

Association Française d'Études Américaines
French Association for American Studies

Congrès 2013 : 22 mai 2013 / May 22nd, 2013
Université d'Angers

DOCTORIALES /
GRADUATE SYMPOSIUM

American civilization Graduate seminar, May 22nd 2013

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

Respondents : Didier Aubert (Paris 3-Sorbonne nouvelle) ; Luc Benoit à la Guillaume (Paris-Ouest Nanterre) ; Annick Cizel (Paris 3-Sorbonne nouvelle) ; Jim Cohen (Paris 3-Sorbonne nouvelle) ; Anne Ollivier-Mellios (Lyon 2)

PROGRAM

9:15 *Welcome and opening comments* (**Amphi Germaine Tillon, MSH**)

Civilization : (**Salle Julien Gracq, MSH**)

- 9:30-10:15 Workshop 1 : Women's Agency (1870-1970)

Respondent : Anne Ollivier-Mellios (Lyon 2)

- ▶ **Florence Kaczorowski**, « American Women and the Politicization of the Private sphere in post WWII America, 1945-1970 » (Lille 3)
- ▶ **Eva Payne**, « The “Great Crusade”: Religion, Medicine, and Women's International Social Purity Reform, 1870-1930 » (Harvard, USA)

10:15-10:45 Discussion

10:45-11:00 Coffee break

- 11:00-12:00 Workshop 2 : African-Americans since the 1960s

Respondent : Jim Cohen (Paris 3-Sorbonne nouvelle)

- ▶ **Alberto Benvenuti**, « African American Internationalism and Revolutionary Cuba in the 1960s and 1970s » (Florence, Italy)
- ▶ **Gwennaëlle Cariou**, « The Representation of African-Americans in African American Museums in the United States from the 1960s until Today » (Paris 7-Denis Diderot)

12:00-12:30 Discussion

12:30-14:30 Lunch

- 14:30-15:15 Workshop 3 : American Influence Abroad

Respondent : Annick Cizel (Paris 3-Sorbonne nouvelle)

► **Jan Pajor**, « US policy towards China, 1911-1922 » (Lodz, Poland)

► François Doppler, « “Carrying the Torch High.” The Military Element in the US Cultural Policy in France, 1944-1967 » (Strasbourg)

15:15-15:45 Discussion

15:45-16:00 Coffee break

- 16:00-16:45 Workshop 4 : Political Rhetoric

Respondent : Luc Benoit à la Guillaume (Paris-Ouest Nanterre)

► Jérôme Viala-Gaudefroy, « National Political Myths in Post-Cold War Presidential Speeches » (Paris 3-Sorbonne nouvelle)

- 16:45-17:30 Workshop 5 : Photography

Respondent : Didier Aubert (Paris 3-Sorbonne nouvelle)

► Hélène Beade, « Landscape and Environment in Contemporary American

Photography (from 1975 onwards) » (Paris 7-Denis Diderot)

18:00 : **(Amphi Germaine Tillon, MSH)** Arnaud ROUJOU DE BOUBÉE / Séverine PEYRICHOU (Fulbright/ French American Commission) : Bourses et soutien à la recherche / Fellowships and support for researchers

Florence Kaczorowski, Lille 3

American Women and the Politicization of the Private Sphere in post WWII America, 1945-1970

The purpose of my research is to explore women's politicization in post-WWII America when, for the first time since they had been granted the right to vote in 1920, a majority of women actually went to the polls and when female activism, be it in the name of progressivism or conservatism, seems to have increased significantly, even if for decades historians regarded the generations of postwar women as highly apolitical.

The upsurge in American women's politicization in the immediate aftermath of the war coincided with the resurgence of the domestic ideology which defined the private (or domestic) sphere as women's 'proper place' but also paradoxically extended their civic and political influence as women were cast as the moral guardians of the family and the community. Women's activism was shaped by politicians' essentialist discourse which put forward women's special attachment to peace, moral and family issues. Women's votes were particularly sought after because of a major demographic change perceptible from the early 1940s: female voters now outnumbered male voters, by more than 1 million in the immediate postwar period. It was a revolution taken into account during the 1952 presidential election: TV commercials became the staple of political campaigns and Republican candidate Dwight Eisenhower first capitalized on women's growing politicization addressing several TV campaign commercials to them – these commercials show that women voters were treated differently – they were regarded as wives and mothers first and foremost.

