This lecture will focus on the fate of two Tahitians, Ahoturu and Omai, who travelled in Paris and London in 1769 and 1774. Both are said to have aroused intense curiosity from the public. How to interpret this curiosity? What did it mean in the context of the multiple debates on human diversity that had been raised by Enlightenment thinkers? Did it foreshadow the appalling success, during the 19th century, of colonial exhibitions and human zoos? Or did it rather illustrate Enlightenment cosmopolitanism and the ambivalence of modern universalism?

Friday, November 17
5:30pm
Music Room, Rochambeau House
84 Prospect Street

The Department of French Studies at Brown University presents: