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Gabor Gelléri, *Philosophies du voyage: visiter l'Angleterre aux 17-18^e siècles*. Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, xi+297 pp. Tables, notes, bibliography and index. \$76 U.S. (pb). ISBN 978-0-7294-1183-7.

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France and England share a common history of conquest and invasion, alliance and collaboration, admiration and disapprobation. The love-hate relationship between the two countries over the *longue durée* was explored by Robert and Isabelle Tombs in *That Sweet Enemy* but the eighteenth century represents a high point in mutual fascination and antipathy: punctuated by Anglo-French conflict culminating in the Napoleonic Wars, it was also a period of unprecedented cultural exchange between the two countries, facilitated by ever-increasing voyages across the Channel.[1] Anglophone historians have analysed the relationship from the perspective of diplomatic history and warfare; through studies of English fascination with French culture; and, most influentially, the importance of France as 'the other' in the construction of English and British identity.[2] More recently Renaud Morieux's *The Channel* emphasised the close historical relationship and entangled histories of the two countries providing an alternative perspective to the elite-focused narratives of emergent nationalism that dominate so many accounts.[3]

Gelléri's study belongs to this latter camp and represents a significant contribution to this body of scholarship: first, as a close examination of those *miroirs étrangers*, to use Paul Hazard's phrase, through which a French sense of self was constructed, and second, as an attentive reading of the discourse of travel. Given the existence of prior bibliographical studies of the French in England, his concern is not to plot every publication, but to illustrate the ever-shifting modulation of the Franco-Anglo relationship through a range of representative texts. Gelléri's case, consistently argued and amply demonstrated, is that travel writing about England constituted a crucial framework through which the French reading public reflected upon, critiqued or affirmed the nature of their own politics, society, and culture. Collating data from Boucher de la Richarderie and Daniel Roche, he shows that over the century, England (or rather Great Britain) was the subject of more travel literature than any other single country, including Italy. Despite this, much of the historiography relating tends to assume the 'lure of Italy' as a normative model; or else, focuses upon Europeans' discovery of the wider world, and the appetite for exoticism. This northern bias to French travel and travel writing, which became increasingly marked by the end of the century, therefore, is a point well worth making.

Gelléri traces the evolution of the genre from the later seventeenth century, following the Stuart Restoration in 1660, until the outbreak of the French Revolution; in doing so he demonstrates the textual relations between the different written accounts and shows how a body of information and a set of stock tropes about the English grew and developed over the course of a long eighteenth century. While many of these tropes were caricatures, the texts themselves cannot be reduced to simple dichotomies of attraction and repulsion. His second objective is to interrogate more critically terms such as Anglophobia or Anglomania and to develop a more nuanced and contextually sensitive reading of the

balance of praise and criticism of both France and England to be found in these texts. The key point, however, around which the structure and the argument of the book revolves, is Gelléri's determination to de-centre Voltaire from his all-dominant position as the *fons et origo* of the 'tour philosophique' and progenitor of Anglomania.

Gelléri adopts a broad definition of travel literature in order to include three texts central to the construction of the French image of England by Voltaire, Prevost and Montesquieu within his discussion. Although all three authors had spent time in England which substantively informed their respective publications, neither *Lettres philosophiques*, nor Prevost's *Histoire générale des voyages* nor Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des lois* conform to the travel writing genre; nor, judging by the evidence of library catalogues, were they read or categorised as such. But Gelléri's emphasis is not about the experience of travel per se, or even to any great degree what French travellers to England said about England, but the way in which the 'idea' of England, its political structures, social mores, and intellectual life were used to hold up a mirror to France. In this respect, these widely-read and highly influential texts constituted a *discours philosophique* around travel to England and to omit them from the broader discussion would be fundamentally misguided.

The structure of the book is chronological, although each chapter has a strongly developed thematic approach. The body of literature relating to seventeenth-century tours to England is, of course, more limited and largely confined to members of the nobility; nonetheless, this seventeenth-century context is important, both in terms of providing a yardstick by which to judge the remarkable recalibration which took place in the Anglo-French relationship between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and to establish the longevity of some of the descriptive tropes and observations, particularly concerning English national pride and the shortcomings of English food, identified in uncompromising terms by Samuel Sorbière, for example. By the late Stuart period, Gelléri suggests that French noble travel to England was for pleasure, what he calls "*proto-touristique*" (p. 39) rather than following the *ars apodemica* conventionally held to have structured elite travel in the early modern period. The inclusion of the seventeenth century also permits Gelléri to take account of the important corpus of travel writing produced by the Huguenots, following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, for whom England represented liberty and toleration: it was at this point that England was first used to hold up a mirror to France, allowing the structural opposition between France and England to be articulated with increasing clarity.