Despite the increasing pervasiveness of the domestic ideology in the entertainment and news media as well as in the political discourse, some American women did enter the political arena and occupy the public sphere – such as those women (non-white and white) who, starting from the mid-1950s, supported the civil rights movement. However, most American women kept working in the shadows as campaign staff during election years or, most often, were involved in women's clubs and organizations. Additionally, in the postwar context, the home (particularly the suburban home) became more politicized and grew into the cornerstone of some women's activism. Whether they organized social-turned-political get-togethers at home (such as the informal kaffee klatsches or the formal 'political teas' and 'political coffees'), called fellow members of their organization or potential recruits, wrote letters to their Congressmen, circulated petitions, or sent articles to the local press, many postwar American housewives centered their political activities in the private sphere. A conservative anticommunist organization, Minute Women for America, thus claimed that every member's home was '[the group's] national headquarters.'

Such home-based political action (which historian Lisa McGirr names 'kitchen table activism') was not the prerogative of conservative women, however; it fit into a long tradition of female activism (both progressive and conservative) shaped by the ideology of 'separate spheres.' It allowed women – especially housewives – to engage in politics without necessarily conquering the public sphere; and thus preserving the status quo and the stability of the family, regarded as the most sacred institution in Cold War America. Most of these 'kitchen table activists' were white middle-class housewives, and religion played a crucial role in their political participation.

In the 1960s new groups of women, inspired by feminism, questioned their status and challenged the traditional types of female activism. With the radical feminist organizations emerging in the late 1960s, consciousness-raising groups sprouted in the country and organized meetings and 'speak-outs' in the members' homes. The CR groups revealed radical

feminists' desire to challenge the traditionally-accepted distinction made between private and public, between personal and political. Capitalizing on the private and personal allowed them to become politicized and to challenge traditional power relationships in and outside the home.

While millions of women invaded the public sphere and the political arena from the late 1960s to claim women's rights or to protest against the Vietnam War, conversely the conservative/anti-liberal backlash fortified conservative women's attachment to home-grown activism, a mode of political action which had helped them establish a large and strong political network from the late 1940s. After all, the right-wing Christian group Concerned Women for America (1979) or a more recent organization affiliated to the Tea Party Movement, the Kitchen Table Patriots (2009), still advise their members to do politics and lobbying mostly from home thus revealing a strong lineage with post WWII conservative women that historian Michelle Nickerson calls 'the mothers of conservatism.'

Eva Payne, Harvard, USA

The "Great Crusade": Religion, Medicine, and Women's International Social Purity Reform, 1870-1930

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries social purity reformers took on popular sexual morality in the United States, the British Empire, and Continental Europe. They sought to eliminate prostitution rather than simply regulate it, raise the age of sexual consent, provide children with sex education, and dismantle double standards that shamed women for sexual behaviors accepted in men. My dissertation examines the role of women, particularly physicians and missionaries, in internationalizing social purity reform from the 1860s to the 1930s. The movement was international in two senses: reformers were from diverse national origins and often went to foreign places to enact their reforms. One of my central hypotheses is that women's medical and religious affiliations played a critical role in creating informal international networks of social purity reformers and shaping the agenda of their reform efforts. Women doctors could, with great effort, gain training in their home countries, but were often stymied in finding opportunities to practice medicine; thus they looked for opportunities elsewhere and found them in missionary work. It is well recognized that women were active leaders and participants in social purity reform, yet scholars have not studied the significance of their medical training and religious commitments in making it a truly international movement. Furthermore, I contend that these international networks profoundly shaped the direction of American social purity reform.

My dissertation builds on my research on the American medical doctor Katharine Bushnell. Her career illuminates women medical missionaries' leading role in internationalizing the social purity movement. After graduating from the Women's Medical College of Philadelphia in 1879, Bushnell served as a medical missionary in China. In the same missionary spirit, Bushnell investigated reports of sexual slavery in the logging camps of the American Midwest; she then spearheaded a national media campaign, leading to the passage of legislation to punish male brothel-keepers instead of female prostitutes. After this success, Bushnell turned once more to the international arena, using her authority as a physician to investigate reports of government-sponsored prostitution in India and China. Although her investigations precipitated legislative changes, Bushnell repeatedly saw that such laws were not often enforced. Returning again to the United States, Bushnell undertook an ambitious bible translation project: only by changing American cultural and religious foundations, she believed, could she change American sexual mores and thus bring about true female equality.

My research found that Bushnell's medical training and vision of Christian sisterhood were central to her international importance; my dissertation expands on these findings and examines the role of women with similar backgrounds and experiences.

