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## EDITORIAL

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The following issue explores one of the oldest significant migratory connections in both Irish and Scottish history – that connection binding the two countries to France. Often romanticised through reference to the Flight of the Wild Geese or the conceit of an Auld Alliance, both Ireland and Scotland have claimed a special affinity with their Gallic cousins. A shared cultural Celticism binds their national self-images, just as much as a tactical engagement with England's rival to European and Imperial power brought Ireland and Scotland into the French political orbit. Much work has been done on precisely these engagements, exploring the myth history of the Celt and how the Jacobite communities in Britain's other kingdoms integrated into the French military system. Yet beyond such potent symbolic ties, the value of a French connection to the Irish and Scottish populations is often obscure. In evaluating their intellectual and cultural engagement with France this volume makes its contribution.

In doing so it draws structural inspiration from Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* (2004). Therein, Casanova postulates the existence of an autonomous realm of literary power, with its own economies of credit, brokers of worth and 'central banks' holding cultural capital (23). At the heart of this transnational polity of the imagination Casanova places Paris – 'the capital of the literary world, the city endowed with the greatest literary prestige in the world' (24). To it, the cultural producers of Ireland and Scotland were, and continue to be, drawn. From as far back as the sixteenth century, Irish and Scots have gone to Paris for education and inspiration. In that, they allow us to draw out one of the postulates in Casanova's thesis; that Parisian centrality is a consequence of 'political liberty, elegance, and intellectuality', a configuration that sustains the 'historical and mythical' literariness of the city (24).

The following essays take up those categories, beginning with the foundational intellectual institution of the University of Paris. Both Alexander Broadie and Tom McNally illustrate how the University acted as a lodestone for Scottish academics and students alike. Then, political liberty is interrogated in four essays which concentrate attention on the decade of the French

Revolution. The first two, those by Liam Chambers and Michael Rapport also highlight the fate of the Irish and Scottish Colleges in that tempestuous decade, while the second pair, authored by Michael Brown and Sylvie Kleinman, focus on the explicitly political ramifications of an encounter with revolutionary France through a case study of individual Scottish and Irish travellers. The elegance to which Casanova alludes is the topic of the next two contributions. John Morrison points up how Paris was to replace the Netherlands as the focal point of Scottish artistic culture in the nineteenth century, while Maebh O'Regan provides a survey of a generation of Irish artists trained in the French capital. Cumulatively these contributions set the context for the final essays, by Paul Shanks and Gavin Bowd. They attend directly to the place of France in the world literary culture that Casanova outlines. The continued vibrancy of France in the poetic imagination is illustrated by our final contribution, a newly published work by David Kinloch.

But these essays do more than illustrate the possible power of Casanova's central conceit. They also shed light on the place Casanova assigned to the translator in 'establishing value' through 'the power of consecration' and the 'enrichment' of the source culture and the recipient (23). The people who populate the pages that follow were all, to a greater or lesser extent, involved in the process of cultural translation, communicating with and disseminating French culture from positions within the Celtic hinterland. Their power, as polyglots, was in no sense peripheral, however, for it was precisely the depth and longevity of their engagement with French culture that credited it with the capital it embodied.

This volume is a result of an AHRC sponsored research project on the Irish and Scottish Diasporas since 1600 which runs out of the University of Aberdeen, for details of which readers can go to [www.abdn.ac.uk/riiss/events](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/riiss/events). A critical part of this wider exploration, concerned as it is with the cultures of migration and the intellectual ramifications of encountering foreign shores, this volume is the first in a sequence which will study the investment migrants make in their adopted land, the resources that they bring with them, and the cultural capital they retain in their place of origin. In that, the current volume sets the agenda for some later issues of the *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*.

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