

**51<sup>st</sup> AFEA Congress**  
**May 21-24, 2019**  
**University of Nantes**  
**“Discipline and its Discontents”**

**Workshops**

Abstracts should be sent to the workshop organizers by January 28, 2019.  
Length: 250 to 300 words, written in English or French. Please include a short biography.  
We wish to remind you that all workshop organizers and all speakers have to become members of the AFEA. It is not possible to present at two different workshops.

**Workshop 1. “Bad Form”: Models of Dissent in American Contemporary Poetry. H  l  ne Aji (Universit   Paris Nanterre) and Fiona McMahon (Universit   de Bourgogne Franche-Comt  )**

As readers of American contemporary poetry in France will concur, the aftershocks stemming from “negative modernity” (E. Hocquard), a concept that has underwritten the arts since the end of the nineteenth century, are still recognizable today. Amongst poets, “bad form” may be understood as a vector of practices especially prevalent amongst avant-garde or modernist aesthetics that defy the notion of a pre-established, disciplined form for poetry. The countless variants of contemporary writing define departures from a teleological premise to craft. The emphasis lies with the enactment of writing as it continues to stand outside conventional boundaries of form. The “reengagement of the negative” (B. Watten) in contemporary poetry and critical theory is of equal weight when considering how aesthetic transgressions can translate as a form of cultural or ideological “intervention” (B. Watten). This atelier will investigate the relationship between the aesthetic and the cultural, with respect to the transformative agency of dissenting models of form. Discussions focussing on the discursive currency of “bad form,” as deployed by critics and poets alike are thus welcome. Speakers will bring to light the “de-stabilizing energies of formal innovation” (C. Noland), whether they concern early twentieth century avatars (as exemplified in J. Rothenberg’s *Revolution of the Word*), mid-century sound and visual poetries, later experiments such as Language Poetry or Flarf, conceptual writing or current forays into performance, digital forms, and intermedial practices. Select Bibliography:

Hocquard, Emmanuel. *La Biblioth  que de Trieste* (1988).

Noland, Carrie and Barrett Watten. *Diasporic Avant-Gardes: Experimental Poetics and Cultural Displacement*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

St. Onge, Jeffrey and Jennifer Moore. “Poetry as a Form of Dissent: John F. Kennedy, Amiri Baraka, and the Politics of Art in Rhetorical Democracy.” *Rhetoric Review*, 35:4, 335-347.

Rothenberg, Jerome. *Revolutions of the Word : A New Gathering of American Avant Garde Poetry, 1914-1945*. Exact Change: 1974.

Watten, Barrett. *Questions of Poetics: Language Writing and Consequences*. University of Iowa Press, 2016.

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**Workshop 2. An undisciplined discipline: the challenge of pop cultural studies. Dani  le Andr   (Universit   de La Rochelle) and Charles Joseph (Universit   Rennes 2)**

Questioning what the discipline of pop cultural studies is aiming at and stands for in 2019 challenges its very identity but also its relationship or even parenthood to other fields that it sometimes aggregates with or encompasses to create something new. Hence the discipline itself needs to be addressed and updated as ever-changing, rooted in multi-, cross-, inter- and transdisciplinary dynamics, making of its undisciplined quality its first defining element.

Analyzing pop culture objects is also the locus to question normativity and the power of discipline, a notion that compels culture and the arts to correspond to a norm, or to imprison diversity with labels. Such is the case for instance by opposing high to low culture, pop music to opera, or hard to soft science, etc. But pop culture productions can be read on many different levels as they have been engineered to accommodate the greatest number and, as such, they are precisely a combination of different elements of society. Because pop culture is a reaction to people's perception of themselves and their immediate environment, it will always need to be apprehended according to theoretical frameworks that will need to be adapted to these objects and their place and time of emergence. Because pop culture is undisciplined in its essence, pop cultural studies need to integrate a similar characteristic, while trying to maintain academic credibility.

Over the past decades, more scrutiny and attention have been given to pop culture productions and they are now considered valuable research objects in the field of American studies. Yet when it comes to cultural studies as a branch of research, the notion of discipline becomes problematic, mostly because intersectionality is at the core of what it stands for. Even more so, the field of research itself has been challenged by the rise of popular culture studies departments that have appeared in now several American universities, complexifying anew this already intricate field of research. While popular culture studies are often described as a merger of cultural studies and communication studies, thus now opposing cultural studies and popular culture studies, it could also very well be argued that this theoretical distinction should not exist. Instead of opposing cultural studies and popular culture studies as two faces of the same coin, shouldn't we advocate for *pop cultural studies*, thus legitimizing pop culture objects of research while carrying forward the legacy of a vastly rich and ongoing theoretical background?

Pop culture productions themselves also question this segmentation through their diversity and their ability to mix different arts and mediums. There may be no limit to what popular culture can do, precisely because there is no specific definition for the field of research that it is intimately connected with. Popular culture is defined by its lack of discipline, or more likely by its undisciplined nature which makes it what it is: a never-ending cultural production which either questions society in its impaired functioning, or celebrates its alternate or subversive voices (through novels, films, comics, TV shows, games, etc.). It can also be used by or use the system it is based on (a capitalist economy) and thus reproduce sameness to sell a lot, or make only a few copies to sell them at a very expensive price. Pop culture works of art are meaningful not only because of what they say, show, deal with, but also by their very belonging to an economy they cannot seem to escape, or even less so, subvert.

This workshop intends to trigger debate and discussion around a branch of knowledge that we would label *pop cultural studies* through the discipline/indiscipline dichotomy in regards not only to its theoretical aspects but also to the content analysis of pop culture productions. The papers could thus be related either to the theoretical aspects of "discipline-indiscipline-no discipline" of pop cultural studies, and/or to the contents of pop culture objects as they criticize or challenge "law and order", "normativity", "self-constraint", advocating an absence of rules or liberty to play with them, etc.

Papers can deal with, but are not limited to:

- science-fiction (*The Handmaid's Tale* or *Westworld* for instance when it comes to the very notion of discipline and indiscipline imposed upon a society, or on some groups of people; etc.), fantasy, horror (*Halloween*, etc.), adventure (*Black Sails*)
- comics (*Sin City*, *My So-Called Secret Identity*, *Deadpool*, etc.)
- games (video-games, Table top RPG with games to be played by the rule or the new forms asking for an emancipation from any rules and giving players the freedom to invent the story)
- street art (now used to ornate city walls, but also street art to criticize society)
- music (punk, rap, .... How music has been created and used through time to go against or to break free from)
- sports (where self-discipline is necessary but where people can also express their indiscipline towards social problems, such as American football player Colin Kaepernick kneeling during the national anthem to protest against police brutality, etc.)

- literature (exploding the way novels are written or were written (blank pages, words that form a drawing, deconstructed sentences, Newspeak, etc.))
- Collectibles & franchising consumerism
- Transmedia narratives (*Buffy* seasons 8 to 11 in comic books, Richard Kelly's *Southland Tales*, etc.)
- American Indian pop culture, etc.

Grounded in a transdisciplinary perspective, the workshop is open to all approaches which may further the understanding of these questions. Proposals may put forward different fields of study and theoretical frameworks and approaches.

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### **Workshop 3. Radicals and Disciples: American (Counterculture) Poetry mid-1950s-mid-1970s. Anna Aublet (Université Paris Nanterre) et Peggy Pacini (Université de Cergy-Pontoise)**

This workshop will not work against but with and through canons of reading and writing poetry. From the mid-1950s largely into the early 1970s, American dissident/radical/countercultural poetry was all merged into or overlapping with what some critics called the Beat school or what the media ultimately labeled the Beat Generation. Moreover, a number of anthologies also partook in blurring schools and movements at that time on disputable criteria and categories alongside partisanship of "closed form" and "open form", among them Don Allen's *The New American Poetry* (1960). This is somehow a restrictive approach this workshop wants to challenge focusing on poets and poems from the countercultural poetry scene of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s on the West and East Coast. This workshop would like to address questions of doctrine and method allegiance and disobedience in the construction of the distinctive voice of the disciple outside canons, schools and movements.

We welcome proposals on:

- Poets who have proved a radical dissidence from mainstream culture and/ or academic poetry while blatantly translating or refashioning other forms of avant-garde poetic esthetics, form and language.
- The radical voice of the prophetic poet in 1950s and 1960s now canonical poems.
- Manifesto poems
- patterns of social engagement and literary experimentation
- making poetry an engaging oral art
- poetry as insurgent art (Ferlinghetti)
- political poetry / street poetry
- a poetics of resistance

We welcome proposals on such poets as: Jack Spicer, Robert Duncan, Richard Brautigan, Phil Whalen, Allen Ginsberg, Michael McClure, Gary Snyder, Lenore Kandel, Diane Di Prima, Bob Kaufman, Gregory Corso, Harold Norse, Philip Lamantia, Carl Solomon, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Jack Hirschman, Kenneth Rexroth, LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka, Jack Micheline, Joanne Kyger, Anne Waldman and others.

Often considered as outsiders, then and for some still now, these radical poets innovated as well as worked into and through a canon outward. While their poetry was an experiment in form, consciousness and esthetics to bring about a radical, social, political vision, it nonetheless worked at remodeling, reshaping, altering traditional, lyrical, romantic or avant-garde forms, myths, and voices.

