**2014 AFEA conference, Paris**

**American civilization Graduate seminar, May 21st**

*Organized by :* Anne Ollivier-Mellios (Lyon II) and Luc Benoit à la Guillaume (Paris-Ouest Nanterre)

*Respondents* : Hélène Le Dantec (Paris 3) ; Céline Murillo (Paris 13) ; Marianne Kac-Vergne (Amiens) ; Evelyne Payen (Paris 3) ; Frédéric Sylvanise (Paris 13) ; Laurence Cossu-Beaumont (Paris 3), Agnès Derail-Imbert (ENS Ulm) ; Monica Michlin (Paris 4)

**PROGRAM**

*9:15 Welcome and opening comments*

**- 9:30-10:15 Literature/Civilization Workshop 1** **: Abolitionist novelists**

*Respondent* : Laurence Cossu-Beaumont (Paris 3) ; Agnès Derail-Imbert (ENS Ulm)

 Dan Farbman, « 19th century abolitionist lawyers », (Harvard, USA)



**- 10:15-11 Workshop 2 : Science fiction films**

*Respondent* : Monica Michlin (Paris 4)

-  Pablo Gomez Munoz, « Complex narratives in contemporary science fiction films » (Zaragoza, Spain)

*11:00-11:15 Coffee break*

**- 11:15-12:15 Workshop 3** : **American cinema**

*Respondents* : Marianne Kac-Vergne (Amiens) et Céline Murillo (Paris 13)

- Rebecca Franklin-Landi, « McCarthyism and the Cinema of Fear » (Aix-Marseille)

- Noelia Gregorio, « The Rebel of Chicano Cinema, Anglo-Mexican Intertextuality in Robert Rodriguez’s films » (Alcala, Spain)

12:15-12:45 Discussion

*12:45-14:30 Lunch*

**- 14:30-15:15 Workshop 4** : Transatlantic Cultural Influences

*Respondents :* Hélène Le Dantec-Lowry (Paris 3) ; Evelyne Payen (Paris 3)

- Nicole Leopoldie, « The Franco-American Love Affair : Transnational Marriage and Cultural Infatuation in the 19th and 20th Century », (Arlington, USA)

- Joseph Malherek, « Émigré scientists of the Quotidian : Market Research and the American Consumer Unconscious, 1933-1976 », (George Washington, USA)

15:15-15:45 Discussion

*15:45-16:00 Coffee break*

**- 16:00-16:45 Workshop 5** : Popular Music

*Respondent* : Frédéric Sylvanise (Paris 13)

- Marie Demars, « The traditional music of South Louisiana Creoles of Color », (Montpellier 3)

**17:30**  : Arnaud Roujou de Boubée / Séverine Peyrichou (Fulbright/ French American Commission) : Bourses et soutien à la recherche / Fellowships and support for researchers

**ABSTRACTS**

**Dan Farbman, « 19th century abolitionist lawyers », (Harvard, USA)**

My dissertation focuses on five antislavery/racial justice lawyers at four chronological junctures across the 19th century. These lawyers, for various reasons, turned to the form of the novel as either an extension of or alternative to their work as lawyers. The main characters of the story are: in the 1830s (the birth of radical abolitionism), Gustave de Beaumont and Richard Hildreth; in the 1850s (the height of the sectional conflict), a radical abolitionist lawyer named John Jolliffe; in the 1870s (during and in the aftermath of Reconstruction) Albion Tourgee; and in the 1890s (as the cloud of Jim Crow was descending) Charles Chesnutt. Beaumont’s 1835 novel *Marie; ou L’esclavage aux États Unis* lays the groundwork for the project in a number of ways. First, contrasting his project to his famous friend’s *Democratie* published in the same year, Beaumont argues that he chose the form of the novel because it was better suited to discuss the customs of American life, while Tocqueville’s treatise/essay format was better suited to a discussion of the political institutions of American democracy. Beaumont thus sets up a dichotomy between a formalist and theoretical view of American public life and a more critical examination of the prejudices and inequality at the root of American culture. This rings of what Roscoe Pound would later call the difference between the law in books and the law in action. By suggesting that the novel might be a tool to address the subtler questions how race and racism is embedded in the substructure of American law, Beaumont lays the groundwork for the lawyer/authors that follow.

Hildreth followed it most directly, writing the first edition of *Archy Moore* (the first novel about American slavery in English by and American) directly after reading both Beaumont and Tocqueville while he convalesced in Florida in 1835. The later authors followed the example in various ways as they sought a forum for their utopian ideas of justice and equality that were so often unwelcome or silenced in the courts. Take, for example, John Jolliffe. He was a lawyer in Cincinnati before the outbreak of the Civil War and he had a hand in defending nearly every fugitive slave who came across to Ohio from Kentucky. Most famously, he unsuccessfully defended Margaret Garner (Toni Morrison’s historical reference for *Beloved*). Losing case after case, serving as the only public voice of accused fugitive slaves doomed to be returned to the south, Jolliffe saw an opportunity after the 1852 publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* to further his own advocacy by writing two antislavery novels. Though commercially unsuccessful, Jolliffe’s novels offer a window onto his own life as an lawyer for fugitive slaves and dramatize the limits of permitted expression within the boundaries of his legal practice.

Beaumont is the most salient transatlantic character in my project. He was a vector of the continental image of the sentimental negro into American literature. But he is not the only connection to Europe. At the end of their careers, in failing health and having been found too radical for the domestic political scene, both Albion Tourgee and Richard Hildreth were appointed to European consulates. Hildreth spent his last years in Trieste (he is buried beside Theodore Parker in Florence) while Tourgee ended his life as consul at Bordeaux.

**Pablo Gomez Munoz, « Complex narratives in contemporary science fiction films » (Zaragoza, Spain)**

The main objective of my PhD thesis is to study contemporary science fiction films (2000-2015) from a cosmopolitan perspective. While filmmaking is becoming more transnational, it is obvious that Hollywood is the leading film industry in the world. Even though I consider English-language films from different countries, American films constitute the core of my research material. During the last two decades, the social sciences have shifted their main object of interest from globalization to the cosmopolitan paradigm. Cosmopolitanism is no longer seen as an universal, ideal project. Rather, the new cosmopolitanism condition signals the current awareness of the relevance of transnational interactions and their consequences. Throughout its history, science fiction has connected to society's imaginaries. Just as cosmopolitanism, science fiction creates imagined futures to interpret the present and the past. Due to its capacity to articulate particularly complex stories and concepts, science fiction is a film genre that is specially well-equipped to study cosmopolitan phenomena. This dissertation project draws on the imaginary worlds that science fiction creates to explore the transnational experiences that human beings have. My analysis focuses on transnational and cosmopolitan imaginaries, the division and differentiation between spaces of poverty and prosperity, borders, transnational couples and families, aliens as a metaphor of immigration, connections among people in different places and times, and the centrality of learning and critical thinking to cosmopolitanism. In order to study the relationship between visual, narrative, and conceptual complexity of these films and their cosmopolitan character, I employ visual and narratological analysis. In addition, I resort to science fiction film genre theory and social studies on borders and cosmopolitanism.

**Rebecca Franklin-Landi, « McCarthyism and the Cinema of Fear » (Aix-Marseille)**

The aim of this thesis is to interpret the manifestations of McCarthyism and its consequences on American society, through the lens of cinema. The anti-communist crusade, instigated by Senator Joseph McCarthy’s allegations of high-level spying activity, developed a distinct rhetoric which echoed the contemporary geopolitical situation – the country, like the world, was split between Them and Us. US citizens had to choose which side they were on and publicly declare and defend their beliefs. McCarthyism was particularly toxic as it affected every aspect of the American way of life, feeding on people's fear and paranoia so that denunciation became an accepted part of the American consciousness.

In order to understand this fear, this research combines a civilisational approach with the study of a selected corpus of films. The study is divided into three chapters analysing the economic, social and political pressures which conditioned the US and Hollywood, followed by a fourth chapter on the aesthetic portrayal of fear in Hollywood cinema. The pervasiveness of these themes also emphasises how strongly McCarthyism was interwoven into the fabric of American society. This is particularly true for certain key myths and beliefs, notably Manifest Destiny, American Exceptionalism, the Myth of the Self-made Man and the American Dream.

The decision to use a selection of films by three major directors; Kazan, Hitchcock and Zinnemann, relates to the men behind the films more than to their preferred genres. All three directors were born outside of the United States and they all became American citizens. At a period when the question of what it was to be American was so central, this study places particular emphasis on the duality these directors represented as foreigners in an adopted land, and the extent to which their personal history, combined with the events of the time, impacted on the films they made between 1946 and 1954.

This study has posed various problems: determining the choice of films, the exact dates for the analysis, and the question of structure. The themes which underpin this subject are often interdependent and attempting to divide the subject into clearly defined chapters when fear is an all-pervasive element has been a difficult, even artificial, task. Furthermore, fear is not easily quantifiable. The fear that McCarthyism generated is visible solely as a subtext in our filmography and thus we must depend heavily on subjective interpretations. To counterbalance this, the films have been contextualised by studying the specificities of Hollywood at that time, as well as the social and political movements that aided and intensified McCarthyism. Another troubling issue faced by every historian is perspective. The problem of evaluating an era from a twenty-first century viewpoint, influenced at a conscious and subconscious level by current assumptions and experiences, was another key factor in the choice of a contextual, civilisational approach. These challenges make a systematic and sensitive approach essential, but also add to the fascination of the subject and its ongoing repercussions.