In the third chapter, "*Helvetia Mediatrix*," Gelléri extends his survey to the writings of francophone Swiss observers: many Englishmen at the time would scarcely have bothered to make the distinction between a Frenchman and a French-speaking Swiss. But for Gelléri the justification for inclusion is rather more considered: not only were the observations of Swiss travellers such as Bêat Muralt widely read and debated within France, and thus incorporated into the *paradigme anglais*, but Muralt offered a very distinctive perspective as a 'third party' observer, owing loyalty and sympathy to neither France nor England and loudly affirming his own Swiss identity. His account, therefore, is balanced with praise and criticism for both countries: English good sense, Protestantism and liberty found favour in his eyes; but too much liberty was seen to lead to licence, debauchery and general excess. English society was contrasted to French *esprit* and *amour du paraître*, most significantly for his French readers, English literature was favourably compared with French—which proved a particularly cruel blow to French *amour propre*. The immediate response to Muralt in France, was largely critical (and in the process Muralt became something of a figurehead for Swiss attempts to assert their cultural independence) but the text's chief significance for Gelléri is the way in which Muralt compared France and England explicitly, making both direct and indirect criticisms of France. Whether Voltaire actually read Muralt's text (which was not published until he was actually en route for England) is a moot point. As the first four chapters cumulatively demonstrate, long before *Lettres Philosophiques* was published, the image of England in French literary culture was complex and contested with many of the key contrasts between France and England already sketched out.

Voltaire, Prevost and Montesquieu provide the focus of the pivotal fifth chapter, 'Le temps de philosophes': three authors whose published works, taken together, ensured the centrality of England as a destination for French travellers in the second half of the century and set the parameters for ways of seeing and thinking about England for the subsequent half-century or more. Gelléri's analysis of the evolution of these texts, from unpublished notes to published works, is one of the book's most effective sections. The immediate flowering of Anglomania and its antonym Anglophobia in response to *Lettres Philosophiques* naturally follows. Again, many of the texts discussed are well known, as are the clichés of English life, both positive and negative. Gelléri's focus is not so much that both Anglomania and Anglophobia co-existed but rather upon the combination of divergent sentiments within individual publications and upon the need for a more granular model of analysis. This is not a wholly original insight: Robert and Isabelle Tombs similarly rejected the straightforward binary in *That Sweet Enemy*, but Gelléri offers a far more rigorous and sustained analysis. Criticism of Anglomania or Anglophilia did not, of itself, constitute Anglophobia; similarly, dissent from xenophobic outbursts of Anglophobia did not necessarily signal an Anglophile position. Full-blooded and unequivocal Anglomania was extremely rare. Anglomania was a construction of the Anglophobic text, part of the process of 'othering' rather than an identifiable sub-genre. Those who travelled to England in a haze of high minded idealism were inevitably disillusioned with the reality.

The final substantive chapter surveys *le temps de touristes* as travel for leisure and pleasure became increasingly common. In terms of sheer numbers of travellers and publications on travel to England, this was the high point of the eighteenth century, but England's centrality to the *discours philosophique* was steadily encroached upon by the emergence of its former colony, America, not so much as a destination than as the embodiment of political liberty, in contrast to English tyranny. Nonetheless, the concept of England remained central to the process of defining a sense of French self: "*parler d'Angleterre ne sera, en effect, qu'une façon de parler de la France*" (p. 199). As numbers of travellers increased, so too did the social constituency of those travelling broaden, as travel became increasingly affordable and accessible. Notably, this chapter includes discussion of three female-authored texts, by Mmes Roland, de Bocage and de Genlis. Mme de Roland is remarkable for her enthusiastically uncritical embrace of Anglomania, which no amount of stolid English fare appears to have disturbed; de Genlis and de Bocage offered more nuanced views. They were united, however, in the emphasis in their accounts upon the status and position of women in English society and their experiences of female sociability; as such, argues Gelléri, a distinctively feminine perspective and experience of travel can be identified.

By the outbreak of the French Revolution the increasing divergence of travellers, approaches to travel, and even itineraries of travel within England makes the task of navigating a clear line of analysis increasingly challenging; by this time, there was no longer any single dominant image of England. Gelléri asks in the final chapter if the *voyage d'Angleterre* had any influence upon the French Revolution. His conclusion is that it did not: there is no correlation, for example, between travel to England and support for revolutionary principles. With the war, England effectively closed to French travel, although a new breed of 'traveller' the émigré (given a brief walk-on part here in the person of de la Tocnaye) did emerge. The *voyage philosophique* can therefore be seen as another casualty of the Revolution. But there were other forces acting to undermine the centrality of the English travel narrative, not the least of which was the expansion of travel within France.