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### **Workshop 4. Getting off the Grid: Disciplined / Undisciplined TV Series. Ariane Hudelet (Université Paris Diderot) and Sylvaine Bataille (Université de Rouen)**

For a long time, TV series were considered as standardized, commercial products. Inserted in a channel grid, each episode was expected to attract an audience wide enough to satisfy the sponsors and advertisers that made the very existence of the series possible. TV shows had to comply with several types of discipline: in terms of duration, they needed to adjust to the generic format – shorter episodes for sitcoms, longer for dramas; in terms of structure, they had to follow a strict set

of landmarks: *recap*, narrative arcs or acts corresponding the commercial breaks, cliffhangers, etc. Closely watched by the FCC, they also needed to obey strict rules in terms of censorship. There were precise limits to what they were allowed to show in terms of sex, violence, or profanity. It did not, however, prevent narrative audacity, as had been the case with cinema at the time of the Production Code. Serial audiences were also supposed to follow a certain discipline, since they had to be in front of their TV sets at a specific time to be able to watch these shows.

Since the turn of the 21st century, many of these constraints seem to have vanished or to have been reconfigured. TV series have gone “off the grid” in many respects: first, they have been dissociated from what Raymond Williams considered to be the key to television – the notion of “flow” – because of the new modes of consumption and conservation. We can now watch TV shows wherever and whenever we want, on very diverse types of screen. The universe of the series can also become autonomous through transmedia extensions of the narrative – whether they are authorized or not (fanfiction, vidding) – and can thus sometimes leave the surface of the screen entirely. The format of the episode is also challenged as an increasing number of series are produced by SVOD providers (Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime), with entire seasons being made available at once to the audience. In terms of content, premium cable channels such as HBO have opened the way to complex issues and politically ambitious, sometimes controversial, subject matter, while inviting in characters previously left off-screen. Such narrative boldness is now often found in series, from network shows to VOD series. Technical and digital evolutions, both in production and in reception, have led to a more varied range of mises-en-scène and aesthetic experiences, so that TV series can no longer be considered as primarily narrative forms but have become audiovisual works in their own right. These audiovisual fictions that are not necessarily “TV” any longer also seem to go beyond the limits of what is usually defined as a “series”, leading to renewed consideration of serial storytelling. They potentially bring nuance to the “lack of discipline” conveyed by today’s series, which constantly negotiate between new sets of constraints and reconfigurations of traditional narrative frames such as the “formula” or the episode.

In the academic context, the frames of reference for the study and analysis of TV series are also mutating. First examined within the field of media studies and social science, TV series are now an object of study for a variety of disciplines, often working together: English studies, comparative literature, philosophy, history, geography or film studies. TV series turn out to be a particularly fruitful field for the elaboration of concepts and reflections – as long as their specific codes and their integrity as works of art are kept in mind.

Papers that specifically investigate what TV series as an object of study bring to the concept of discipline (rather than case studies of discipline, or lack of discipline, within TV series) will be particularly welcome.

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**Workshop 5. From indiscipline to academic discipline in the United States: social, political, and epistemological resistances. Robin Benzrihem (Université Montpellier III – Paul Valéry), Carline Blanc (Université Paris 3 – Sorbonne Nouvelle) and Yohann Lucas (Université Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée)**

“Producing knowledge is in itself a political activity.” With these words, Annette Kuhn pointed out the political dimension that each epistemological organization or reorganization inherently carried, and stressed the fact that knowledge was a practice, before being limited to a set of theoretical guidelines, and that instruction followed construction. Following the strong mobilization of students demanding a quantitative and qualitative rearrangement of institutional space, thus articulating indiscipline and discipline, the institutionalization of black studies departments during the 1960s and 1970s stands as an example of political activity dovetailing with knowledge production. Likewise, while the 1990s “canon wars” and “culture wars” raged in the American academia on the pretense of aesthetic disagreements, the division between liberals and conservatives over which authors should be taught – whether those gathered under the expression “dead white males” or those coming from

historically minored communities – made one fact plain to everyone: the content of humanistic education was a crucial point on both sides, and barely concealed the power struggle at stake.

Identity-based studies – including, but not limited to, LGBTQ studies, gender studies, African-American studies, or disability studies – made it possible to recover the voices of the different groups which had been systematically silenced even if they were part and parcel of the nation history. However, their multiplication sometimes led to a competition for a larger share of the same institutional resources, compelling them to reinstate a form of hierarchy in which some disciplines are absorbed by other fields and reduced to the status of sub-disciplines. If one can easily trace the historical relationships uniting various disciplines, how are we to understand the double movement of subject fragmentation/ contraction at play? How can the professionalization of a branch of knowledge end up producing a hegemonic discourse?

Resistance is a key aspect in the creation of disciplines, whether it is exogenous or endogenous, geared toward transformation or conservation. It can be the doing of gatekeepers who want to ensure the stability and endurance of a discipline through a thematic, theoretical, and methodological authenticity distinct from other fields, or the doing of activists who use indiscipline to promote the recognition of their rightful place within the university. How does academia formalize knowledge, and can knowledge emerge outside university walls, in local or community institutions before being institutionalized? Is the disciplinary maze of the university a site on which subversion can thrive? Also, it is crucial to study the works of artists and writers who revitalized an academic discipline by crumbling away its outer wall, disrupting codes, forms, and functions of the art they transformed. How can artistic creation expand or displace subject boundaries?

Following Gaston Bachelard's premise stating that "Scientific observation is always a polemical observation; it confirms or subverts a prior thesis, a given scheme, a plan of observation," the workshop will attempt to analyze how resistance, power struggles, and indiscipline are inevitably intertwined with processes of knowledge formation, transmission, and acquisition. Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches will be welcome, both as a method and as a topic.

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**Workshop 6. The people's indiscipline into question: Political movements and popular revolts in the United States (1800-2018). Alexia Blin (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle- Paris 3), Tamara Boussac (Sorbonne Université/EHESS) and Marion Douzou (Université Paris 1- Panthéon Sorbonne)**

At a time when discussions about the resurgence of a populist tradition in American politics are increasing, it seems crucial to study the role given to "the people" by the political movements which claim to be speaking in its name.

Since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many movements have been calling for the disobedience of the American people, betrayed by political and economic elites, in order to redress perceived wrongs and to disrupt the established order. The Populists of the 1890s, just as the abolitionists before them, or the civil rights activists decades later, often referred to the heritage of the American Revolution and invoked the necessary popular disobedience to advance their cause. However, indiscipline sometimes oversteps the limits the leaders of these movements had envisioned and becomes unacceptable: during the workers' or the farmers' strikes of the 1930s or what is referred to as the radicalization of black and feminist movements in the 1970s, the grassroots turned out to be more undisciplined than expected.

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, American conservatives at the other end of the political spectrum have been trying to get what they see as the worrisome indiscipline of popular masses back into line. Yet, these very conservatives do not hesitate to reclaim a right to disobedience and indiscipline, in particular towards the federal government, when they see the political, economic, and racial order threatened. They do it in the name of another "people" than the one threatening them: the taxpayers, the middle class, the ordinary people. The movement of "massive resistance" in the southern states in reaction to the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* is one of many examples of this phenomenon.

Both perspectives imply to define who the people is and to evaluate the kind of indiscipline which is deemed suitable by the organizers of these movements. Should disobedience be an unorganized revolt against injustice or should it be controlled, framed and coopted by progressive or conservative leaders? Who has the right to rebel and under which conditions within American political movements?

These questions will offer the general framework of the workshop. Proposals can include perspectives on different time periods of American history, including the contemporary period.

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**Workshop 7. Mathieu Bonzom (Université Paris 1-Panthéon Sorbonne), Soraya Guenifi (Université Paris 1-Panthéon Sorbonne) and Clément Petitjean (Université Versailles-Saint Quentin)**

Has the specter of socialism at last decided to haunt America? Over the past couple of years American politics have witnessed the heightened visibility of socialism – both as a watchword and a political horizon put forth by a series of high-profile electoral candidacies (from Bernie Sanders’s 2016 campaign to various primaries and mid-terms victories in 2018 like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s in New York), by the rapid growth of Democratic Socialists of America (which reached 50,000 members this year) and also by various intellectual and cultural projects such as *Jacobin*. This striking comeback originates in the aftershock of the 2008 Great Recession but also the multiple social movements which have emerged over the last twelve years: the 2006 Latinx immigrants’ movement, Occupy Wall Street, #BlackLivesMatter, Fight for \$15, feminist and environmental mobilizations, and so on.

A topic of research in itself, this renewal calls for revisiting both the historiography and the history of socialism in the United States. To that end, it would be fruitful to open up a space for recent or current research on US political history to interact with studies that already focus on socialism or that could be read through that lens.

A 1983 conference at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) took up the perennial question “Why is there no socialism in the US?”, the original formulation of which is traditionally attributed to Werner Sombart. The most circulated paper coming out of the conference was Eric Foner’s. The historian pointed out that the difficulty in closing that debate might indicate that the question itself was fundamentally flawed and inextricably linked to various forms of political or socio-economic exceptionalism. But this may have been one of the last collective attempts to date to make possible and legitimize the development of a renewed approach to socialism in the field of American studies.

Foner’s contribution – and the conference in general – must be located at a crucial moment of the history of the Left as well as left-wing historiography. Indeed, on the one hand, the 1980s witnessed the beginning of a durable and global decline of socialism, and on the other, a shift from the “new social history” approach to politics of the 1960s and 1970s in order to “bring the state back in”. In that regard, today’s new historical context seems to facilitate renewed historiographical debates about socialism in America that could overcome certain epistemological fault lines seemingly taken for granted thirty of forty years ago.

This panel aims at fostering these debates by combining multiple disciplinary perspectives – both their objects and their methods – within American studies. In terms of history as a discipline, the panel will provide the opportunity to confront traditional political history with other approaches such as cultural, intellectual, socioeconomic and institutional history in order to grasp the specific features of US socialism and their transformations through time. The historical perspective might also benefit from works and concepts from sociology and political science and broaden the scope of enquiry to social movements, labor unions’ and political parties’ relation to the state, or activist careers and trajectories, but also the transformations of capitalism and the multiplicity of social relations of exploitation, oppression and domination. Finally, these perspectives should be combined with philosophical, literary and artistic approaches highlighting how the history of socialism in the US was (and is) both the history of a foreign language and a vernacular one. It is only through multiple

definitions of “socialism”, through efforts to strike the right balance between historicizing the object and refusing exceptionalism, that socialism can be apprehended in all its depth within American studies.

A great many research topics can be looked at through the lens of socialism, be they political movements with a socialist bend, contributions to make such movements happen or reactions to such movements. Without trying to exhaust the issue, one could think of labor, community, cooperative, reform and other social movements which have come into being in the United States for the past two centuries, but also of the transformations of electoral politics, or mass and popular culture.

The panel will thus welcome all recent or current research that might contribute one way or another to renewing the study of US socialism.

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### **Workshop 8. The claims of intimacy: struggle for revolt in American literature and cinema. Guilain Chaussard (Université Paris-Est) and Martin Berny (Université Paris-Est)**

“Whose would be a man”, writes Emerson in *Self-Reliance* (1841), “must be a nonconformist”. Making self-reliance the essential trait of the American genius, the sage of Concord provides the basis for an enduring American tradition. With *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), Hawthorne himself lays the foundations for an emblematic figure that relates closely to this model. Scorned by her own community for staying true to her heart in spite of the social constraints, Hester Prynne – permanently bearing the indelible mark of the letter symbolizing her condition – is an exemplary case, through which the author could dramatize the tension between the public and mundane self and the private and intimate desire that lies in the depth of being, as discussed by Emerson.

Through his study of the melodrama of the unknown woman, *Contesting Tears* (1996), philosopher Stanley Cavell subtly demonstrates this very “myth, that seems to present itself as a woman's search for her story, or of the right to tell her story”. Following the tradition initiated by Hawthorne's work, Hollywood melodramas translate to the screen the destiny of heroines struggling with conformity (often represented through man characteristics), their self-assertion originating from an inner trajectory. Therefore, this way of experiencing indiscipline is manifested through the inner voice of revolt – a woman's voice, oppressed and denied, struggling to recognize itself and come into the world.

Such a metamorphosis is consecrated through the work of Douglas Sirk, a fascinating case of subversion of the melodrama genre and its traditional aesthetics, aiming at bringing out “the inner violence, the energy of the characters which is all inside them and can't break through”. Films such as *All I Desire* (1953) and *All That Heaven Allows* (1955) address the inner conflict that these heroic and transgressive female figures inevitably have to confront.

Within the Hollywood canon, indiscipline finds its masculine expression, which rather tends to manifest itself in the comedy genre, through a cry, an idealistic claim. The work of Frank Capra is emblematic, especially through the characters portrayed by actors James Stewart (*Mr Smith Goes to Washington*, 1939), Gary Cooper (*Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, 1936; *Meet John Doe*, 1941) and Spencer Tracy (*State of the Union*, 1948).

This typical American tradition questions the dramatization of the unexpressed and the skepticism experienced by these Promethean figures. One might ask in what ways the limits and constraints of an oppressive society ultimately drive such individuals to make their voice heard for the whole community or to take moral responsibility for the aspects denied by the norm. Because the balance of the world seems to rely upon them, they take the reader or viewer back to his own conception of the established order and ideals.

Such works form a sustaining bond with this tradition of indiscipline from which they take their inspiration, often referencing the texts openly. Consider, for instance, the Lionel Barrymore character in Frank Capra's *You Can't Take It With You* (1938), a wacky yet inspiring protagonist, described by Cavell as a « putatively good old man, urging everybody to do what he or she likes, to have the

courage of his or her happiness, an Emersonian sage ». Mention should be made of the pivotal scene in *All That Heaven Allows* where the Sirkian heroine reads passages of Thoreau's *Walden*, holding the book in front of the camera. A more recent example would be Peter Weir's *Dead Poets Society* (1989), a film echoing explicitly through its dialogues and images Thoreau and Whitman's philosophical ideals of independence. Hollywood productions offer many other occurrences and these acts of Poetics invite us to make the connection between authors, works and mediums – a connection without which there would be no tradition at all.

This workshop will aim to build transdisciplinary approaches, inquiring the moral depth of what ties philosophy, literature and cinema together. It will favor proposals exploring the way through which the transcendentalist heritage is claimed or questioned by literature and cinema, whether the works studied are contemporary or part of the classic canon. In particular, they could build upon works from both mediums, the constant to-and-thro between these two arts, a common motif, or investigate the multiple occurrences of intertextuality, literary adaptation and use of the self-reliance archetypes from one field to the other. The proposals submitted could focus on isolated figures, women or men, whose individual path will allow for the discussion to extend to the problematic of the self facing a demanding and menacing world, a strikingly American and modern subject if there ever was one.

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**Workshop 9. Rule-making and rule-breaking: discipline and indiscipline in American dance and music. Adeline Chevrier-Bosseau (Université Clermont-Auvergne) and Danielle Follett (Université Paris 3 – Sorbonne Nouvelle)**

The history of modern music has progressed via indiscipline and rule-breaking. Richard Wagner's chromaticism stretched the fabric of tonality almost to the breaking point, and Arnold Schoenberg began to compose in such a way that would "emancipate the dissonance," thus creating atonal music. In the United States, Charles Ives incorporated discord and scraps of popular songs into his compositions, and Henry Cowell invented dissonant "tone clusters" and played the piano directly on the strings. John Cage raised the practice of sonorous indiscipline to a higher register, with his percussion compositions, his use of chance methods, his invitation of ambient sounds into the work, his experimental instruments and his disciplinary border crossings into theater and the other arts. His indisciplined "disciples," the artists associated with Fluxus, pushed this exploration even further. Earle Brown, Morton Feldman, La Monte Young, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, Philip Glass and others continued to investigate the potential of sound beyond traditional rules and limits.

And yet at the same time, not only did these composers maintain a certain discipline in their compositional work, but sometimes accentuated the rigor of their new self-imposed discipline to the point of obsession. Schoenberg's twelve-tone method used series of twelve notes organized in polyphonic variations to construct a rigorous new kind of counterpoint. This logic was extended by Pierre Boulez and other post-war composers toward a very disciplined form of general serialism. Cage, for his part, who had said that he no longer felt the need for musical structure, imposed new rules and complex configurations on his compositional method as he invented ways to incorporate chance. His compositional technique is most-often based upon what we might call "rule-making." Even his most open work, *0'00"* (1962), paradoxically emphasizes discipline; its score is made up of a single sentence: "In a situation provided with maximum amplification (no feedback), perform a disciplined action." Cage would say in 1978, "Most people who believe that I'm interested in chance, don't realize that I use chance as a discipline" (*Conversing with Cage*, 2002, p. 17). Perhaps discipline, when kicked out the front door, comes back in through the back.

This situation has a parallel in modern dance. In her famous 1903 speech "The Dance of the Future," Isadora Duncan takes a stand against the tradition of classical ballet and its strict discipline which stifles the dancers' bodies and creativity: "The school of the ballet today, vainly striving against the natural laws of gravitation or the natural will of the individual, and working in discord in its form and movement with the form and movement of nature, produces a sterile movement which gives no



birth to future movements, but dies as it is made.” Duncan therefore proposes to create a new school of dance where indiscipline would be the founding principle of the young dancers’ learning process; she refuses to impose upon them any rigid technique and encourages an individual and organic approach to movement: “In this school I shall not teach the children to imitate my movements, but to make their own. I shall not force them to study certain definite movements; I shall help them to develop those movements which are natural to them.” Duncan’s rebellious and revolutionary approach strongly resonates in the American choreographic tradition: her descendants (the Denishawn School, the New Dance Group, Graham, and even Forsythe or Cunningham) reflected throughout their lives upon their relation to discipline and indiscipline, from rejection to reappraisal – or even subversion – of the classical technique, and they all tirelessly worked to renew and rejuvenate the discipline that is dance. “Freedom may only be achieved through discipline,” Graham would tell her dancers; as this famous phrase recorded in “A Modern Dancer’s Primer for Action” shows, it is by observing a strict discipline that the dancer allows his/her body to move more freely, just as a musician practices everyday to maintain his/her agility. Only through discipline can discipline be transcended. Many American choreographers share Cage’s complex relationship to discipline and indiscipline, for example Cunningham and his work with random patterns and repetition. But this “disciplined” relation to indiscipline can also be found in the combination of styles in Robbins’ or Balanchine’s neo-classical ballet.

This combination of different styles sometimes verges on the blurring of disciplinary boundaries, from dance to musical theater, from drama to opera or dramatized dance. What kind of discipline can be associated with happenings and performances? Are these necessarily examples of indiscipline? In this panel, we will investigate the relations and tensions between discipline and indiscipline in the fields of music, dance and forms of interdisciplinary theater like happenings, performances and musical theater. How do American choreographers and composers tackle notions like discipline and indiscipline in the creative process? How do they reconcile freedom and rigorous discipline (or not)? Another possible lead could be the relation to discipline and indiscipline in the learning process of American dancers trained in the many schools that were created in the wake of Duncan’s revolutionary school: Denishawn School, the Martha Graham Company School, and Black Mountain College. How is a company’s artistic identity shaped, between discipline and indiscipline? The connection between discipline, indiscipline and modernity could also be investigated: is modernity necessarily undisciplined? Is discipline necessarily stifling, as Duncan professed? How can the complex relations between randomness and discipline in avant-garde artistic productions be understood? These are a few of the questions that this panel will discuss.

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**Workshop 10. Racial consciousness and the (self-)discipline of performing race. Cécile Coquet-Mokoko (Université François Rabelais) and Nathalie Loison (Université Paris Est-Marne-la-Vallée/Université Paris XI)**

In theorizing the concept of double consciousness in the early 20th century, W.E.B. Du Bois deeply anchored in personal experience the awareness of being a subject defined by race, and as such, unable to ever fully counter the implications of the dominant gaze on one’s own existence, including self-perception. In such circumstances, self-discipline seems impracticable in any constructive manner, as racialized individuals are at war with themselves, being compelled to make room for a gaze that negates them.

During the Great Migration (1915-1960), almost 6 million African Americans hailing from the Deep South of the USA moved to big cities in the North, the Midwest and the West. As a result, the cultural codes born from the confrontation with slavery and Jim Crow (*de jure*) segregation had to adjust to environments where social stratification was more complex, for it added several new layers of ethnicity to the Euro-American (or WASP) norm. For instance, Harlem first saw Ashkenazi immigrants living together with African American migrants, some of whom eventually converted to their

neighbors' religion before the latter left in the 1930s. The cultural movements that called for increased social recognition for African Americans, from Marcus Garvey's UNIA to Noble Drew Ali's Moorish Science Temple to Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam, each systematically worked to reverse the racial stigma by elaborating individual strategies of empowerment—such as manufacturing Moorish identity cards, celebrating Black women's beauty, or refusing to be drafted—which can be read as so many forms of indiscipline. Yet, in the same breath, these same organizations used coercion to have their members comply with injunctions of respectability, which then paradoxically encouraged a tightened monitoring by the community of individual self-presentation. This collective control was justified by the awareness of having to fight battles over racial images where the outcome would be entirely dependent on empathy, or lack thereof. Beyond the phenotypical markers dictating the racial labeling of individuals, Blackness also became a matter of performance, in the sense where Judith Butler speaks of gender performance.

The dominant gaze, it seems, still has not disappeared from the various processes of homogenization of racial protest. Today as in the decade of the Civil Rights Movement, earning the right to be respected requires a close individual micromanagement of one's reactions and appearance in the public sphere, while one's speech (i.e., word choice, intonation and voice patterns) may still escape self-discipline in all-Black spaces which remain safe spaces. We may, however, question the persistence of a tendency to monitor acceptable behaviors and censoring unacceptable ones (such as talking White, dating out, being too Black or not Black enough, selling out) in a new millennium when hyper connectedness makes safe spaces increasingly porous.

This workshop aims to use the concept of performance and an intersectional approach to explore explicitly or implicitly normative discourses regulating the (self-)presentation of racialized subjects in various public spaces, as opposed to safe spaces, at various time periods. Presentations may address any time period in U.S. history and may also focus on other racialized groups than African Americans. It welcomes doctoral candidates as well as more experienced scholars.

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**Workshop 11. The pragmatist imagination: moving across or against artistic and scientific disciplines. Hélène Cottet (Université de Lille) and Antonia Rigaud (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle)**

This workshop will confront John Dewey's thought and its influence on both American culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and our own assumptions as Americanists. It should offer us an opportunity to go over his seminal yet sometimes silent presence in American studies. Calling into question the limits separating traditional fields of expertise, Dewey's thought on pedagogy, esthetics, and politics, deserves further attention, as does his promotion of democracy as an ideal. We seek to bring together scholars in literature, history, the history of ideas and art history, willing to consider the influence of Dewey and pragmatism on the way we structure our disciplines and sometimes move beyond them.

The workshop will be twofold:

- One area of inquiry will bear on context and look into the institutions and social circles which shaped Dewey's career. Taking a closer look at a "pragmatist moment" spanning the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, we shall measure the importance of Dewey's intellectual *milieu*. Intellectuals such as Charles Peirce, William James, Jane Addams, who helped him in the elaboration of his own theories, but also Alain Locke and W.E.B. Du Bois, influenced by pragmatist theories, are certainly of interest in this context. Colleagues, such as Thorstein Veblen and George Herbert Mead (Chicago) or Franz Boas (Columbia), and students, among whom we find the undisciplined figure of Randolph Bourne, also help us understand the institutional contexts Dewey was part of. Taken separately or together, what is the legacy of these intellectuals, what disciplines have they helped to define, how did they question the boundaries of their own fields? Bearing in mind the process of professionalization which the American university was undergoing at that period, we can maybe better understand the innovations taking place in disciplines such as sociology,

anthropology, art history or cultural criticism, or appreciate more fully Dewey's, James's and Peirce's interest in experimental science.

This is also a moment when intellectuals were concerned with a new theory of education, one that makes sense in a "pluriverse" marked by uncertainty and change. The "Laboratory School" in Chicago which made Dewey famous is truly the *experiment* on which a new theory of knowledge can be based. What are the lessons to be drawn from it today – at a time, for instance, when change indeed "intervenes" between one generation and the next?

Do the democratic ideals of such an experiment still speak to us, and can the university accommodate a vision of knowledge as socially constructed? Education, pedagogy, teaching, are controlling concerns to be seen everywhere in Dewey's work, and they might be of relevance to our own methods and assumptions.

- Another area of inquiry will concentrate on the ways in which the pragmatist imagination has informed and defined a specifically American aesthetic, from the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Dewey was an important figure for modernist poets, especially authors associated to *The Dial* such as William Carlos Williams or Marianne Moore. His crucial presence can also be found behind the major pedagogical and artistic experiment that was Black Mountain College. Black Mountain College inaugurated an aesthetic tradition, upheld by names such as John Cage and Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg and Charles Olson, and which this workshop can examine anew. Looking beyond Black Mountain, we can question more generally the importance of the pragmatist imagination in American art: how has creativity been redefined in the wake of pragmatism? Has the pragmatist aesthetic changed over the course of the century?

Dewey's insistence on the notion of process has authorized new dialogues between the arts. In *Art and Experience* Dewey wrote: "It is no linguistic accident that 'building,' 'construction,' 'work,' designate both a process and its finished product. Without the meaning of the verb that of the noun remains blank". How do the notions of process and experimentation resonate with American art? *Art and Experience* has had a central role in constructing an aesthetic of performance which can be reconsidered here, especially in relation to the field of performance studies.

Finally, the pragmatist imagination invites us to think about the politics of art. Defining the real as that which is constantly rediscovered, pragmatism suggests that art can involve a democratic and collective experience. How did his notion of democracy influence American art and how relevant is it today?

Possible topics of discussion are:

- The intellectuals who were part of a "pragmatist moment". From within (or without) which disciplines — how did they collaborate — what is their common denominator?
- The pragmatists in relation to their own "disciples".
- Chicago as intellectual breeding ground during the Progressive Era — the new disciplines that the city may have fostered.
- Dewey's influence on theories of education and the links between his theory of knowledge and our teaching methods. The idea of a "laboratory" school.
- Dewey's democratic ideal now and then. The dialogue we can establish between Dewey's philosophy and that of African-American thinkers such as Du Bois, Cornel West or Fred Moten.
- Dewey's legacy in the arts (20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries).
- The influence of the "New Pedagogy" on aesthetics; how art schools such as Black Mountain College, The New School for Social Research, the California Institute of the Arts, have helped structure an American aesthetic. More generally, the relationship between pragmatism and institutions of learning.
- Politics and art, the relationship between art and democracy.
- The notions of art and experience at work in literature and the arts.
- The notion of experimentation.

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**Workshop 12. Ideological Discipline and Indisciplined Parties: Political Parties and the Challenge of Polarization. Fran ois Vergniolle de Chantal (Universit  Paris Diderot) and Alix Meyer (Universit  de Bourgogne)**

If the US pioneered the creation of modern political parties – classically defined by E.E. Schattschneider (1942) as “an organized attempt to get control of the government” –, their national politics is merely based on the coexistence of two electoral machines lacking the means of enforcing party discipline among their members. Since the 1970s democratizing reforms of the nomination process, the American political market has been perceived as largely dominated by individuals vying for electoral success during the primary cycle to become their parties’ nominee. To survive electorally, candidates rely on party labels merely to be easily identified by voters. Such a configuration, analyzed by Nelson Polsby as early as 1983, prevents any party discipline since political entrepreneurs of all stripes keep the upper hand.

Does the current state of American politics reflect this theoretical vision of an omnipresent lack of party discipline?

Over the past few decades, polarization has been on the rise (McCarty, 2006; Nivola & Brady, 2006; Abramowitz, 2010). This shift, triggered by the southern realignment in favor of the Republican Party, paved the way for an ideological sorting of both political parties. Thus, polarization makes it increasingly more difficult for congressional parties to reach across the aisle and also prevents collaboration between Congress and the Presidency. Few lawmakers are ready to go along with the opposite party. Congressional roll-call votes perfectly capture this rise of party discipline.

How may one account for this change in party behaviors? More specifically, who is in charge of party discipline nowadays? Political parties themselves seem to be too weak to perform that function. The Speaker, as the institutional embodiment of the majority party’s will in the House of Representatives, should be in a position to have his/her decisions respected. But the forced resignation of Speaker John Boehner in 2015 after a radical minority of his Caucus contested his leadership clearly shows that this is not the case. If the Freedom Caucus successfully defeated the Party Establishment, isn’t it proof that party discipline is lacking? How else to understand the successful Trump onslaught on a GOP that was initially hostile to his ideas and his candidacy? The argument made in *The Party Decides* (Cohen, Karol *et al.*, 2008) seems rather weakened, at least as far as nominations are concerned.

Beyond these contemporary debates, this panel also aims at questioning party discipline – or the lack thereof – in American history. In many ways, the current situation bears similarities with past periods. Party cleavages and rising polarization echo the Gilded Age. Partisan and ideological maneuvers in the judicial nomination process are reminiscent of Taney’s Justiceship. All while the rather indisciplined President proudly displayed the portrait of Andrew Jackson in the Oval Office.

American political parties have always been largely unable to create a collective coherence and have been easily captured by individuals or social movements (Scholzman, 2015) who wanted to further their own goals. The parties’ structural weaknesses pave the way for a whole series of para-party organizations and groups gravitating around them with various degrees of independence. For instance, as far as campaign finance is concerned, PACs and Super-PACs are in competition with political parties, which are unable to control the financing of their candidates and thus impose a form of discipline. Advocacy groups, networks and associations of all kinds (NAACP, NRA, NARAL etc.) are illustrative of this point. These organizations are so deeply anchored in the electoral arena that it is now useful to conceive of them as para-partisan groups. It is often through their actions that a form of partisan or ideological discipline is enforced from the outside, thus making up for the lack of coordination from parties.

Organizers welcome proposals for this panel that address the sources and evolutions of party discipline across American history.

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**Workshop 13. At the crossroads of discipline and indiscipline: American autobiography. Laure de Nervaux-Gavoty (Université Paris-Est Créteil) and Delphine Louis-Dimitrov (Institut Catholique de Paris)**

In “Self-Reliance”, Emerson exhorts his contemporaries to free themselves from the fetters of other people’s judgment and to remain faithful to their true selves: “No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature.” Emerson’s injunction to nonconformism and indiscipline strikingly echoes the very principles of autobiographical writing: staging a subject at odds with the conventions of his time, this genre appears in many ways as an inherently unruly act which strives to define new configurations of self through constantly renewed literary forms. Discipline, however, has always been integral to it too, from the budding expressions of the genre on the New Continent to its more modern developments. A complex dialectic movement weaving together discipline and indiscipline thus seems to be at the basis of American autobiography.

Life writing is first and foremost a discipline, a self-imposed constraint meant to contribute to one’s self-improvement. For the Puritans, it entails a set of writing rules that go hand in hand with a rule of life. Thus, their diaries, autobiographies and captivity narratives meticulously relate a spiritual journey and assess the narrator’s improvement and failures. As an instrument of meditation, confession and prayer, Puritan introspection – as in the archetypal narrative of Mary Rowlandson – is also a discipline in the original sense of the word: it is a form of punishment, of pain, and of asceticism meant to instruct and spiritually educate the author as well as the reader. Likewise, in Benjamin Franklin’s autobiography, self-improvement, which results from a strict moral discipline, is central to the self-made man’s life-course and is set forth as an example to the reader. In a radically different way, the principles of Puritan autobiography also underlie confessional poetry: while giving voice to one’s suffering, this genre enacts a self-imposed therapeutic and cathartic discipline that is offered to the reader as an example and testimony. The task of the writer is then to impose a formal structure on an intractable material that will not be disciplined.

As a liberating form, autobiography is also a mode of dissidence, contestation and resistance consisting in both the refusal of an external discipline and the definition of a freely chosen writing discipline. *Walden* is thus the literary counterpart of Thoreau’s dissident withdrawal into the woods, expressing the refusal of the social discipline weighing on citizens; meanwhile, it advocates and strives to put into practice a principle of transparency that other writers are called on to follow: “I, on my side, require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life.” The articulation of dissident and resisting indiscipline with the definition of a literary discipline is even more flagrant in slave narratives, where the denunciation of slavery is achieved by taking up well-

established literary conventions and following a formal discipline that paradoxically participates in the emancipatory force of this literary genre.

This dialectic movement between discipline and indiscipline runs throughout the formal experiments of XX<sup>th</sup> century autobiographies, especially the works of Henry Adams, the modernists – HD, Gertrude Stein, Mina Loy – and their followers – Joe Brainard, Lyn Hejinian, Alice Notley or Theresa Hak Kyung Cha to name but a few. Their attempts to render the elusive movements of consciousness as well as the opacity of a plural self give rise to a dazzling array of formal innovations which, while they do away with the rules of the autobiographical genre such as chronological unfolding, the claim to authenticity and the rejection of fiction, or the identity of narrative and authorial voices, nonetheless follow other self-imposed, generic or formal, principles.

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**Workshop 14. Screen resistance: rogue cinema and the art of indiscipline. Emmanuelle Delanoë-Brun (Université Paris Diderot) and Delphine Letort (Université du Maine)**

Hollywood classic cinema was long governed by conventions whose terms were set out in the Hays Code in 1934. Still, the strict regulation acted as an incentive as much as a deterrent, as numerous directors circumvented the list of dos and don'ts to question their underlying ideologies or to address topics banned from the screen. The prohibitions of the Hays Code expressed concern that certain types of films may be detrimental to the moral sense of the nation. Yet, to Michel Foucault, the power of film was of a different nature, one defined as "a mode of action that does not act directly and immediately on others, but which acts on their own action" (Michel Foucault, "Le sujet et le pouvoir" (reproduced in *Dits et écrits II*, 1976-1988, Paris, Gallimard, 2001, 1041-1062)). Cinema is therefore believed to help discipline bodies and ideas by promoting cultural hegemony.

This workshop will focus on deconstructing such tenets by analyzing films that challenge cultural hegemony and its heteronormative models. We will study independent films as well as the works of directors who try to subvert the system from within, undermining the expectations of censorship or questioning dominant values from the margins. Drawing inspiration from Rick Altman's writings, we wish to reflect on the notion of film genre in order to highlight the spaces of subversion within genres, such as film noir for example; or more broadly, we wish to examine and question the negotiations between the mainstream and its margins, that have recently agitated even the world of blockbusters. Finally, we want to analyze the production strategies of directors (women, minorities) who aim to express singular experiences on screen from the margins of mainstream Hollywood. The place of actors and actresses in this cinema will also be considered as a central element of an undisciplined aesthetic, which explores improvisation as a source of creation.

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**Workshop 15. Representing slavery: at the crossroads of art and history. Anne-Claire Faucquez (Université Paris 8) and Androula Michael (Université Jules Verne Picardie)**

Writing, spreading and teaching the history of slavery have become more necessary than ever. Faced with the rise of racial tensions in the United States, with this hatred fed by ignorance, it seems obvious that this story must be exposed to the greatest number. After the advent of social history in the 1960s-1970s, which suggested to rewrite the history of slavery from the point of view of the slaves themselves, rendering their "agency" and moving them away from their status as victims, the last two decades have seen the emergence of an international conscience on the duty of memory that took the form of many events opening the issue to the public domain: the establishment of commemorative dates (the day of March 25 celebrating the *International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*), the erection of monuments and memorials (the *Ark of Return* or the *Permanent Memorial at the United Nations in the Honor of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade* in New York), or the opening of museums such as the

*National Museum of African American History and Culture* in Washington, D.C. or the *Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration* in Montgomery, Alabama.

This craze for commemoration and the memory of slavery has led to the creation of a profusion of representations through the visual arts and literature. We can think of writers Toni Morrison (*Beloved*, 1982, *Mercy*, 2008), or more recently Colson Whitehead (*The Underground Railroad*, 2018), visual artists like Kara Walker (*Narratives of a Negress*, 2003), or Tom Sachs (*Barbie Slave Ship*, 2013), directors like Steve McQueen (*12 Years a Slave*, 2013), Lee Daniels (*The Butler*, 2013) or Quentin Tarantino (*Django Unchained*, 2012), the dancer-choreographer Rhodnie Désir, and his *Bow't project trail* or the jazzman Archie Shepp.

In this workshop, we would like to take into account the diversity of these artistic forms (fictions, sculptures, installations, performances, drawings, paintings, photographs, films, television series, dance and theater) and to question their roles in the transmission of the history of the slave trade, slavery and abolition in the Americas. By reflecting on the relationship between history (*Histoire*) and story (*history*), we could explore how artists and writers get their inspiration from the historical material (archives, collected objects etc.) to interrogate the past; or conversely, the way in which historians resort to art to interrogate the silences of history differently.

These representations of the history of the slave trade, slavery and abolition have long fed the American imaginary, conveying myths that are sometimes far removed from the historical truth but which have remained tenacious and have come to forge the collective memory of the country. How do memory and history complement each other in the construction of American identity? How do the United States try to overcome this traumatic past? Can art have a cathartic dimension in accepting the past? What role can these artistic forms play in the writing of memory?

It is this reflection that we would like to conduct by bringing together Americanists specialized in different disciplines (historians, anthropologists, ethnologists, historians of ideas, art historians, specialists of literature, film and theater studies or visual arts). By gathering a multiplicity of artistic productions from various origins, forms and eras (from the Antebellum South, up to the recent controversy on Confederate monuments, through the Jim Crow South, and the period of the Civil Rights), portraying the slave trade, slavery and abolition but also conversely, stigmatizing the African-American population (in the *Minstrel Shows* for example), we would like at first, to reflect on the relationship between art and history, and then to open up these questions to the place of the "extra-disciplinarity" or "interdisciplinarity" in our Americanist studies.