**Noelia Gregorio, « The Rebel of Chicano Cinema, Anglo-Mexican Intertextuality in Robert Rodriguez’s films » (Alcala, Spain)**

Latinos are established as an essential part of both demographics and cultural networks in the United States. Nevertheless, in the last few decades, especially due to the so-called “Latino Boom” of the 1990s, the media interest in this ethnic group has dramatically increased, mainly due to the demographic growth and upward mobility of Latinos. In this context, my dissertation explores the cinema of Robert Rodriguez, as both harbinger and main practitioner of a significant change in trend, in which Latinidad spreads, to a greater or lesser extent, through the Anglo community of the United States, while at the same time embraces postmodern views such as hybridity and transnationalism.

Since movies are direct and indirect reflections of the historical moments in which they are made, the representation of Chicanos in U.S. films also follows these trends. The medium’s traditional representations of this ethnic group indulged in negative stereotypes. As film scholar Charles Ramirez Berg claims, the history of Latino images in U.S. cinema is in large measure a pageant of some basic stereotypes such as the harlot, the greaser or the Latin lover (2002:66). In opposition to these traditional mainstream Hollywood conventions, we find the Latinos’ own view, in particular that of the Mexican American filmmakers. This Latino ethnic group, especially since the creation of Chicano cinema in the 1970s, has explored and analyzed their own experience and their coexistence with the Anglo community by rejecting Hollywood mainstream visual techniques and narrative patterns.

Within this context, which brings together two apparently divergent cinematic realities such as mainstream Hollywood and independent Chicano cinema, Chicano filmmaker Robert Rodriguez puts forward a syncretic discourse that gathers certain characteristics from both cultures. Chicano filmmaker Rodriguez’s cinema maintains the Chicano’s “strong connections to both their nation of origin and the one to which they have migrated” emphasizing “a two-way movement across relatively fluid national borders” (Kanellos 2008: 1164). Thus, in his filmography, there is no place for exclusion as both ethnic realities, Chicano and Anglo, are intertwined in order to strengthen the mainstream ties and the Latino visibility.

This research understands the work of Robert Rodriguez as a turning point in contemporary Chicano cinema. In order to explain that, this dissertation suggests that it is possible to enter mainstream media institutions and maintain one’s ethnic identity, focusing in this case in the Latino community. Robert Rodriguez’s work represents the integration within Hollywood mainstream cinema of a new cinematic tendency that defies the current national borders and, at the same time, joins together Hollywood dominant norms and the social pattern of independent Chicano cinema.

**Nicole Leopoldie, « The Franco-American Love Affair : Transnational Marriage and Cultural Infatuation in the 19th and 20th Century », (Arlington, USA)**

My doctoral dissertation examines America’s long-standing fascination with France and the Franco-American marriages that were manifested out of this fascination. Here, the concept of transnational marriage provides a unique prism through which to view long-standing, complex, cultural encounters that have continuously occurred between French and American societies. Because marriage is a microcosm of larger cultural and social values, explaining them is essential to further exploring and uncovering the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of the United States and France.

In an attempt to address both why these marriages occurred and their subsequent cultural results, I examine three historical contexts: The first occurred during the late-nineteenth century when wealthy American women searching for increased social status entered into matrimonial unions with members of the French aristocracy. Central to my analysis here are the characteristics of wealthy American society and its fascination with French food, clothing, and architecture, all as part of a mark of elite status. The second context occurred during the world wars when local French women married American soldiers and accompanied them back to America. Finally, the third context takes place in the second half of the twentieth century when university students living and studying in the US and France married local residents. Here my focus rests on the formation of transnational cultures and spaces between French and American societies.

Explanations put forth by much of the existing scholarship have pointed to socioeconomic motivations in attempts to explain the occurrence of transnational marriages. By drawing on cultural history, transnational history, migration history, and the history of emotion, I argue, however, that greater analytical considerations need to include both cultural and emotional motivations to satisfactorily explain their occurrence. Emotions, often excluded from the study of history because they are hard to capture, played a significant role in both the migration and marital experience, and they proved to be an essential motivating factor. I specifically argue that by participating in a transnational marriage, one bound oneself permanently not only to one’s spouse but also to the culture of that spouse. Motivations for these marriages were therefore strategic and based on preconceived notions of what they believed the other culture to be.

Moreover, I also argue that an examination of Franco-American marriages needs to be put into a broader transnational analytical framework. The study of these marriages can tell us much about the resulting formation of transnational spaces and the characteristics of these spaces. I argue that while a physical migration of one of the participates does occur in each of the three historical contexts, rather than being completely integrated into one society or another, both parties essentially leave their respective societies and enter into a third liminal space—a transnational space—one that is neither entirely French or American.

