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ABSTRACTS

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Daniel Boone and the Construction of the American West:

A Century of Representations (1784-1893)

This research study aims at categorizing and explaining the development of the literary and visual representations of Daniel Boone in American culture between the end of the 18th century and the end of the 19th century. The purpose is to show how the legendary figure of Daniel Boone was built and rebuilt in text and in image throughout a century, as well as to identify the ideological premises to those representations. The general hypothesis is that those representations participated in the construction of an idea of the *American West*, and that this idea varied, depending on the contexts and audiences. In line with the recent developments of American historiography and criticism (*New Western History, environmental history, cultural studies*), the traditional notion *American West* is considered here as a complex cultural construct with a significant role in the definition of national identity and national history. Three methodological problems will be addressed. The first relates to the categorizing and analysis of the sources. Considering the ideological dimension of the discourses and images of the American West, many sources – including secondary sources – can be considered as *unreliable* under historiographical criteria. Secondly, the concern for historical contextualization poses the problem of the balance between aesthetic analysis and historical analysis. The corpus is literary and iconographic, but the selection and treatment of the sources are based less on their aesthetic qualities than on their significance in the American Boone culture of the period. Finally, the relation between Daniel Boone and the American West is at the heart of the study, but this relation is problematic and implies constant redefinition of such typical American

Lucie Genay (Grenoble)

The scientific conquest of New Mexico: a Devil's bargain

On November 16, 1942, in the New Mexican desert, J. Robert Oppenheimer suggested to his military counterpart General Leslie Groves that Ashley Pond's Los Alamos Ranch School would be an ideal location for the establishment of a secret laboratory to pursue research on the design and construction of the atomic bomb. This event sealed the fate of New Mexico, dubbed the "Land of

Enchantment”, which acquired a new identity as the cradle of the nuclear age. The Los Alamos laboratory paved the way to a third colonization¹ of the area: a scientific conquest funded by the federal government and maintained by the arms race with the Soviet Union. Along the Rio Grande, the derivative installations of the Manhattan Project revolutionized the social, economic, and demographic order in the state while disturbing its environmental and cultural balance. And yet, sixty years later, New Mexico was still among the five poorest states in the nation despite its nuclear Eldorado.

This paper will assess the double-edged quality of legacy of the Manhattan Project in New Mexico, focusing on the socio-economic and environmental issues entailed by the nuclear economy. How can one evaluate the durability of the benefits of the nuclear industry in terms of jobs, education, and standards of living? To what extent did local populations actually gain from this high-technology revolution? Over the almost seventy-year period since the settlement of the first atomic scientists in Los Alamos, native populations of New Mexico, be they Indian Pueblo dwellers, Hispanic villagers, or Anglo ranchers have had to adapt to the ups and downs of this new order based on a dependence on federal monies to retrieve its benefits and face up to an increasingly harsh competition with outsiders, nuclear immigrants to the state.

The darkest secrets of nuclear energy including the dangers of radioactivity and thus the risks of nuclear facilities and nuclear waste matters became public knowledge and have prompted antinuclear reactions in New Mexico since the 1980s. Meanwhile, the economic pressure to maintain the military-industrial and scientific complex remained constant. Thereupon, many previously unheard voices have spoken up to shed a new light on the nuclear heritage in the state. Their relation with nuclearism² has come to be regarded as a Devil’s bargain for the arrival of science in this region stricken by poverty was first viewed as a bonanza but gradually revealed a heavy price at the same time as the benefits started to dwindle for the local population. This local perspective of the humblest, forgotten participants in the advent of the nuclear age lacks historical recognition, therefore the purpose of my paper will be to address the issue of dependence that the nuclear industry generated in New Mexico to show how much the Manhattan Project impacted New Mexicans to a point where they now have to deal with the long-term effects of what seems either a Devil’s bargain at times or an indispensable and fortuitous pillar of the state’s economy.

Marie Dassé (Nanterre)

The privatization of public spaces and its socio-political implications. The case of Southern California. 1972-2015

Public spaces possess a highly symbolical function in the fact that citizens can use it in order to make political or social claims and are often envisioned as the backbone of democracy. Yet, the distinction between public and private spaces is becoming more and more blurred. Margaret Kohn, assistant Professor of Political Science explains that since the beginning of American history and throughout its development, the place that was used for public meetings was the public square whereas it is now the mall that fulfills this function.³ She defends the idea that the privatization of public space has important sociological implications in that it limits freedom of expression as well as free speech.

I identified two different models that are particularly relevant in Southern California. I am going to argue that the emergence of numerous new spaces follows different logics which all

¹ The third one after the Spanish and American conquests.

² To be understood as the faith in nuclear weapons to maintain national security.

³ Margaret Kohn, *Brave New Neighborhoods: The Privatization of Public Space*, Routledge, 2004.

have in common the main underlying ideology which relates to the neo-liberalization of urbanism. Whether this change has been deliberately created by neoliberal urbanism or is a result of post modernist cities, I will try to seek out how these changes came into being and what are their implications. It remains interesting to ask ourselves if having private organizations dealing with public space influence civic, individual and collective behavior. In other words, how has this shift occurred and to what extent does it have any politico-social consequences and philosophical impacts in the way we envision and use cities?

First of all, following a certain model based on security and separation which include- but is not limited to- the development of CCTV and laws, I am going to argue that public spaces have become partially privatized. The anti-camping law in Skid Row, Los Angeles drawing from the 'broken window' theory is particularly interesting in that regard. The HomeOwners Associations have also been widely criticized for functioning as 'small governments'.⁴ Moreover, the development of gated communities is quite telling. Residents of gated communities also seem to be attracted to the type of lifestyle based almost exclusively on self segregation.

