

Pierre Loti

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France and India: Discourse on Colonial Method

In this paper, I argue that the Indian topos in late nineteenth-century French literature points not so much to a subjugation-based relational model between colonial powers (the British as major colonial presence, the French as subaltern colonialists) but rather to one discursive position, that of colonial expansion, alternately occupied by either colonizer, in relation to an entirely visible and knowable non-discursive position, that of the Indian people. If, according to Foucault, we admit no individual enunciating subjectivity but rather a number of enunciating positions occupied by individuals, then focus inevitably shifts from the “I” to the indeterminate “on” reducing the essentialist difference in kind or degree to a difference in distribution and dissemination. In practical terms, when a French discursive position such as Pierre Loti’s *L’Inde (sans les Anglais)*, which describes the people and customs of the sub-continent without acknowledging the British colonial presence, positions itself within an economy of colonial enunciations at a time of intense imperialist state propaganda, it proposes strategies of colonial space reorganization by either obliteration or substitution. In either case, colonial power is reaffirmed since the enunciating position not only remains intact but is, in fact, reinforced by positing itself as resisting, a strategy that allows it to usurp the only power-challenging modality reserved for the non-discursive other—in this case, the indigenous people. The distribution of alternately discursive positionalities among European powers and their dissemination in the colonial space annuls the nation-bound subjectivity in favor of what Deleuze calls a murmur, the enunciating instance made possible by a relationship of discursive interchangeability.

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Le chronotope de la forêt : une lecture écocritique du château de la Belle-au-Bois-Dormant

Dans cette communication concernant le château de la Roche-Courbon surnommé « le château de la Belle-au-Bois-dormant » par Loti ou encore « Fontbruant » dans *Prime Jeunesse* (1919), je montrerai que le narrateur lotien est bien différent de ceux rencontrés dans ses romans exotiques. Ce narrateur traversant la forêt enchantée du château n’est pas agressif et ne pénètre pas des terres inconnues, puisqu’il s’agit de la forêt de son pays natal. Il se veut être ici le genius loci ou l’esprit gardien de l’immuable forêt gallo-romaine.

En faisant une étude bakhtinienne du concept du chronotope, j’établirai que Loti était à la fois un écrivain de l’environnement mais surtout du paysage, souhaitant donner une voix à la nature. De plus, j’expliquerai que ces pages, bien qu’étant écrites au début du XX^{ème} siècle représente un « complexe idyllique » au sens où l’entend Bakhtine.

Pierre Loti

Finale­ment, je révélerai un autre aspect de Loti ; celui de l'écrivain écologiste en avance sur son temps qui en critiquant le capitalisme et la pollution lança un appel public dans *Le Figaro* du 21 octobre 1908 afin de sauver cette forêt et son château.

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Orient Express: An Acceleration of the "East" in the Writings of the *Train de luxe*

While the Orient Express continues to mesmerize a contemporary imaginary, its inception in the 1870s accelerated a collision of cultures between France and Turkey. A vehicle of tourists, diplomats, and journalists, the Orient Express and its destination Istanbul paved a way into French writings of the "East" by journalists Edmond About and Alfred de Blowitz and author Pierre Loti. About's *De Pontoise à Stamboul* (1883) and Blowitz's *Une course à Constantinople* (1884) record these reporters' experiences aboard the train for a population of readers who could only dream of going. In Pierre Loti's multiple writings on the Turkish capital, he details a more personal, in depth experience of a Western individual "gone Turkish." In this paper, I argue that the collision of cultures in these journalistic and literary depictions of the Orient Express' journey and destination invigorates the discourse of speed, as perceived by these Western writers. The Orient Express journey itself is a rapidly moving panorama of a changing geographical, political, and linguistic landscape. While the journalists note the acceleration of the actual journey, Loti adds a revelation about the changing pace of the city in his Istanbul series. From *Aziyadé* (1879) to *Fantôme d'Orient* (1892), Istanbul evolves from a city of immobility to a bustling atmosphere of tourism and urban traffic, partly brought about by the train itself. Even in his negative portrayals of the new technologies and influx of tourists, Loti is part of this frantic pace as he traces the ghosts of his past through the changed city. In their association of acceleration and the East, these acute observers of society investigate the train's widespread impact across Europe, linking danger, death, and instability as the Orient Express spreads its reign across the continent.