In addition to uncovering significant and understudied aspects of social purity reform, my dissertation will help to answer broader questions about the role of informal networks in social reform movements. Religion's ability to link individuals across national boundaries has been well established, but the role of religion has not been fully appreciated in the history of social purity reform. My research suggests that religious commitments and a shared medical framework may have been more important than national identity in uniting and dividing reformers. It also indicates that religion profoundly shaped female social purity reformers' perceptions of sexuality, gender, and non-Western—often non-white—women. Thus, the international web of people, ideas, and beliefs of which American social purity reformers were a part may have had a significant impact on the means and goals of their nationally focused reform efforts.

Alberto Benvenuti, Florence, Italy

African American Internationalism and Revolutionary Cuba in the 1960s and 1970s

My research analyses the political and cultural exchanges between revolutionary Cuba and some African American leaders in the Sixties and Seventies. In the 1950s black Americans were fighting racial discrimination in the United States while seeking for international consensus to make pressure on Washington to face the racial problem (Dudziak 1999). Due to the fact that Castro's government had friendly relations with many "Third world" socialist-oriented countries, Cuba opened new sceneries of transnational collaboration between black movements and revolutionary "Third world" movements.

As recent historiography has shown, the African American struggle of the Sixties and Seventies was part of a global anti-colonial movement that was fighting white world supremacy (Borstellman 2001, Bush 2009). Afro American internationalism in Cuba represented the first and more lasting relations that black Americans had outside the national borders.

When Castro's barbudos defeated Fulgencio Batista and conquered Havana on January 1st 1959, the African American press greeted the Cuban revolution (Brock and Castagneda 1998). Castro's ambiguity towards the United States and Washington's fear of Castro's marxist aspirations, exacerbated the relations between the two countries. When Castro came to New York to attend the UN meeting in September 1960, he decided to stay in the famous Theresa hotel in Harlem, where Malcolm X arranged tens of rooms for him and his delegation. His stay in Harlem ratified the beginning of a political collaboration between African Americans and Cuba. While staying at the Theresa hotel, Castro met several prominent black leaders such as Malcolm X and Robert F. Williams, who later became the two major responsible for the diffusion of black nationalist ideologies in the Sixties. While civil rights advocates distanced themselves from Castro's Cuba, many black nationalists, who were embracing "Third world" revolution ideologies, perceived the alliance with Cuba as an important opportunity to internationalize their struggle. This mutual support between the just mentioned black nationalists and the majority of Cuba's revolutionary government opened the door to a new and lasting political collaboration. And because most black nationalists were promoting revolution, marxism and Third-worldism, Cuban guevarism represented a source of inspiration for them. Due to this ideological closeness to the Cuban revolution, many black nationalists decided to visit Cuba. Some of them, such as Robert Williams, went there in exile

and began a political activity focused on the denunciation of what he called “US internal colonialism” towards blacks; others, such as Stokely Carmichael and Angela Davis, went to Cuba to express their support for the revolution and they had the opportunity to meet many “Third world” leaders, others, such as Eldridge Cleaver and Huey Newton, fled to Cuba to escape from US authorities.

Even if the Castro regime initially supported black revolutionaries, my study also considers the ideological incompatibility between socialism and black nationalism, which emerged between the just mentioned black activists in Cuba and the later marxist Castro’s regime. This incompatibility became more and more obvious when Ernesto Guevara left Cuba in 1965. Now, the growing political influence of the Soviet Union contributed to worsen black Americans’ relations with Cuba.

The USSR’s strict marxism, they argued, was not the solution to solve the racial problem in the U.S., as it mainly focused on social revolution and class struggle.

Gwennaëlle Cariou, Paris 7-Denis Diderot

The Representation of African Americans in African American Museums in the United States from the 1960s until Today

My research is on African American museums and their relation to “white” museums.

Indeed we can question the place and the role of black museums in the American cultural landscape, and of African Americans in American civilization. Museums can be relevant examples on how a people, a nation, a region, etc. sees itself and what message it wants to convey to the visitors.

The history of African Americans in the USA is very ancient, as the first Africans arrived in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619, but there are not many objects or historic documents that are able to tell this story. Besides, for the 17th and 18th centuries, many artifacts are not telling the story of African Americans but the story of slavery (shackles, contracts, etc.) The background of slavery and segregation in the USA gives a peculiar place to black people in American history. The appellation of ‘African American’ is itself very complex: what can define and identify African Americans today?

The first African American museums appeared in the 1960s in the USA, during the Civil Rights Movement. But there have been several periods since the 18th century, especially after the abolition of slavery, during which African American heritage was protected, collected and displayed: for instance in historically black colleges and universities; through the art of what is called the “Harlem Renaissance” in the 1910s-1920s or with the ethnographic missions launched by the Work Progress Administration in the 1930s. There has been an intention of recording a story through documents, works of art or testimonies since the end of the 19th century, but African American museums were created quite recently. One can wonder why there is a discrepancy between the first attempts to collect an heritage and the actual display of this heritage.

