



## Doctoral Conference XVII-XVIII

### Real and Imaginary Travels in Literature and Culture: 16th-18th centuries

4-5 April 2014

University of Strasbourg

#### CALL FOR PAPERS

This call for papers emanates from the project “Interchanges between England and North-Eastern France from the Reformation to the Enlightenment” and is co-organised by SEARCH – the Strasbourg research group of English studies–, Société d’Études Anglo-Américaines des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles and Société Française d’Études sur le Dix-huitième Siècle. It is open to any doctoral student or recent PhD who is interested in the topic of travelling in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

For English studies, one can consider that with the reign of Elizabeth I and the gradual resolution of religious conflicts consequent upon the English Reformation, the withdrawal and isolation of England slowly began to diminish as the country established frequent contacts with the Continent. Humanists of the 16th century, such as Thomas More, forged close bonds with such illustrious figures as Erasmus of Rotterdam, or Martin Bucer, who travelled to England and helped to provide the theological foundations of the new Church. Economic and cultural exchanges between England and Europe’s great powers continued to intensify after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. It was perhaps from these instances that the Grand Tour was derived, a form of travel at once cultural and pleasurable that began to develop in the early 17th century and that, in turn, inspired many travelogues and reports, such as Thomas Coryat’s 1611 *Crudities*. In the following two centuries, many educated English people undertook a journey to Italy in order to perfect their education and to frequent the great minds and art of their times, thus furthering the circulation of texts and ideas. The importance of experience through contact with the other was already brought forth by Bacon in his essay “Of Travel” (1623) where the approach is not only touristic but also, and especially, scientific. Bacon laid the foundation of the empiric process that science was to confirm in the following centuries and to which Locke brought a philosophic substrate in his *Essay on Human Understanding* (1689). This new way of thought nourished the great literary and pictorial production of the long 18th century, from Defoe to Goldsmith and from Hogarth to Gainsborough.

The epic genre, so important during the Renaissance and splendidly illustrated by gestures such as Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* (1590-1596), gradually gave way to a picaresque literature that aimed to entertain at least as much as to instruct, and whose golden age was to span the entire 18th century with Defoe, Swift, Fielding and even Sterne. Thanks to these great novelists, travelling also became a literary exploration through which the authors confronted new modes of writing.

Voyages also became more imaginary, much like the utopias written between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, which strongly influenced philosophical reflection and political theorization. In the wake of Thomas More's work, an entire body of marvellous city literature strongly asserted itself with Bacon, James Harrington and even Margaret Cavendish, up until Robert Owen's socialist utopia at the very beginning of the 19th century. Parallel to this current, the *topos* of the dreamed voyage to the moon found its expression in an abundant production that combined the revisiting of classical sources (the myth of Endymion, Lucian's *True History*) with an interest in new science; texts as diverse as Ben Jonson's mask, *News from the New World Discovered in the Moon* (1620), Francis Godwin's *A Man in the Moone* (1638), Daniel Defoe's *The Consolidator* (1705) and even Samuel Brunt's *A Voyage to Cacklogallinia* (1727) all illustrate a constant enthusiasm for the cosmic voyage throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.

In this period also emerged another type of travel, that of colonial conquests. Confronted with new lifestyles and customs which were foreign to them, the explorers reconsidered their conceptions of mankind and their visions of society. Certain explorers recounted their experiences in remarkable narratives (Hakluyt, Raleigh, *The Bermuda Pamphlets*...) upon which the literary production of the English Renaissance heavily drew. Having already abundantly treated pastoral themes and the subject of travel beyond city limits, Renaissance poetry and Jacobean theatre placed the motif of the elsewhere at the core of their themes.

Colonizers of the young America perceived travelling from yet another perspective: for numerous Puritans, much like William Bradford, Edward Johnson or Cotton Mather, the spiritual journey into the folds of the heart and the depths of the soul obeyed the powerful command of greater self-awareness. 17th- and 18th-century Americans produced a blossoming of spiritual autobiographies, matched with just as many textual testimonies of religious conversion by English writers such as that of Joseph Hall or John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666) and *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678).

These are the various facets of the subject that the "Jeunes Chercheurs XVII-XVIII Conference" proposes to explore on April 4th and 5th in Strasbourg. Contributions are welcome in the domains of literature, history, cultural studies, the history of ideas, art history, philosophy and the history of science. Presentations may be given in English or in French. The best contributions will be published in a volume of RANAM, the University of Strasbourg journal of English Studies.

A bibliography is available at <http://search.unistra.fr/index.php/colloques>

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