**Joseph Malherek, « Émigré scientists of the Quotidian : Market Research and the American Consumer Unconscious, 1933-1976 », (George Washington, USA)**

My dissertation, “Émigré Scientists of the Quotidian: Market Research and the American Consumer Unconscious, 1933-1976,” examines the role of professional market researchers in creating the media, images, materials, and spaces of modern American consumer culture. I argue that a new kind of motivational research, introduced during the Great Depression by a cohort of émigré social psychologists, revealed the inherent tension between American cultural values and capitalist economic imperatives. Marketers used the findings of the new research to craft appeals to a growing middle class of consumers that played a critical role in sustaining the postwar economic boom. The mass marketing of this period evoked popular expressions of anxiety over conformity, but the fracture of the mass market and the rise of segmented marketing strategies in the late 1950s presaged the emergence of identity politics in the 1960s. This tectonic cultural shift prompted a vigorous debate over the role of “mass culture” in American society, the alleged “manipulation” of consumers by cynical marketers, and the social striving caused by the broader availability of status symbols in the form of consumer goods. My project uses the history of marketing—documented in thousands of market research reports and client files that are my main primary sources—to examine the profound social and cultural changes that defined the U.S. in the mid-twentieth century.

The narrative of my dissertation is structured by an analysis of several Austrian and German émigrés. My first chapter introduces Paul Lazarsfeld, a Viennese sociologist who was a methodological innovator in the field of market research. He founded institutions that provided jobs for his fellow intellectuals in exile, including members of Max Horkheimer’s Institute for Social Research. I argue that Lazarsfeld applied socialism’s moral concern with social stratification to capitalism’s economic problem of producing and maintaining markets. My second and third chapters focus on the controversial work of the psychologist Ernest

Dichter, Lazarsfeld’s Viennese colleague, who applied Freudian psychoanalysis to the practice of market research, for which he was attacked as a “manipulator.” My fourth and fifth chapters consider two designers: Victor Gruen, another Viennese, an architect whose commitment to social democracy motivated his designs of postwar, suburban shopping centers in the U.S., which he envisioned as organized community centers for pedestrians; and Walter Landor, a German graphic designer who applied the aesthetic ideals of Bauhaus

modernism and the psychological principle of *Gestalt* to the design of consumer product packages. Gruen’s malls became an essential part of the suburban landscape, and Landor’s corporate logos, brands, and consumer product packages became part of the American vernacular aesthetic.

These entrepreneurial refugees, who fled the rise of Nazism in Europe, applied Continental ideas, theories, aesthetic principles, research methodologies, and leftist political commitments to the practical problems of marketing in the U.S. As immigrants, they were uniquely positioned as analysts and critics of the American consumer psyche, and as émigrés, they were keenly aware of the power and potential danger of commercial propaganda. They intervened in American capitalism where culture matters most: in marketing and consumer behavior.

**Marie Demars, « The traditional music of South Louisiana Creoles of Color », (Montpellier 3)**

The word Creole can take on several meanings according to the geographical region or to the field of research you are referring to and to use it correctly is always a thorny problem. When applied to present-day Louisiana, Creole refers to the French, Catholic African-Americans living in the rural Southeast region of the state also known as *Acadiana*. A highly mixed people, Creoles (also known as Creoles of color or Black Creoles) descend from French and Spanish settlers, former slaves, free people of color (*gens de couleur libres* –mixed-race people from the local bourgeoisie who were not enslaved), refugees from Saint Domingue and Native Americans. After Reconstruction, Creoles who were until then protected by a specific status found themselves at the bottom of the social ladder after the introduction of Jim Crow Laws in the Southern states; too Black to be accepted in the privileged world of White people, too White to be part of the African-Americans, Creoles also had to face the double stigma of speaking French and being Roman Catholic. Today, one of the last remnants of Louisiana Creole culture is found in zydeco, an accordion-driven musical genre combining old French music and blues.

My research thus focuses on this traditional music of South Louisiana Creoles of color, and more specifically on the role played by radio in the preservation and promotion of Creole culture and identity. Many books and scholarly articles are easily available in libraries and on online research platforms such as JSTOR, questions can be sent to artists and scholars through emails, Skype sessions can be organized, but none of this can replace an extensive field work in Louisiana. Starting April 4th, I will thus spend a month there, searching the archives of the Center for Louisiana Studies (located on the campus of the University of Louisiana in Lafayette) and of various local radio stations throughout the state, and most importantly conducting numerous interviews with musicians, club owners, radio hosts, producers, record company managers and members of the Creole community.

As an English Studies doctoral candidate, this will be my first time doing field research and ethnomusicology work, which is quite stressful but highly challenging. Participating in these *Doctoriales* would be a great opportunity for me to share my recent experience in the field with other PhD students and to discuss the importance of field research for Americanists living and studying outside of the United States.