



Seminar

YU LIU

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*The Inspiration of a Different Thought Process:
China in the Rise of English Romanticism*

Tuesday, 22 May, 11:15 a.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala
www.swedishcollegium.se

S W E D I S H
C O L L E G I U M
for ADVANCED STUDY

ABOUT YU LIU

Yu Liu holds a BA in English from Luoyang Foreign Languages Institute in China, an MA in Applied Linguistics from Lancaster University, an MSc in English from the University of Edinburgh, and a Ph.D. in English from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Since 1994, he has been teaching full-time at Niagara County Community College in Sanborn, upstate New York. He is the author of *Poetics and Politics: The Revolutions of Wordsworth* (1999), *Seeds of a Different Eden: Chinese Gardening Ideas and a New English Aesthetic Ideal* (2008), and *Harmonious Disagreement: Matteo Ricci and His Closest Chinese Friends* (2015). He has also published over thirty essays in peer-reviewed journals of literature, philosophy, and history.

In addition to many short-term library research fellowships in the United States and Britain, he was the recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 2006–07 and a Fulbright Lecturing/Research Fellowship at the City University of Hong Kong in 2012–13. For the past twenty years or so, he has been studying the Jesuit China mission in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and the momentous impact of that early modern East–West encounter on the subsequent history of English and European artistic, literary, and philosophical ideas. During his fellowship at SCAS, he will continue his research on this subject, paying particular attention to the possible participation of Chinese aesthetic and philosophical ideas in the rise of English Romanticism.

ABSTRACT

In scholarship the aesthetic and intellectual impact of China on Europe in the early modern period is often presented as a form of orientalism or a misguided benign projection of Western ideas onto the Far East such as chinoiserie. This line of study is interesting and useful, but misses something much more fundamental and important for the formation and indeed our very understanding of Western modernity. Via a well-known controversy among Catholic missionaries in China in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries about Chinese sacred names and memorial rites and the surprising garden design reform in England in the early decades of the eighteenth century, I will discuss briefly how a way of thinking beyond the usual binary either-or paradigm was transferred from China to Europe in the early modern period and how this may have constituted the most significant and consequential inspiration of China for Europe and helped to prepare the rise of English Romanticism.