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#### **Workshop 16. The In-Discipline of Poetics. Theoretical Resilience and Practical Authority. Yves Gardes (Université Paris Dauphine)**

Because it resists many attempts at definitional elucidation, poetics is an open and unstable discipline which harbors intimate processes of recovering authority. Resilient to the adversity of

ordinary language, poetic expression allows Emerson, for example, to triumph over the tautological impasse of philosophy. In his essay "The Poet" (1844), he even states the following: "Language is fossil poetry. As a limestone of the continent consists of infinite masses of the shells of animalcules, so language is made up of images, or tropes, which now, in their secondary use, have long ceased to remind us of their poetic origin." Moreover, adding that "every word was once a poem," Emerson sees poetry as the origin of a language which, just as the soil is made up of different fossil strata, is formed by the superposition of different tropes and images. This analogy between language and fossils allows us to consider normative language as a dying mode of expression, emptied out of its vital poetic spirit. Emerson's phrase however seems paradoxical, for his observation suggests that the remembering of the poetical survives the depoetizing of language – that the depoetized nevertheless shows signs of a poetic past. Beyond Emerson, what is at stake here is a form of theoretical resilience which encourages us to question the very nature of poetics. Does it only consist of images and tropes, whose growing usage throughout history reduces the metaphoric reach to finally absorb them into ordinary language? Does it mean that poetics cannot be permanently defined, for it seems doomed to leave – or even to deny – its defining traits and to reformulate them untiringly? Or does poetics on the contrary most steadily ground itself in this constant instability, which could be seen as the foundation of its resilience?

If poetics is seen as resilient to the adversity of ordinary language, its mode of expression can be seen as an intimate process of recovering authority, and as political indiscipline. Is resorting to poetic expression then consequential to some conscious commitment or does it precisely originate in the unconscious desire to oppose prevailing authority? Does poetic expression precede the construction of a new authorial discourse as it favors personal insurrection, or does it form the very textual space where new authority may unfold? In any case, isn't there a paradox in defeating dominant authority and founding a more personal form of it, whether temporary, or, on the contrary, atemporal? To answer these questions, this panel, not limiting itself to works of poetry, will welcome papers on the discipline of poetics and the different features of its theoretical resilience, as well as on the indiscipline of poetics and the different processes of recovering political authority, as well as on the indiscipline of poetics and the different processes of recovering political authority.

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### **Workshop 17. Foucault, discipline and the U.S. penal and carceral history. Simon Grivet (Université de Lille) and Yohann Le Moigne (Université d'Angers)**

Michel Foucault maintained a close relationship with the United States. Invited to deliver a seminar at the University of Buffalo (New York) in 1970, he had regular stays, especially in California, from 1975 to the time of his death in 1984. This period corresponded to the publication in French of *Discipline and Punish* (quickly translated in English), a book which brought forward the appealing but somewhat mysterious rise of "discipline" to explain the western predominance of prison in the western economy of punishment from the 19<sup>th</sup> century on<sup>1</sup>. To the question "Why prison?", he offered answers which allowed a radical reconsideration of the question of social control. The choice of prison resulted from a will to render the State's control invisible. For Foucault, the goal was to "unveil and analyze how the various disciplinary devices communicated, devices whose aim it was to generalize the punitive function in the social sphere"<sup>2</sup>. In this perspective, one of the principal functions of prison is to "create delinquency" and impose the figure of the delinquent as a counter-model so as to justify a larger control of populations<sup>3</sup>. However, prison as theorized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was not meant to exclude deviants. To the contrary it was contemplated as a tool to

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<sup>1</sup> The book was published by Gallimard in 1975, then translated in English by A. Sheridan and published by Vintage in 1977.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-François Bert, « 'Ce qui résiste, c'est la prison.' Surveiller et punir, de Michel Foucault », *Revue du MAUSS*, 2012/2 (n°40), p. 161-172

<sup>3</sup> Frédéric Gros, « Foucault et 'la société punitive' », *Pouvoirs*, vol. 135, Issue 4, 2010, pp. 5-14.



rationalize behaviors: transforming individuals by restoring the inmate's morality according to the dominant social order.

Foucault's book was published at a time of intense mobilization for prisoners' emancipation (San Quentin, the Attica riot in the U.S., several mutinies in France supported by the creation of the Prison Information Group, etc.), a context which also informed the publication of several important historical works on the same topic by scholars such as David J. Rothman or Michael Ignatieff<sup>4</sup>.

Since that time, Foucault's theories about discipline have never ceased to be used, discussed and debated by social scientists working on the U.S. justice and prison systems<sup>5</sup>. Foucault now belongs to the same mandatory canon when studying crime and punishment together with Marx, Durkheim or Weber<sup>6</sup>.

Meanwhile, the U.S. carceral system underwent major transformations with the development of a prison industrial complex characterized by the emergence of private actors supposedly offering more efficient services to relieve the State of some of the costs of mass incarceration. After the publication of Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* in 2010, several other works confirmed that mass incarceration was disproportionately affecting minorities (mainly African Americans and Latinos)<sup>7</sup>.

Almost half a century after *Discipline and Punish*, this panel would like to question the pertinence of Foucault's vision of discipline to analyze and explain justice and prison in the United States, from both a historical and contemporary perspective.

We will welcome contributions in history, American studies, sociology, geography or anthropology which offer a critical dialogue between research on the U.S. justice and carceral system, and Michel Foucault's work.

The following questions are of special interest to us:

- Does Foucault's thesis of the rise of discipline still make sense today to explain the birth of the prison in the antebellum United States?
- How can we update Foucault's ideas in the wake of some of the evolutions impacting the U.S. judicial and carceral system since the 1970s such as mass incarceration or the continuing use of the death penalty?
- Can we compare the project of transforming individuals defended by 19<sup>th</sup> century prison advocates to today's practice of mass incarceration? Does the goal remain to transform inmates' behavior in order to curb recidivism or is it to definitely marginalize some categories while making comfortable profits?
- *Discipline and punish* questioned the necessity and the inexorability of incarceration as a punishment and a corrective tool. How does American society fare when it comes to elaborate alternative means of incarceration and more generally which criticism(s) of prison can we find in the U.S.?

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<sup>4</sup> David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum, Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic*, [1st., Boston, Little, 1971, 376 p. ; Michael Ignatieff, *A just measure of pain: the penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*, Columbia University Press morningside ed., New York, Columbia University Press, 1980, 257 p. Rothman wrote a critical yet admiring review of *Discipline and Punish* for the *New York Times* in February 1978.

<sup>5</sup> See for instance Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of virtue: punishment, revolution, and authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835*, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1996, 338 p.

<sup>6</sup> David Garland, *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990, 312 p.

<sup>7</sup> Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, The New Press, 2010, 312 p. ; Heather Ann Thompson, "Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History", *Journal of American History*, Volume 97, Issue 3, 2010, Pages 703-734; John Pfaff, *Locked in: the True Causes of Mass Incarceration and How to Achieve Real Reform*, Basic Books, 2017, 320 p.; James Forman Jr, *Locking up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017, 320 p.

- Finally, we would also be interested in proposals analyzing prison as a place of political awareness and resistance to power (from George Jackson's letters at the end of the 1960s<sup>8</sup> to the strikes launched in many American prisons in August 2018) or as an object to question the dominant social and racial order.

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**Workshop 18. Michel Foucault's legacy: towards an understanding of disciplinary processes and undisciplined epistemologies in the US. Aurélie Godet (Université Paris Diderot) and Élodie Grossi (Université Paris Diderot)**

Though Foucault's work never focused on the United States and was to a certain extent "anti-disciplinary" (Megill 1987), it has been used by historians, political scientists, and sociologists since the 1990s to analyze a variety of disciplinary processes in the United States. This panel will highlight the many ways in which research on US institutions can benefit from Foucault's theoretical insights. Plantations, asylums, hospitals, prisons, schools (many of which today follow military rules and Skinnerian communication models based on stimulus and response), immigration detention centers, the family, the workplace, as well as everyday "rituals of power" (e.g., surveillance and random drug testing in the workplace, sexuality) will be considered in both their historical evolution and contemporary forms (Foucault's goal, after all, was to produce a "history of present times").

Concurrently, issues of indiscipline and resistance will be analyzed. In the first volume of his seminal *History of Sexuality* (1976), Foucault discussed the various ways in which mechanisms of social, political and even personal resistance to power can emerge (p. 125). Keeping this in mind, our call for papers invites contributions on all forms of social or political resistance in the United States, from social movements to identity politics (LGBTQ, African Americans, Latinx, Native Americans, women's rights, etc.). We especially welcome contributions that draw upon empirical studies (through ethnography, participant observations, social history, etc.) and use Foucault's theoretical framework to sustain their arguments. The idea would be to synthesize Foucault, Gramsci and more recent discussions of "agency" in order to produce a balanced description of power relations inside US institutions.

Right after giving a series of lectures at U.C. Berkeley in the late 1970s, Michel Foucault gained considerable popularity in U.S. liberal circles. His texts were studied and read by proponents of African American Studies and Women's Studies departments that started to spring up on various American campuses in the 1970s and 1980s (Boxer 2001; Caroline Rolland Diamond 2012). Consequently, we also welcome any contribution that deals with the rise (and future) of these critical (and "undisciplined") epistemologies in the United States in connection to Michel Foucault's works and approaches.

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<sup>8</sup> George Jackson, *Soledad Brother. The Prison Letters of George Jackson*, Lawrence Hill Books, 1994, 339 p.

