

Cosmopolitanism, Cultural Exchange, Performing Arts, and Transnational History between France and Denmark (1660-1800)



Frederiksborg Castle, 3.-4. June 2019

Registration to Executive Secretary Mette Carstensen (mc@dnm.dk) by 31st May 2019.

FREDERIKSBORG

Museum of
National History

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With a focus on transnational studies, cultural mobility, and performing arts, we aim to explore and question the idea of a universalist French culture exported to Denmark and its reception at the court of Copenhagen during this two-days workshop. The self-fashioning of the aristocratic and cosmopolitan court culture was undeniably influenced by France during the Enlightenment, but the French myth often clashed with local identity, language, cultural, political, and religious differences. By comparing the perception of “Frenchness” in Denmark and the perception of “Danishness” in France, we intend to understand the negotiations and adaptations of the exported culture and its influence in redefining identities and local culture. Moreover, “culture” has no agency and the process is not unidirectional, from a transmitting to a receiving context. Rather it is multidirectional and mutual; the exported cultural materials along with their practices are transformed and adapted to its new context. The stereotypes associated with the North changed drastically during the period studied. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the perception of Scandinavia as a dark and barbarian periphery inhabited by ruthless Vikings left way to a new image of Nordic people as free, strong, and democratic but who had yet to evolved in a more civilized society.

The myth of Versailles played a crucial role in the image of power and culture associated with the French court. Cultural exchange takes many forms, but performing arts (music, theatre, and dance) is certainly one of the most interesting aspects to study how culture is exported, translated, and adapted to a new environment. In order to understand the role of performing arts in this perspective, we will study broader concepts that are associated with migration, diaspora, métissage, and national VS cosmopolitan identities.

French artists in Copenhagen acted as ambassadors of French culture by performing in a context of migration. However, it was necessary to tailor the productions and adapt them to their new audience, often by means of translations or rewritings, along with educating an audience unfamiliar with theatrical productions. Scandinavia has largely been ignored by scholars working on cultural transfers and a perspective from the North does not only bring Denmark on the map, but also shed new light on European cultural relations and cosmopolitanism.

Various perspectives will be explored:

- What does French culture represent in Denmark? Which aspects are accepted and eagerly imported in Denmark (fashion, cooking, theatre, among others) and which ones are rejected (religion, politics, or others)?
- What role does the myth of Versailles play in the French culture exported all over Europe during the Enlightenment?
- Cultural transfer of performing arts: what is transferred exactly and how? It is not the culture, but an idea of what it represents, its agents (actors, musicians, impresarios), their routes across Europe, the production of a spectacle and especially its adaptation, translation, denationalization in order to tailor it for a cosmopolitan court
- How are Denmark and the Danish culture perceived in France? Travel literature, first history books on the North in the eighteenth century

PROGRAMME

DAY 1: June 3rd Foredragssalen, Frederiksborg Castle

13.00 Welcome and registration.

Welcome address by Mette Skougaard (Frederiksborg Castle)

13.30-15.00 Session I: Frenchness and Danishness: Constructing Identities

Éric Schnakenbourg (Université de Nantes): *The March of the North: French Perception of Denmark in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*

Karen Klitgaard Povlsen (Aarhus University): *Northbound/Southbound: Mallet's Northern Antiquities and Friederike Brun's travelogues from France*

Coffee break

15.30-17.30 Session II: The Myth of Versailles

Mathieu da Vinha (Centre de Recherche du Château de Versailles): *Visitors to Versailles*

Gérard Sabatier (Centre de Recherche du Château de Versailles): *Court Identities and the Myth of Versailles in Europe*

Flavie Leroux (Centre de Recherche du Château de Versailles): *The Myth of Versailles in Historiography*

DAY 2: June 4th, Foredragssalen, Frederiksborg Castle

9.00-12.30 Session III: Cultural Exchanges, Arts and Sciences

Charlotta Wolff (University of Turku): *French opéra-comique in Denmark: A Political Reading*

Christine Jeanneret (Frederiksborg Museum): *French Theatre in Copenhagen: Actors as Ambassadors of French Culture*

Lars Cyril Nørgaard (University of Copenhagen): *The King's Portrait in the Danish Royal Kusntkammer*

Mette Birkendal Bruun (University of Copenhagen): *Jacques-Bénigne Winsløw (Winslow): A Dane in Paris*

12.30-13.30 Lunch

Afternoon: visit of Frederiksborg Castle, optional