Gelléri's approach is overwhelmingly that of textual analysis: this is a study of the literary representation of England and the English rather than a study of travellers, let alone the experience of travel. Even England, as seen through French eyes, is an elusive entity: Gelléri focuses upon those features of English government, culture, 'manners and customs' that were highlighted by French visitors, and how these were used to critique or celebrate French culture and to create a sense of French self. He firmly distances himself from those who would use books of travel as primary sources for information regarding the country they purport to describe: "*La seule chose dont le livre de voyage peut (et*

doit) être considéré comme source directe est la façon dont l'auteur veut faire voir le pays et son expérience" (p. 10). That is a bold claim and may be defensible in a study of Francophone views on a well-documented and well-recorded country such as England, but this reader, at least, can think of many instances where travellers' observations can be exploited as valuable primary sources regarding the countries they describe. More broadly, however, readers might be justified in hoping to find more discussion of what travellers actually said about their experiences of England or London.

It is unfair, of course, to criticise a book for what it does not set out to do, but the richness of Gelléri's discussion of French travel writing raises its own questions. His insistence that travel literature should not be used as a source for the country being travelled through notwithstanding, more sustained analysis of the content, particularly regarding place, would be illuminating. Persistent themes, such as the English propensity to suicide or observations on political corruption, are analysed, but Gelléri is remarkably uninterested in what travellers said about how they spent their time or where they went; questions which are not simply about experience, but also tell us something about how the authors wished to represent their English sojourns to their readers.

Moreover, this is a book that is curiously deracinated from a sense of place: the implication is that most travellers spent most of their time in London, although there are references to more extensive travel to cities such as Oxford or Bath and occasional visit further north. Travel in the later eighteenth century became more adventurous, he suggests, but the attractions of Britain as a hub of manufacturing modernity, for example, as embodied in the Soho works at Birmingham (where the French constituted the largest proportion of non-native visitors) or the furnaces of Coalbrookdale are not discussed.[4] Gelléri's model of Anglomania or Anglophilia seems rooted in the 1730s and unable to evolve to take account of England's increasing commercial and manufacturing dominance and the attractions of cities beyond the metropolis. Equally, his decision to focus specifically upon England precludes consideration of Scotland: undoubtedly a complicating factor when considering specifically Anglomania but equally an increasingly significant dimension of European travel to Britain. The evolving itinerary of travel—defective though it might be—has much to tell us about what travellers considered important and of the image of the country that they wished to convey: it is curious, therefore, that Gelléri chooses to give so little analytical weight to it.

Finally, Gelléri's emphasis upon the importance of travel to England in reinforcing a French sense of self offers a corrective to the idea that travel was part and parcel of the creation of an elite culture of enlightened cosmopolitanism; however, it is worth asking whether the exclusive focus upon the France-England dialectic and the emphasis upon defining France and the French brings its own distortions. How many of the criticisms were distinctively French? Studies such as Paul Langford's *Englishness Identified*, for example, suggest that many of the reservations expressed by the French about their neighbours across the Channel were shared by other continental Europeans.[5] Indeed, given the status of French as a *lingua franca* amongst the educated elite of much of Europe, it would be extraordinary if there were not cross-cultural borrowings in travel writing about England, just as there were in the literature of travel to Italy. Ian Buruma's schematic survey of Anglomania across Europe from the eighteenth to the twentieth century offers a different perspective upon French *anglomanie*, presenting it as a European phenomenon.[6] One also wonders what a comparison between travel writing on England with travel writing on Holland would reveal: although Gelléri argues Holland was neglected in favour of England for most of the century, Dutch historians such as Madeleine van Strien-Chardonneau have demonstrated that Holland was a favoured destination for French travellers from the duc de Rohan onwards, and cities such as Amsterdam, the 'Venice of the North', were widely admired as the embodiment of commercial modernity.[7]

NOTES

[1] Robert and Isabelle Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: the French and the English from the Sun King to the Present* (London: William Heinemann, 2006).

[2] For example: Jeremy Black, *Natural and Necessary Enemies: Anglo-French Relations in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Duckworth, 1986); Robin Eagles, *Francophilia in English Society, 1748-1815* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History* (rev edn Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

[3] Renaud Morieux, *The Channel: England, France and the Construction of a Maritime Border in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[4] See, for example, Peter Jones, 'Industrial Enlightenment in Practice: Visitors to the Soho Manufactory, 1765-1820', *Midland History*, 33:1 (2008), 68-96.

[5] Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified: Manners and Character, 1650-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[6] Ian Buruma, *Voltaire's Coconuts: or, Anglomania in Europe* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999).

[7] Madeleine Van Strien-Chardonneau, *Le voyage de Hollande: récits de voyageurs français dans les Provinces Unies, 1478-1795* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1994); and 'Amsterdam as Global Market and Meeting Place of Nations: Perspectives of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century French Travellers in Holland', in Rosemary Sweet, Gerrit Verhoeven and Sarah Goldsmith, eds., *Beyond the Grand Tour: Northern Metropolises and Early Modern Travel Behaviour* (Routledge: Abingdon, 2017).

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