**Workshop 19. LGBTQ+ Workshop “The Discipline and Indiscipline of Bodies”. Anthony Castet (Université de Tours) and Georges-Claude Guilbert (Université du Havre)**

At the end of the nineteenth century and during the first two thirds of the twentieth century, religious, political and medical forces often found themselves objectively allied in a moral crusade that sought to establish an immutable sexual order by disciplining bodies through the affirmation of heterosexuality as the only valid and beneficial orientation, by reinforcing gender roles and by promoting a repressive model that confines sexual intercourse to the sphere of conjugal embrace and punishes sodomy, adultery and fornication.

Women were considered only in their role as mothers and wives and could not resort to contraception or abortion. Controlling the sexual behavior of LGBTQ+ Americans was enforced at the expense of their dignity and of respect for their freedoms. The passing of the *Sexual Psychopath Laws* (1937-1967) further blackened the brand of their infamy and promoted feelings of guilt and shame by persuading them that their sexual orientation was a perversion. They were confined in psychiatric institutions, where they underwent "treatments" with often irreversible consequences (castration, hysterectomy, lobotomy, electroconvulsive therapy, self-disgust cures, untested drugs). Morris Ploscowe (*Sex and the Law*, 1951) took a strong stand against the excesses of the sexual and moral panic that LGBTQ+ Americans were the collateral victims of: "These individuals are nuisances for the most part. They create **scandal** and **annoyance**, but they are not a serious danger to the women and children of a community" (203). Their refusal to conform to the norm that had been assigned to them led to systematic discrimination and even persecution, which ended up opening the way to an insurrectional struggle against their oppressors.

Feminist and LGBTQ+ movements have never ceased to develop, taking various forms over the decades, ranging from the legendary Stonewall rioters (1969) to today's assimilationists who only want equal rights (marriage, adoption, MAP/gestational surrogacy), but also including sub-political mobilization strategies, Act Up's epic struggles in the 1980s and 1990s, and the uncompromising speeches of Hal Offen (1977): "Our rights are ours because we exist—we must demand them and fight for them—not work for them **with a promise to behave**". The LGBTQ+ movement is striving, as best it can, to represent a very diverse community and to present multiple demands through an intersectional approach, including the right to refuse to discipline bodies. The personal/private is political.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, despite unquestionable progress made in gender equality and LGBTQ+ equality, Donald Trump's accession to power has brought with it threats to existing freedoms in the fields of abortion (*Roe v. Wade*, 1973) and marriage for same-sex couples (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015). These threats are triggering protests against the misogyny, sexual assaults and harassment suffered by many women (#MeToo). Trump has significantly restricted access of transgender people to the military; "transitions" are discouraged and bans have been passed to restrict the access of their variously transformed bodies to certain places (*bathroom wars*). Despite its being a ruling with limited scope, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the pastry chef who refused to make a wedding cake for a gay couple (*Masterpiece Cakeshop*) due to his religious beliefs. Might other initiatives in the name of "religious freedom" hinder the full equality of LGBTQ+ citizens' rights? To what extent is the America of its turbulent, indisciplined president going through a renewed phase of invisibilisation and regression with regard to LGBTQ+ issues? What discourses and modus operandi have been put in place by those who reject discipline so as to be able to offer a long-term riposte and be heard?

This workshop will explore both the different means some use to discipline bodies and the various ways used by others to assert their indiscipline between 1870 (Karl Westphal, "Contrary Sexual Sensations") and 2018. Some papers will be concerned with historical facts and sociological observations, while others will examine the representation (especially on American television) of this discipline and indiscipline of LGBTQ+ bodies (religious "accommodations", multiple sex partners, unsafe sexual practices, pregnant transmen, etc.). We warmly welcome transnational submissions which, while maintaining a US focus, take a critical look at the treatment of LGBTQ+ people in Chechnya or at Justin Trudeau's apology for the purge of LGBTQ+ state officials in Canada, for example. We will carefully consider proposals for papers on conversion therapies, which also rely on

America's number one metanarrative, namely gender, which of course depends on the discipline of bodies.

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**Workshop 20. Intermediality, indiscipline and/or new discipline. Isabelle Labrouillère (École Nationale Supérieure d'AudioVisuel) and Anne-Catherine Bascoul (Université de Nice-Sophia Antipolis)**

If transmediality, at the center of Henry Jenkins' analysis, redefined the habits of a spectator "[encouraged] to search for new information and create connections between scattered media contents<sup>[1]</sup>," the theorization of intertextuality and intermediality has for a long time moved the heuristic cursor<sup>[2]</sup>. According to Rémy Besson, these two approaches are the first that led researchers to question themselves less on the contents of a strictly circumscribed form of creation, than on what is at stake between the elements which compose it or between the different types of production it can be articulated with<sup>[3]</sup>.

More precisely, intermediality, a word used for the first time by Aage Hansen-Löwe in 1983 on the model of intertextuality<sup>[4]</sup> is defined in its broader sense by Werner Wolf as: "any transgression of boundaries between conventionally distinct media of communication such transgression cannot only occur within one work or semiotic complex but also as a consequence of relations or comparisons between different works of semiotic complexes."<sup>[5]</sup>

One of the directions we would like to explore in our workshop will deal with the way intermediality used as a heuristic approach is a means of highlighting the changes in a society according to the discourses it produces and the hierarchy it installs at a precise moment in its history (a hierarchy always possibly undermined) to answer and condition, new reading and viewing regimes.

We may take cinema as an example. From its origins, cinema has been a privileged place for intermediality. Hardly its primitive period at its end, cinema borrowed its stories from literature and theatre, very often referring to writers and playwrights to adapt their works to the audiovisual medium. It is only at the end of the sixties and what David Bordwell theorized as the classical period of Hollywood cinema that the 7<sup>th</sup> art explored new means of expression not "submitted" to narrativity. This is when Stan Brakhage's experimental cinema, documentary films but also the feminist and queer movements (we think of Kate Millett's and Su Friedrich's works, but also, to an entirely different end, Barbara Loden's *Wanda*) appeared. They started to reinvent the cinematic form using the techniques of collage, assembling, narrative discontinuity, as well as performance, happening and the rejection of traditional narrative forms. However, the problems of imitation and crossing boundaries as well as the way these different forms are used as a resistance to the established power (as in the feminist and queer manifesto "Radical Content/Radical Form") are raised.

In parallel to the movement contesting the "all narrative" forms, some mainstream American films continued to revisit the matrix(es) they found inspiration in, to transcend or even cross out the original work (we can think of the ambiguous link between Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and Stoker's novel), a film being, in its extreme forms, reminiscent of total art.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Henry Jenkins, *La culture de la convergence*, 23.

<sup>[2]</sup> In the sense of a discipline that studies the research processes to explain its rules and that methodologically thinks about this activity.

<sup>[3]</sup> Rémy Besson. « Prolégomènes pour une définition de l'intermédialité à l'époque contemporaine ». 2014. <hal-01012325v2>.

<sup>[4]</sup> « Intermedialität und Intertextualität: Probleme der correlation von wort – und Bildkunst: Am Beispiel der russischen Moderne ». Wolf Schmid, Wolf-Dieter Stempel, eds. *Dialog der Texte: Hamburger Kolloquium zur Intertextualität*. Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, spec. vol.11. Vienna: Gesellschaft zur Förderung slawistischer Studien, 1983: 291-360.

<sup>[5]</sup> Werner Wolf, "Intermediality Revisited. Reflections on Word and Music Relations in the Context of a General Typology of Intermediality". 2002: 13-34, 17.

This incessant recycling conditioned by the film industry can, as a consequence, lead to a mechanical repetition where cinema is condemned to series, following episodes, prequels and sequels. This specific movement of the mainstream American cinema is thus denounced in films like David Cronenberg's *Maps to the Stars*, the intermedial approach implying, in its process itself, metatextual/metafilmic questionings.

We thus propose, in this workshop, to explore an overview to better situate and question the problems at stake in contemporary intermediality. It is, on the one hand, the intermedial practice itself as a form of discipline that will interest us and, on the other hand, the way these different forms of indiscipline integrated the mainstream culture eventually redefining the relation between the two words together (form/indiscipline) which turned into elements that are less signs of a contest than traces of a culture of convergence.

If the examples we have chosen above pertain to the field of film studies, we will also welcome propositions on other media because it is more intermediality as a hermeneutic process than where its dynamics is used that will interest us. It will be possible to explore and question all the forms of intermediality as they are presented:

- In the musico-literary domain, through the use of musical techniques in a written text (we can think of the numerous versions inspired by Bach's *Goldberg Variations*), or the text being itself at the origin of a musical composition – explicitly or implicitly – or the sound and acoustics being themselves vectors of the musicalization of fiction,
- In ekphrasis which, in our digital media era, can take the form of the fusion of different arts as in Edward Falco's *Classical Landscapes Digital Tales* (2006),
- In photography, whose presence in the body of the text can be a testimony of a socio-historical reality as used by Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White in *You Have Seen Their Faces* (1937),
- In reference to television, whatever the form, be it residual as in Don De Lillo's *White Noise* (1985) or Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) to the contamination of the scheme itself as can be seen in the televised series *Sherlock* (first instalment in 2010),
- And in an image in a general way, from comics to graphic novels, video games and illustrated novels, of which the recent text *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* by Ransom Higgs (2011) is an illustration.

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### **Workshop 21. Dissident Protest Practices: At the Crossroads or Outside of Disciplines. Guillaume Marche (Université Paris-Est Créteil)**

This panel aims to address the question of how best to examine dissident protest practices and grasp their significance: Should this be done at the crossroads or outside of disciplines? Many a protest movement in American history, whether distant or recent, has taken the path of institutionalized—or at least institutionally recognized—confrontation or negotiation. American studies scholarship has usually treated these research objects by placing itself at the intersection of history, sociology, political science, and sometimes law. But what should be an appropriate epistemological positioning to address the least canonical, least disciplined dimensions of social movement militancy? That is, how are we to grasp activism that aims to undermine social, political, economic, and cultural structures—instead of seeking access or assimilation? Does such activism also destabilize the organization of academic scholarship, or can established disciplines accommodate it?

