



One Day Symposium
Order's Other Histories: Revisiting South America
25 November 2010

10am – 3pm: Council Chamber, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Charles Clore House, 17 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DR

3pm – 5pm: The Studio, British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG

Focusing on South America, this interdisciplinary symposium, organized by the Centre for Iberian and Latin American Visual Studies (CILAVS) at Birkbeck, University of London, with the collaboration of the Institute for the Study of the Americas and the British Museum, aims to foster discussion on the multiple ways of ordering, representing and 'othering' nature and society within different experiences of colonial encounters.

In the first part of the symposium, invited speakers will address the following questions: to what extent did the context of an informal empire produce different frames for interpreting different colonial experiences? What were the literary, scientific or aesthetic discourses and practices of Hispanic and Portuguese colonial powers in their attempts to control the apparent 'disorder' of the different worlds under their rule? In what ways did South Americans borrow from, resist or reconfigure European classifications?

In the second part, a plenary lecture at the British Museum will be followed by a roundtable discussion on weaving practices as a particular way of organizing socio-cultural knowledge and histories based on samples of their collection of South American textiles, which will be on display.

This Symposium is part of the international research network 'The Disorder of Things: Predisciplinarity and the Divisions of Knowledge 1700-1850' (http://ideasandsociety.ucr.edu/disorder_of_things/). It is funded by Birkbeck's School of Arts Research Fund.

Order's Other Histories: Revisiting South America Programme

PART 1

Venue: Council Chamber, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Charles Clore House, 17 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DR

10.00 – 10.15 Registration and Coffee

10.15 – 10.30 Welcome and Introduction

10.30 – 12.00 Panel 1

Chair: Laura Leon-Llerena

Dana Leibsohn, 'Objects of Alterity: Colonial History and the Exchange of Things in Spanish America'

Luciana Martins, 'Typification, Exoticism and the Blurring of Disciplinarity: Visualizing the "Bororo"'

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 14.30 Panel 2

Chair: Philip Derbyshire

Iris Montero Sobrevilla, 'Mestizo Medicine in the Spanish Atlantic'

Tristan Platt, 'Appetite and Deprivation during Foetal Formation in the Andes'

14.30 – 15.00 Coffee



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PART 2

Venue: The Studio, British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG

Textiles Display

15.00 - 16.00 Plenary Lecture & Discussion

Chair: Luciana Martins

Denise Y. Arnold, 'Andean Textiles: As Media for Weaving Together Diverse Kinds of Knowledge'

16.00 - 17.00 Drinks

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Abstracts

'Andean Textiles: As Media for Weaving Together Diverse Kinds of Knowledge'

Denise Y. Arnold

The paper traces the way that disciplinary divisions in the past have influenced our views of textiles in the present, whether in the way they are presented in exhibitions and museum registers, in academic studies, and especially in the ways textiles are expressed, spatially and geometrically. It proposes that in order to approach a way of understanding textiles, as Andean weavers do, we must relocate them within the pre-disciplinary idea of 'technology' as the marriage of *tekhnē* and *logos*, and so as a form of both practice and knowledge, and as a 'total social fact'. The paper begins to lay out ways of reconstituting the idea of textiles as media for uniting and documenting, rather than dividing and forgetting, different kinds of knowledge.

'Objects of Alterity: Colonial History and the Exchange of Things in Spanish America'

Dana Leibsohn

In what ways do contemporary understandings of colonial history depend upon material things, particularly objects valued for their foreign-ness? Taking a cue from early modern accounts of cross-cultural trade, and drawing examples from recent writing on the art of Spanish America, this paper examines this theme by exploring what constitutes a 'good colonial object' – both in the early modern period, and in the present.

'Typification, Exoticism and the Blurring of Disciplinarity: Visualizing the "Bororo"'

Luciana Martins

This paper analyses the ways in which travellers, state officials and anthropologists have visually represented the 'Bororo' from 1830 to 1940. Focusing particularly on the film *The Last of the Bororos* (1930-31), produced by the American traveller and filmmaker Aloha Baker, it aims to expose the historical contingency and mutability of typifications, as well as to shed light on the porosity of disciplinary boundaries.

'Appetite and Deprivation during Foetal Formation in the Andes'

Tristan Platt

Based on an ethnographic and linguistic study of maternal mortality in Bolivia, this paper aims to transcend the opposition between 'essentialist' and hybridist interpretations of indian society by showing that the juridical concept of 'originary indian' (*indio originario*) is necessarily constructed by indian commoners as 'essential' without therefore denying his/hers constant historic transformation. The rites of separation of the 'aggressive foetus' from the mother also pose questions to psychoanalysts concerning the influence that perinatal experiences can have on the formation of the individual person in different historical and cultural contexts.

