

## Two-Day Symposium

# American Literature in France, 1917-1967: the role of cultural intermediaries and mediators

14-15 mars 2019, Université de Rennes

This symposium is jointly organized by ACE-EA 1796 (Université Rennes 2)  
& LERMA-EA 853 (Aix-Marseille Université)



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This two-day interdisciplinary symposium will look at how American literature was taken up into French culture over a fifty-year period bounded by two defining moments in French-US relations: 1917, when the US entered World War I, and 1967, when NATO troops withdrew from French soil.

The aim is, first, to identify people and institutions in France that acted as intermediaries and mediators for US literature over this period. The project will examine the range of their activities, such as setting up collections and corpora, and producing translations and publications, academic and critical studies, textual and audio-visual adaptations, as well as press surveys and reviews. The idea is also to look at the forms these various practices took—such as capitalization, selection, distortion, hybridization, censorship, rejection, or subversion. We will also seek to bring out the social, cultural, economic, and political relationships brought into play by these mediators, as well the images and perceptions of US literature they devised for the French public.

This symposium brings together scholars from a range of disciplines (including literary studies, history, sociology, and visual studies) to explore the work of the many mediators and intermediaries (institutions, circles, communities, and individuals) helping texts to flow across the Atlantic to a country whose capital, Paris, was crucial in winning consecration for authors and texts (Casanova, *La République mondiale des lettres*, 1999) and hence

in the distribution and transfer of literary capital. Our purpose is to better understand the role played by these intermediaries, especially university and private libraries, publishing houses and collections, bookshops and periodicals, including academic journals whose role has tended to be overlooked. We also want to highlight the mediating agency of translators, preface writers, patrons, publishers, editors and editorialists, critics, literary agents, diplomats, academics, and US journalists and press correspondents in Paris, as well as writers, cartoonists, directors and librettists. While interested in the role played by consecrated mediators—such as Soupault, Larbaud, Bazalgette, and Coindreau—we also invite contributions on lesser-known figures, and how they related to larger networks and social circles.

In addition to individuals and institutions, we intend to examine how such media as the visual arts—especially comics—cinema, theatre, and radio helped bring American literature to the attention of the French. Topics include but are not limited to the French magazine adaptations of American comics in the political and moral context of the time; film adaptations such as *Le Dernier tournant* (1939) or *Pierrot le Fou* (1965); and the role of radio programs in introducing American literature and poetry. Another intriguing example is the adaptation/appropriation/reinvention of certain American literary codes, the best known example of which is probably *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes* (1946) by Vernon Sullivan (aka Boris Vian).

We encourage 25-minute contributions in English and French in the fields of literary studies, the history of books and material culture, sociology, arts, theatre, and film.

Please submit a 300-word abstract of the presentation (for a 25-minute presentation) with a short bio-bibliography note on the conference website: <http://passeurs2019.sciencesconf.org/>

**Deadline for submissions: September 15, 2018**

#### **Bibliography:**

BOSCHETTI, Anna (dir.), *L'Espace culturel transnational*. Paris : Nouveau Monde Editions, 2010.

BROOKER, Peter, THACKER, Andrew (dir.), *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines. II. North America 1894-1960*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009-2013.

CASANOVA, Pascale, *La République mondiale des lettres*, Paris, Seuil, 1999. ; *The World Republic of Letters*, translated by Malcolm DeBevoise, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2005.

TOURNES, Ludovic, *L'argent de l'influence. Les fondations américaines et leurs réseaux européens*, Paris, Autrement, 2010.

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