By necessity, American studies scholars outside the United States study American society from a distance and an oblique angle that could predispose them to decentering academic disciplines. This panel therefore invites participants to consider at once two dimensions of discipline and indiscipline as presented in the conference organizers' call for contributions: academic knowledge and social behavior. Participants are invited to consider the link between the objects and tools of research—the thematic and epistemological aspects of (in)discipline. Do dissident protest practices—ranging from the most classic civil disobedience, to the most tenuous infrapolitics, to the most provocative forms of LGBTQ activism—trouble the codes of accepted collective behavior in public space to the point of

disturbing established academic knowledge? Do such forms of dissidence merely resist the norm, or do they convey a creativity that is beyond the confines of conventional disciplinary boundaries?

How is scholarship to address for instance racial minority literatures expressing feminine or LGBTQ subjectivities that are not usually comprised in African American, Native American, or Latinx movement agendas? Are sociology or political science equipped to make sense of the—not necessarily artistic—expressive gesture of writing graffiti or other unauthorized inscriptions on (public- or private-owned) surfaces in public spaces? Is the Tea Party no more than yet another manifestation of conservatism and anti-statism, or does it involve a disruption that history and political science alone cannot allow us to comprehend? While scholars who study Black Lives Matter generally do focus on its intersectional origins, agenda, and strategies, how exactly do they investigate, for example, its politics of iconic imagery? In what cases and to what extent does the intrusion of religion into politics amount to a form of dissidence (be it political or religious) whose implications reach beyond the limits of how social science can deal with either religion or politics? The same can be asked about the intrusion of erotics into politics. These are among the topics that participants are invited to explore, particularly with a focus on the challenge inherent to research based on sometimes “impure” sources.

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**Workshop 22. The Method and the Fury: American theater and American theatricality. Valentine Vasak (Université Paris Sorbonne), Julie Vatain-Corfdir (Université Paris Sorbonne) and Xavier Lemoine (Université Paris Est-Marne-la-Vallée)**

The history of the American stage is far from disciplined. Having emerged in spite of Puritan prejudices against such an “immoral” genre, American theater raised its voice against British rule in the plays of Mercy Otis Warren, split into violent camps around aesthetic rivalries during the Astor Place riots, and literally became the site of national tragedy when the laughter provoked by a whimsically comical line – “You sockdologizing old man-trap!” – was used to muffle John Wilkes Booth’s gunshot. In a nation which Tyrone Power was already labelling as a “theatrical race” two centuries ago, and whose public life seems ever more influenced by the codes of spectacular entertainment, political protest appears to be anchored in stage tradition, and vice-versa. Such protest often goes hand in hand with aesthetic boldness, when plays elude or denounce censorship (*The Children’s Hour*, *The Crucible*, *Corpus Christi*), when anarchist performances bring the stage to the street (Living Theatre, Bread and Puppet Theatre), or when writing subverts language (Ntozake Shange, Suzan-Lori Parks) as well as theatricality (Jack Smith, Richard Foreman, Reza Abdoh). Irreverence and unruliness lie at the core of American theatrical identity.

And yet what could be more disciplined than the chorus line from a musical, or an actor trained in the ways of Strasberg’s Method? What could be more civilized than the Broadway audience? What could be more exacting than the heavy ‘development process’ which presides over contemporary creation? Through a reverse impulse, American stage practices seem always to be setting up self-discipline and control as models. The field of performing arts is caught up in critical economic constraints and overseen by a powerful educational and academic system, two factors which may have a normative impact upon the works. The highly demanding physical and vocal training of the American performer is achieved through dedicated programs based on different “schools” of theory and practice, each foregrounding a variety of techniques and idiosyncrasies in keeping with the writings of Stanislavski, Grotowski or Meisner, among others. The writing process itself is often encouraged and guided in ever multiplying ‘playwriting programs’. However, let us not yield to easy binary categorization: it would be wrong to assume that discipline is always associated with traditional theater, while indiscipline would prevail among freer types of performances. The most innovative companies of the sixties were known for their rigorous military-style training routines. Similarly, the technological sophistication of the Wooster Group or artists such as Andrew Schneider and Robert Wilson calls for pinpoint precision, while immersive theater imposes strict rules upon audiences. Considering the multiplicity of stage practices in the United States, the tension between

controlling tendencies and a penchant for unruliness is perhaps best analyzed as a continuum of practices that one must strive to determine and define.

This search for definition interrogates the rise of American theater as an established discipline. Historically, drama was the last literary genre to be included in the national academic curriculum and American theater only gained world fame with Eugene O’Neil’s Nobel Prize in 1936. To this day, especially in France, American theater is often considered as less innovative than its European counterpart, except for a few experimental companies sanctioned by international theater festivals. This leads to question, on the one hand, why some of the characteristics of American theater have found a following and, on the other, why some aspects of this theater, understood as a field of study, help unpack American culture in a broad sense, including its rituals, its public practices, and its relationship to leisure and education. This workshop first considers theater as a genre but papers dealing with any other object considered “theatrical”, and analyzed through the lens of performance studies, for instance, will be of utmost interest. Intersectional and transversal practices developed by minority voices (queer, postcolonial, feminist, documentary or verbatim theater) could also provide stimulating perspectives on the subversion of the disciplinary. Transdisciplinary proposals as well as performances, readings and other kinds of initiatives undoing the logic of scholarly disciplines would be greatly appreciated.

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**Workshop 22. Discipline and Indiscipline of the American Subject in Nineteenth-Century Literature. Ronan Ludot-Vlasak (Université de Lille) and Édouard Marsoin (Université Paris Descartes)**

The emergence and constitution of an American subject in the young nation imply both discipline and indiscipline. This subject seems to arise as an acting force that is supposed to go beyond the limitations that could hinder its full realization—a sort of corollary to Jefferson’s “Empire of Liberty.” However, it cannot reach its full potential without conforming to certain types of discipline (paradoxically) meant to guarantee its autonomy and expand its capabilities of action: these include the endless necessity for the subject to outdo or improve itself, the disciplinary techniques of bodies (diets, sexual self-restraint), religious self-control, or gender models—Crèvecoeur’s *Letters*, Franklin’s *Autobiography*, and the Puritan specter haunting so many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writings, are particularly telling in this respect. Such a tension is also constitutive of the democratic subject: while revolutionary impulses or civil disobedience make indiscipline a necessary condition for a distinctly American democratic *ethos*, the citizen must also adopt a certain discipline in terms of ideology, values and action, so as not to imperil the nation’s unity. Finally, the American subject evolves in multiple spaces that involve both discipline and indiscipline. The Frontier, though it appears as a fantasized space where Pioneers can exert their will and violence, is meant to be domesticated; the city, with the development of urban planning (see for instance the New York Commissioners’ Plan of 1811), keeps metamorphosing in palimpsestic fashion, becomes a violent stage of acute social unrest, and fuels an imagination that turns it into an indomitable space where the individual is likely to lose itself; the ship, a totalitarian remnant in democratic America, imposes its unescapable “mechanism of discipline” (*Billy Budd*) upon seamen: can it produce subjects?

This workshop thus seeks to explore the ever-changing forms of an American subject that oscillates between discipline and indiscipline in the nineteenth-century American literary imagination. In works such as *The Scarlet Letter*, *Billy Budd*, or in slave narratives, writing is an exploration not only of the power strata and practices that aim to discipline (and punish) subjects, but also of the forms of resistance that they give rise to. As such, literature emerges as a site of possibilities where the subject seeks to reinvent itself. The Foucauldian mechanism is well-known: subjection entails a possibility of subjectivation. Further attention could be paid to the undoing of norms and the restoration of the subject’s heterogeneity and mutability through writing. Other topics of enquiry could include the potentialities offered by a minor mode of writing (Dickinson) or by the advent of a potential subject challenging the imperial and conquering self. The subject uncovered and tentatively articulated by nineteenth-century American literature is often ungraspable. It may be

the hiding place of unexpected violence (as in Brockden Brown's and Poe's narratives), encompass all forms of contradiction—as Whitman puts it: “Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself, / (I am large, I contain multitudes)”—or turn the impersonal into a form of indiscipline towards itself, which reshapes its relationship to the world (see, in this respect, the Emersonian subject's “whim,” or *Mardi's* narrator when he declares at the end of the novel: “Now, I am my own soul's emperor; and my first act is abdication!”). This unpredictable, unsubjected subject paradoxically escapes or resists the act of writing that seeks to grasp it. What regimes and (in)discipline(s) of writing can thus be adopted to apprehend a *homo americanus* that will not obey the law of the proper?

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### Roundtables

The congress will host three round tables, which do not take part in the call for papers.

#### **1. Undisciplining 3.0: Re-thinking the Ends of the Human(ities)**

Cécile Roudeau (Paris Diderot)

#### **2. What Does Socialism Do to American Studies?**

Mathieu Bonzom (Université Paris 1-Panthéon Sorbonne), Soraya Guenifi (Université Paris 1-Panthéon Sorbonne) and Clément Petitjean (Université Versailles-Saint Quentin)

#### **3. The Uses and Abuses of "Civilisation:" Towards a New Approach to Teaching and Research on The United States**

Nathalie Caron (Sorbonne Université) et Caroline Rolland-Diamond (U. Paris Nanterre)