszter Kovacs (Université de Szeged, Hongrie)

Une catégorie à part du « voyageur par état » : la réflexion de Diderot sur les missionnaires

La méfiance envers les voyageurs et la critique des récits de voyage est un aspect important de la pensée de Diderot. Les doutes sur la sincérité et l'exactitude des relations contribuent à la naissance d'une critique de sources. Les missionnaires forment toutefois une catégorie distincte parmi les voyageurs : ils sont mieux formés, plus instruits et lucides que les commerçants, les soldats, les marins ou les agents coloniaux. Mais, selon Diderot, leur mission est un obstacle devant l'observation impartiale. La réflexion sur les missionnaires est également une réflexion sur l'État idéal. Diderot est très sceptique à l'égard des missions jésuites au Paraguay et les regarde comme une forme moderne de la théocratie. Pourtant, les missionnaires fournissent des sources précieuses sur la langue, l'histoire, la religion et les mœurs des peuples. L'usage que Diderot fait de leurs lettres et de leurs relations n'est pas négligeable. Il s'en sert pour les articles de *l'Encyclopédie* et pour ses contributions à *l'Histoire des deux Indes* en cherchant en même temps d'autres sources pour équilibrer l'autorité du savoir provenant des missions.

Diego Lucci (American University in Bulgaria)

American Political and Social Life in Luigi Castiglioni's *Travels in the United States of America*

The Lombard aristocrat Giuseppe Castiglioni (1757-1832) was a botanist and a political thinker who traveled in France, England and North America in the 1780s. His book *Travels in the United States of North America* (1790) is an interesting description of the US immediately after the end of the War of Independence. In his travel account, Castiglioni described American social and economic life, and explained both the federal political system of the US and the institutions of each State. He especially focused on the respect of individual freedoms and religious toleration. Briefly, Castiglioni's book not only offered a pioneering description of the then young American republic and its lands, people and government, but also highlighted the role of democratic institutions, and of a federal regime, in promoting a new model of society, one that was still unknown in eighteenth-century Europe.

Katrina O'Loughlin (University of Western Australia)

'A smaller compass': body and text in eighteenth-century women's travel.

This paper considers the negotiation and representation of cultural identity for Britons through the mechanism of travel in the eighteenth century. Female-authored travel narratives of this period, although diverse in provenance and destination, seem marked by a shared fascination or preoccupation with the body as a site of cultural identity and difference. The body functions not only as an organ of experience for the traveller, but as a more general site of cultural encounter and negotiation: it becomes a 'smaller compass', or powerful semiotic field in which the points of cultural

specificity and difference are engaged and displayed. Drawing on examples from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Jane Vigor and Lady Elizabeth Craven I suggest that the body emerges as a mediating field of identity and social practice in these traveller's representations of foreign cultures, becoming a space of inscription, or a kind of social 'text' in its own right.

Maria Petrova (Institute of Universal History, Russian Academy of Sciences)

The Diplomats of Catherine II as Cultural Intermediaries: The Case of Princes Golitsyn.

The paper, based on the wide circle of archival documents, is conceived within the framework of a larger investigation devoted to the role of Russian diplomats in the system of intercultural communication of the Enlightenment. It is important to understand how far the diplomats were involved in this network of exchanges, which contribution they made to the formation, enrichment and diffusion of new ideas, norms and models of behavior. Among many interesting, worth-studying personalities I have chosen three representatives belonging to one of the famous noble families in Russia – princes Golitsyn, who had played a considerable part in the political affairs of their time and proved to be important intermediaries among the Russian enlightened elite and the artistic circles of the West. Dmitri Mikhaïlovič Golitsyn (1721-1793), the Russian ambassador in Vienna (1761-1792, 30 years in common) is known not only as a diplomat, but also as a passionate collector, philanthropist and patron of art, one of the protectors of W.A. Mozart. His cousin Prince Alexandre Mikhaïlovič Golitsyn (1723-1807), a vice-chancellor of the Russian Empire (1762-1775), was also an assiduous collector; he used the diplomatic network to procure pieces of art for Catherine II and to enrich his own collection. Prince Dmitri Alekseevič Golitsyn (1734-1803), a *chargé d'affaires* and plenipotentiary minister in Paris (1761-1767), later in The Hague (1768-1782), was a friend of Diderot, a correspondent of Voltaire, d'Alembert and Falconet, an editor of *Helvétius*.

