

## **Année 2 du programme (2017-2018)**

### **Between East and West :**

#### **Representing emotions in non-fictional representations of the individual in the long 18th century (1680-1850)**

Conference organized by the Department of French and Francophone Studies the UCLA Clark library/Center for Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Studies, and the Foundation FACE

**UCLA, June 1-2, 2018**

#### CALL FOR PAPERS

The history of emotions in 18th century Europe has often been charted concomitantly with the rise of fictional literature, notably the novel. In this perspective, the understanding and literary representations of the individual shifted from the Renaissance paradigm of passions to that of emotions, emerging in the Enlightenment. The earlier configuration of the self, summarized and enriched by Descartes, implied a “humoral,” physiological understanding of the human body, distinct from the soul, a passive position of the self, implied by the Latin root of *passio*, and a possibility of classifying and enumerating passions and their facial and bodily expressions. The European Enlightenment changed the reigning paradigm: representing the self was henceforth predicated on sensualism, i.e. the dominance of senses in human cognition. The notion of “passion” was often replaced by “emotion,” and “sentiment,” which – being the product of senses – were seen as more diverse, ephemeral, and more social, i.e. influenced by others. Our first goal is to explore whether this « grand narrative », elaborated mostly on the case of fiction, is the only convincing model. In other terms, are the self and the individual at large represented in the same manner in “factual” sources as in fiction?

Our second goal is to investigate the same conceptual territory in its encounter with different geographic areas. While in the European Enlightenment, self-representation was informed as well as by the critique of Judeo-Christian theology and morals, and of the divine right monarchy, how was it influenced by the encounters with other cultures? How do the personal accounts left by Jesuits, merchants, adventurers or scientists who travelled to China, Persia and other countries of the Orient describe the individual passions or emotions encountered there? Do they differ from the fictional representations of the “Orient” and its “despotism” or its seraglios?

Thirdly and last, we want to study the representations of self and other that stem from non-fictional texts of the middle-Eastern or Asian cultures themselves. How do correspondences, life histories and other “factual” accounts written in that period in Chinese, Japanese or Persian represent individual passions or emotions?

In what ways is the self rooted in society, in its religious, philosophical, and cultural traditions, and its social hierarchies?

We thus aim to explore the representation of the self and its relationship to passions and emotions both within the perspective of cultural encounters between East and West and within the specific genre of non-fictional accounts (testimonies, journals, memoirs, correspondences) in the long eighteenth century. In our explorations, we will be guided by the following questions, among others: are passions personal or common? Is the physical, religious or social grid dominant in their representations? Is the self their victim or their agent? What terms are used for various feelings described? What are the differences between East and West, between court and family, between men and women? Is there a historical shift? What dominant feelings characterize the writing self and how?

This 1 ½ day conference will bring together scholars of various literatures and cultures in the period between 1680-1850 in textual as well as visual, non-fictional (factual) sources which involve self-representation through passions and/or emotions. The conference is funded in part by the FACE foundation through its Partner University Fund, as part of a three year long project of cooperation between UCLA and the University of Tours (France), entitled "From Passions To Emotions: Non-Fictional Representations Of The Individual (1680-1850)". While keeping a slight emphasis on France, we nevertheless seek proposals from scholars of literature, history, or art history, comparative in scope but originating in various Asian or European cultures.

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