'Mestizo Medicine in the Spanish Atlantic'

Iris Montero Sobrevilla

This paper explores how native Mexican notions of health, the body and the soul intersected with European ones in the Colonial period. Focusing on the treatment of epilepsy, this intersection is analysed by looking at remedies based on indigenous materia medica, particularly hummingbirds. There is scant information about how these cures were understood to work. But by piecing different types of sources together – pre-Columbian codices that illustrate the role of deities in managing cosmic energy, for instance, and Colonial sources that point to the etymology of disease terminology – some insights can be obtained. Looking at hummingbird-based remedies opens the window to understanding the association of this animal with native Mexican mythology and religion, and the transmission of these connections into mestizo medical practice.

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Biographies

Denise Y. Arnold is an Anglo-Bolivian anthropologist. She has been Leverhulme Research Fellow and ERSC Senior Research Fellow in the UK, and has taught at the UMSA and Universidad PIEB in La Paz, Bolivia, and the Universidad de Tarapaca in Chile. She is Research Professor in the Department of Iberian and Latin American Studies at Birkbeck, University of London, where she is organising the AHRC research project *Weaving communities of practice*, and Director of the Instituto de Lengua y Cultura Aymara in Bolivia. Among her recent co-publications are *The Metamorphosis of Heads: Textual Struggles, Education and Land in the Andes* (2006), *Hilos sueltos. Los Andes desde el textil* (2007) and *Heads of State: Icons, Power and Politics in the Andes Ancient and Modern* (2008).

Philip Derbyshire is a British Academy Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Iberian and Latin American Studies at Birkbeck, University of London, working on the cultural and geographical imaginaries of North Western Argentina.

Dana Leibsohn writes and publishes about hybrid forms of visual culture in colonial Spanish America. Her current projects include a book, *Made in Mexico, Made in China*, on early modern trade and histories of globalization, and *Seeing Across Cultures: Visuality in the Early Modern Period*, a volume of essays she is co-editing. As the Priscilla Paine van der Poel Professor of Art History at Smith College (Northampton, MA, USA), she teaches classes on Latin American visual culture, the history of architecture, and global exchange in the early modern world.

Laura León Llerena is Lecturer in Latin American Colonial Studies at Birkbeck's Department of Iberian and Latin American Studies. Her research focuses particularly on Andean history and literature. Her current work concerns the Huarochirí Manuscript, an anonymous native Andean text written in the Quechua language around the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth century in Peru. Her research interests include early modern literature and history of Spain, Portugal and the New World, translation studies, postcolonial studies, cultural anthropology, religion studies, and the ethnography of writing.

Luciana Martins is Senior Lecturer in Luso-Brazilian Studies at Birkbeck, University of London. Originally trained in architecture and urban planning, she specialises in visual and material culture, cultural history and the history and philosophy of geography, with particular emphasis on visibility and travel. Her publications include *O Rio de Janeiro dos Viajantes: O Olhar Britânico* (2001) and the co-edited volume *Tropical Visions in an Age of Empire* (2005). Currently writing a book-length project, *Tropical Light: Documentary Film and Photography in the Making of Modern Brazil*, on the Brazilian image world in the early 20th century, she is also working on the AHRC-funded research project *Weaving Communities of Practice*.

Tristan Platt is Professor of Anthropology and History at St Andrews University and SAS Visiting Professorial Fellow for 2010/11. His research interests include South America, Andes, Bolivia; language, writing and politics; history and anthropology; liberalism and rebellion; textuality and silence; myth, memory and archive; colonialism, postcolonialism and ethnogenesis; mining, metallurgy and money; migration. His most recent publication is *Qaraqara-Charka. Mallku, Inka y Rey en la Provincia de Charcas (15th-17th centuries)* (2006), with Thérèse Bouysse-Cassagne, Olivia Harris and Thierry Saignes. He has taught at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris 1985, 1999) and at the Centre for Pre-Colombian Studies (Warsaw 1991, 2003), as well as in postgraduate programmes at many other Universities in Europe, Latin America and the USA.

Iris Montero Sobrevilla is a doctoral candidate at the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge. Originally trained in International Relations, she has been consultant to the United Nations Development Programme and is co-founder of the Mexico City-based think tank 'Fundación Este País'. She received an MA in Eighteenth-Century Studies from the University of Warwick in 2000. Since, she has combined her interest in the history of scientific knowledge production with her work in the field of development. At Cambridge, Iris is writing a dissertation on how knowledge about New World nature traveled back and forth across the Atlantic in the early modern period - and how it transformed in the process. She has published on unrepresented nations and peoples, eighteenth-century epistolary cultures, Beaumarchais and the public sphere, and Darwin and hummingbirds.