African American museums, though their focus is specific, are part of a larger movement in the history of museums. The second half of the 20th century is a moment during which many museums were created, transformed and enlarged, and African American museums need to be comprehended in the movement and the development of a museum culture since the 18th century in Europe and in the USA.

Another important point is what kind of display is chosen by a museum: are objects at the center of the museum, or not? Many museums today, especially museums of society and history, are not using artifacts to tell a story but texts, media and reproductions. What type of

museums has the greatest effect on the visitors? Why some museums are choosing not to show any original artifacts but are putting the stress on great themes? The display of museum is telling a lot about how a culture, a history is seen and understood. With several examples of museums chosen from all over the country and of different sizes, the aim of my research is to understand how African American are presented in black museums and what is the place of those museum in American culture.

Jan Pajor, Lodz, Poland

United States Policy towards China, 1911-1922

The prime intention of my doctorate is to present the policy of the United States towards China, 1911-1922 and ascertain the significance of Peking in the overall foreign policy of Washington. I will endeavor to show assumptions of American policy towards the Middle Kingdom, means of its realizations, results and modifications it had undergone during the period in question.

The more specific objectives I want to achieve concern finding answers to several issues. First of all, how did the United States react to the Xinhai Revolution and subsequent struggle for power in China? Which belligerent of the civil war did they support, which oppose and did they plan to intervene militarily in favor of one side or to quell the revolution as a whole?

The second issue worth examining is America's China policy during the First World War, a time when European powers, hitherto competing with the United States and Japan for supremacy in China, became definitely less interested in Far Eastern affairs, as they were engaged in hostilities on their own continent. Did Washington try to exploit its new position and demand new privileges or was it determined to uphold status quo ante bellum? In addition, the United States' reaction to Japanese encroachments on China should also be mentioned. Did they tacitly or officially endorse Japanese expansion, ignore it or object to it, and if so, were they ready to support their protest by force? Similar matters should be considered with regard to the American policy after the war, when some of the former Washington's rivals in China were defeated, whereas the United States, as one of the victorious powers, could shape the world order and take advantage of their pivotal role in international affairs.

Another fundamental issue I would like to raise concerns the treatment of the Celestial Empire, whose status substantially deteriorated during the 19th century. Having become virtually a semi-colony, it was treated by the powers as an object rather than a subject. American government had acted in the same manner at the turn of 20th century, thus it seems relevant to see whether this attitude changed in the next two decades.

I will also concentrate on the coherence of Washington's policy towards China. It may have been inconsistent due to the fact that during the period in question American diplomacy was led by five different Secretaries of State, working under three different Presidents. I shall try to determine which tendency prevailed – to continue the policy of the predecessors or to alter it.

A penultimate question I want to address regards the Open Door doctrine, which from its inauguration in 1899 was the core of the United States' diplomatic strategy towards China. I am planning to study whether during the period determined by the time-frame of my dissertation Department of State had always acted according to the principles of the Open Door policy, departed from them or even overtly violated them in particular situations? I will also pay attention to any transformations of the doctrine in question and whether its principles

were treated in Washington as equally important or whether there was a hierarchy between them?

Lastly, in the literature on the subject two main schools of thoughts concerning American approach towards China have emerged - realistic and pragmatic policy versus benevolent one. In my dissertation, I shall try to decide which conception is more justifiable.

I do believe that my research would make it possible to assess the significance of Peking in the overall foreign policy of Washington and to appraise whether, and if so, to what extent, actions taken by various powers in China influenced their relations with the United States, and vice versa?

François Doppler, Strasbourg

Carrying the Torch High:” The Military Element in the US Cultural Policy in France, 1944-1967

This project investigates the promotion of American GIs on French territory from 1944 to 1967. After the creation of the National Security Council in 1947, the US army was called upon to play an important role in the United States’ foreign policy. Close to 60,000 GIs and their dependents were stationed in France from the late forties through the sixties as part of the Cold War military security programs. While these American expatriates settled in various parts of the country, the United States Information Service (USIS/France) tried to monitor contact between the soldiers and the local population in order to diffuse an official image of the United States. USIS/France put into place a network of cultural offices, composed of preexisting information services of the main military organizations established in France.

Culture became an instrument of foreign policy and a basic factor of Cold War politics, confirming a strong relationship between culture and security at the time. Who designed the US cultural policy for the American military? Why did the US Congress never interfere with the promotion of soldiers in France, despite its strong distrust of the alleged propagandist nature of information agencies? As the number of combat units stationed in France increased, did the United States Information Service in Paris become the cultural backbone of the US military diplomacy in Europe?

