



★ MUSÉE DU QUAI BRANLY
JACQUES CHIRAC

DISTANCE AND SPEED

RETHINKING THE IMAGINATIVE POTENTIAL OF SPACE AND VELOCITY IN INNER ASIA

7th and 8th of March 2019

musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, salle de Cinéma

International symposium open to the public

Cairn surplombant la vallée de Harhira, Mongolie (Uvs), 2001 ©G. Delaplace



This conference proposes to examine how distances and speeds of humans and non-humans are engaged together in Inner Asia. People whose ways of life depends on mobility, such as herders, hunters and traders, have their own means of estimating temporal – spatial processes and they have to operate by coordinating their own velocities with those of others. Their imagination does not stop at the practical and observable, but constantly reaches out to conceive of other potential velocities. Changing technologies, from railways to satellite dishes to mobile phones, insert new speeds and spatialities; but how these innovations relate to existing cosmologies (religious and political) has till now been little studied. On the one hand, the land in its existence in itself is always ‘beyond’ us, and its entities, such as mountains, lakes or whole regions, have their own spirit-masters. With desertification, certain areas of Inner Asia have become uninhabitable by herders, so some portions of land are abandoned to land masters, and with increased separation from them comes an increased sense of their presence as dangerous, which is a disruption of one fundamental ‘distance relationship’ constitutive of what could be called the right way of dwelling in Inner Asia. On the other hand, the peoples of this region have long engaged in complex relations with abstract political entities (‘modernity’, ‘progress’, the state, the nation, the homeland), and these too involve conceptualizing distance, closeness and speed.

Scientific committee: Grégory Delaplace, Université Paris Nanterre & Caroline Humphrey, University of Cambridge



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PROGRAMME

THURSDAY, MARCH 7 (SALLE DE CINÉMA)

9h30 **Caroline HUMPHREY** (University of Cambridge) & **Gregory DELAPLACE**
(Université Paris Nanterre) - **Introduction**

Panel 1 – Pacing human and non-human gaits

Discussant: **David SNEATH** (University of Cambridge)

10h00 **Charlotte MARCHINA** (INALCO)

Coordinating speeds and keeping distance: herders and their animals in Mongolia

10h30 **Alex OEHLER** (University of Northern British Columbia)

Pacing the multi-species household: examples from the Eastern Saian Mountains

11h00 Coffee break

11h15 **Thomas WHITE** (University of Cambridge)

Governing animals at a distance: environmentality, responsibility, and pastoralist futures in Inner Mongolia.

11h45 Discussion

12h30 Lunch break

Panel 2 – The state at a distance

Discussant: **Isabelle CHARLEUX** (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)

13h30 **Lars HØJER** (University of Copenhagen)

The distant yet intimate temporalities of a Mongolian mining project in the making

14h00 **Ivan PESHKOV** (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan)

From caravan routes to railroad lines: “speed” as spectacle of external modernity

14h30 Coffee break

15h00 **Tatiana SAFONOVA & Istvan SANTHÁ** (Central European University & Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest): *Astronauts of East Siberia: Broken Infrastructures and State Imitation in Isolated Village*

15h30 Discussion

16h15 Movie screening. *The Brigade*, by Liivo Niglas (2000), followed by a discussion chaired by **Dominique SAMSON** (INALCO)

18h00 Cocktail

FRIDAY, MARCH 8 (SALLE DE CINÉMA)

Panel 3 – In and out of the nutag

Discussant: **Morten PEDERSEN** (University of Copenhagen)

9h30 Bumochir DULAM (Mongolian National University, Ulaanbaatar)

Understanding nationalism through nutag in contemporary Mongolia

10h00 Bernard CHARLIER (Catholic University of Leuven)

From the countryside to the city, missing the homeland among new migrants in Ulaanbaatar

10h30 Gregory DELAPLACE (Université Paris Nanterre)

The ruler, the wrestler and the archer. Imposing oneself and composing with the (home)land in Mongolia

11h00 Coffee break

11h15 Sayana NAMSARAEVA (University of Cambridge)

Understanding nutag re-entry motion

11h45 Discussion

12h30 Lunch break

Panel 4 – Mapping out speed

Discussant: **Caroline HUMPHREY** (University of Cambridge)

14h00 Laurent LEGRAIN (Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès)

Frictions of terrain and attention to the world. How to deal with the scattering effect in Mongolian rural daily life

14h30 Christos LYNTERIS (University of St. Andrews)

Distancing Plague: Alexandre Yersin and Disease Mapping in 1898 Nha Trang

15h00 Discussion

15h30 Coffee break

Panel 5 – Making journeys

Discussant: **Rebecca EMPSON** (University College of London)

15h45 Caroline HUMPHREY (University of Cambridge)

Horse-relay (örtöö) and caravan (zhin): the imaginative implications of two modes of transport in early socialist Mongolia

16h15 Charles STÉPANOFF (EPHE)

Finding the way among the skies: Shamanic maps and mental paths

16h45 Discussion and Concluding remarks