E. Natalie Rothman (University of Toronto)

Dragomans in the Republic of Letters: Cultural Mediation and the Making of the Levant

This paper explores the role of dragomans (diplomatic interpreters) who worked for foreign embassies in early modern Istanbul in constituting "Turkish literature" as a field of scholarly inquiry. It asks how different educated milieus (including diplomats, missionaries, and scholars) became interested in Ottoman textual production, and how these interests became articulated through the translational practices of a cadre of interpreters. Based on archival and printed sources, the paper looks at several moments in the making of "Turkish literature" as a field of scholarly inquiry to underscore the close links and simultaneity between early modern Ottoman and European bureaucratic practices, intellectual currents, consumption patterns, and networks of patronage. Ultimately, the paper asks how the diplomatic and scholarly channels through which knowledge of the Ottomans formed and circulated crucially involved the Ottoman elite themselves in intimate and ongoing conversations with

long-term sojourners in the Ottoman capital. It thus views dragomans' writings as having participated in the project of constituting Europe, a project that was informed from early on by competing ideas about civilization and the relationship between language, religion, and political subjecthood.

Fredrik Thomasson (European Institute, Florence)

Cultural intermediaries: another way of addressing or circumventing the centre–periphery dichotomy?

The 'intermediary' is often from the peripheral party of a cultural exchange. Knowledge production and transfer is frequently conceptualised within a centre-periphery framework. I problematize the role of the intermediary and connect this discussion to the centre-periphery debate. That there was asymmetry in the exchange is obvious from how many eighteenth-century actors negotiated their 'peripheral' role. I give examples from Swedish sources – scholars, travellers and diplomats – of how a feeling of being from the fringes is expressed and dealt with. I compare this to the negotiation of the modern (peripheral?) historian of her or his own position with examples from present historical debate.

Ellen R. Welch (University of North Carolina)

Intermediaries and the Media: Ambassadors and Emissaries in the French Periodical Press, 1672-1763

This paper explores the representation of diplomatic missions in the French periodical press, particularly the *Mercure Galant* and *Journal des Sçavans*, from the start of the Franco-Dutch War until the end of the Seven Years War. By disseminating and publicizing the otherwise obscure machinations of international politics, these accounts participated in the formation of a national public, mediating the elite French reader's identification with structures of state and the international state system. At the same time, their vision of the French role in international politics was mediated through a lens particularly adapted to the specific intranational or transnational reading community who comprised each journal's targeted audience. Consequently, the periodicals' dissemination of the dramas of international relations played upon the imbrications of various "publics" defined along lines of gender, social class, and cultural tastes as well as state affiliation.

Laurence Williams (University of Oxford)

Mediating the 'Oriental City' through the Arabian Nights: Eighteenth-Century English Travellers in Constantinople

This paper discusses the influence of Antoine Galland's translation of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* (1706–21) on selected eighteenth-century accounts of travel to Constantinople. It argues that the *Arabian Nights* provides English writers with a new way to imagine the 'Oriental city', as a series of enclosed, segregated spaces

characterised by the maze-like medina, the walled seraglio, and the harem. In contrast to eighteenth-century London, which is often represented as an open space of public debate and visual display, these closed Oriental spaces are revealed only through veiling and disguise, by magic, or by the psychological transportation into the lives of others carried out by storytelling. I discuss the influence of this imaginative model on English travel accounts, with particular reference to Aaron Hill's *Full and Just Account ... of the Ottoman Empire* (1709), and Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* (1763).