Through a close analysis of American and NATO archival records, this research sets out to analyze the structure of the US cultural policy in France, and evaluate its reception by the French population. Archival accounts show that its publicity was organized not only via existing US diplomatic channels (i.e. USIS/France, MSA, the Department of Defense) and international organizations (i.e. the NATO Information Service), but also via unofficial and personal/voluntary initiatives that created extraordinary cultural and social change. This period also left its mark on both French and American popular cultures, where the GIs’ experience was placed in a larger narrative, on the screen, through music and in text, media that permeated the popular culture and collective memories of both countries.

This dissertation is situated at the crossroads of cultural history and the study of crosscultural relations. It aims to offer a comprehensive overview of the US cultural policy structure in France from 1944 to 1967, and to evaluate the importance of the military presence in its program. Most of the primary sources are recently declassified documents collected at the US National Archives and at the NATO headquarters. First-hand documents in the field such as letters, memoirs and personal scrapbooks, as well as press-clips and movies were also obtained. The diversity of these sources raises the ongoing issue of a proper classification method and the constitution of a theoretical framework, which we will discuss in this presentation. However, as a whole, and due to a very limited number of existing secondary

sources on the US cultural policy for France, this project seeks to contribute to the current literature on history of military and cultural diplomacy during the Cold War.

Jérôme Viala-Gaudefroy, Paris 3-Sorbonne nouvelle

National Political Myths in Post-Cold War Presidential Speeches

In the United States, the story-teller-in chief of the nation is the president, and a study of the national stories told in presidential speeches may prove illuminating in a quest for a better understanding of how Americans see themselves and the world.

These national stories constitute "myths" not in the sense of being false as opposed to some hypothetical truth, but rather because they mix fact and imagination and, most importantly, because they are considered sacred by those who share them. In the case of the United States, this is most visible in the religious treatment given to the Founding Fathers, the texts of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, but also in the recurrence of certain mythical themes such as rebirth and renewal in American political discourse.

In the first part of my presentation, I will expand upon the definition of the American national myth, arguing that it is different from the classical concept of 'civil religion', in part because of its political nature. One of its functions is precisely to give meaning to the specific political conditions of a nation. This implies that it is neither universal, nor transferrable to other national communities. Myths, however, are defined as much by their content as by their form, notably their binary and metaphorical language, their link to pathos and their prevalence during rituals, war and crisis.

This will lead me to a discussion of certain issues for scholars faced with trimming down a large corpus into something more manageable. Given the definition of national myths previously mentioned, I have chosen to focus on presidential speeches delivered at moments of ritual and mourning: the Inauguration, the State of the Union, and speeches delivered in war, crisis and eulogy. I have also limited myself to the period beginning at the end of the Cold War because the instability created by the end of that more stable bipolar world necessitated a reframing of the national narrative given the new realities.

Finally, I will explain how the object of my research can be identified and analyzed in my corpus. Political myth is distinct from other political discourse in that it is not argumentative even though of course, no political discourse is ever purely narrative and the American national myths can be embodied in just a sentence, or even a simple word like 'freedom'. This has implications regarding methodology: one possible way to identify national myths is to study the conceptual metaphors used in those speeches and classify them to see what models may emerge, what they may reveal and how they may reflect the political context. This clearly necessitates an interdisciplinary approach of human sciences that will include cognitive linguistics, critical discourse analysis and political science.

Having not yet completed the study of the speeches I have collected, I will not venture into making definite remarks on my findings but as a conclusion I will offer my current hypotheses, based on what I have been able to analyze so far.

Hélène Beade, Paris 7-Denis Diderot

Landscape and Environment in Contemporary American Photography (from 1975 onwards)

My dissertation topic seeks to explore and describe an environmental turn in the long-standing landscape photography tradition in North America. This topic has inspired many exhibitions since the 1990s but has not been studied in depth until now, neither in France nor in North America.

- « Ecotopia », at the International Center of Photography in New York examines the response of today's artists – such as Robert Adams, Mary Marringly, David Maisel... - to the challenges raised by rapid environmental change.

- « Imagining a Shattering Earth » gathering the works of many artists (like John Ganis, David T. Hanson, Frank Gohlke, Joel Sternfeld, Mitch Epstein ...) conceived as a rallying cry against the ecological degradation of our world, as an effective catalyst for reflection and debate.

« Landscape » is an outmoded genre and it seems that we are witnessing in many recent works a kind of reinvention, or at least a rethinking, of an aesthetic idea, a historical genre which is completely overturned.

These works also evoke the anxiety, hope and urgency that characterize today's reflections on the global environment.