Secondly, the economical and commercial model includes places such as open malls which welcome the general public into its premises which is then submitted to private rules. Their design seems to replicate a town square atmosphere with luxuriant vegetation and public benches and often fulfill this very same function, especially in suburbs. Yet, they restrict any political activity. Another case in point relates to the development of *Business Improvement Districts* where particular legislations are applied. More than being characterized by a sterile and cold uniformity, they are owned and managed privately, thus endangering democracy. They are characterized by having their own rules since they are allowed to finance their own projects and to modify the infrastructure of public space the way they want.

Finally, drawing on Marc Augé's 'non places', Foucault's 'heterotopias', I am also going to devote a part to show to what extent this historic-political shift has also led to what may be called the commodification of public spaces. I will study how cities became 'branded'. An interesting case that is Huntington Beach, labeled as being 'the surf capital of the USA'.⁵

My study simply would not be complete without the study of various groups that have recently decided to occupy public spaces to denounce these trends. Whereas it is 'Reclaim The Streets' in England, 'Parking Day' in the US or more recently, 'Occupy Wall Street', one cannot ignore the recent emergence of several groups are contesting and reclaiming public spaces.

My goal is to go beyond the mere description of these processes and provide the beginning of an answer to questions such as: What are the philosophical implications of the Disneyfication⁶ of the city? To what extent can we talk about 'urba-tainment'? How can a sense of belonging, community or even identity be created in such places? And maybe more importantly, how can we envision long term consequences?

The controversy that surrounds the control over public space remains intrinsically interdisciplinary. Indeed, it is impossible to find sources exclusively from one field of study. A multidimensional approach is necessary in order to fully understand the complexity of the phenomenon even though I shall focus on a social angle.

⁴ Mackenzie, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government*, Yale University Press, 1996.

⁵ www.huntingtonbeach.ca.gov, accessed on 01/31/2015.

⁶ I am borrowing the expression from Michael Sorkin, *Variations on A The Park: The New American City And The End of Public Space*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1992.

Anthony Castet (Tours)
Culture Wars, Ideologies, and Equal Rights in the US: the Same-Sex Marriage case

The purpose of my doctoral dissertation is to scrutinize the role and functioning of the Culture Wars through the prism of same-sex marriage. The notion that America's Third Culture War, an idea introduced by James Davison Hunter in 1991, challenges the nation's moral authority between two competing camps and two major ideologies leads not only to political polarization but also to institutional confusion and paralysis. Because marriage is connected to family, a concept that is dear to many Americans, the issue has been subjected to a great deal of political and religious instrumentalization at the expense of same-sex families' legitimate request to equal rights. Instead, trying to win the freedom to marry, within a culture-war framework, has turned into a long-standing political and constitutional battle to put an end to second-class citizenship and to educate the American people on a reality that is often imbued with a long history of discrimination and prejudice.

To address the question of why homosexuality has become a Culture War issue, I examine four historical and ideological intersections of the twentieth century that allowed the gay rights movement to gain impetus to achieve full equality in the twenty-first century. First, the redefinition of gender roles during the Depression along with the birth of Roosevelt's modern liberalism. The postwar period and the demonization and persecution of homosexuals supported by anti-gay policies. The influence of the counterculture in the 1960s, enabling not only a cohesive gay community to come out but also right-wing groups to emerge. Finally, the AIDS crisis and the rise of a collective consciousness paving the way for a more sophisticated movement to achieve legal equality.

This, in turn, will allow me to further explore the relations between marriage equality and other prominent issues by considering a broader analytical framework such as gun control, abortion, and euthanasia to compare their respective material and ideological manifestations in the public sphere.

Such issues are symptomatic of the Culture Wars in the sense that they belong to a fight over the notions of rights and individual liberties which are the bedrock of American democracy. Based on the transcripts of court proceedings, legislative and executive material at both the state and federal level, my research focuses on the legitimate arguments raised for granting or denying same-sex couples the right to marry in order to determine the ideological strategies representative of the Culture Wars, to identify the broader historical, constitutional and religious references that are used, to verify if such an institutional paralysis is applicable to the other issues mentioned above.

By drawing on political, social, LGBT and marriage history, I argue that the mechanism of the

Culture Wars has shaped the debate on same-sex marriage towards greater legal considerations, media visibility, religious and political inclusion. My objective is to demonstrate that far from being a cultural myth, the Culture Wars are inherently part of the system of checks and balances by providing a unique opportunity for the community to reinforce the role of the judiciary in protecting minorities.

Rebecca Scofield (Harvard, USA)

In the Shadow of the Walls: Race, Sexuality, and Nation at the Texas Prison Rodeo
A chapter from
Riding Bareback: Imagining American Sexuality, Gender, and Race through Rodeo

From 1931 to 1986, the Texas Prison System hosted an annual rodeo at the Huntsville penitentiary, a prison affectionately referred to by inmates as the Walls. Eventually drawing 50,000 spectators per year, the rodeo became one of the largest sporting events and tourist attractions in Texas. Throughout the 20th century, prison rodeos were a public form of gladiatorial spectacle and one of the most brutal forms of rodeo, with little protective gear, no training program, and exponentially higher injury rates than other rodeos. Importantly, prison rodeos largely developed in states that make up the ill-defined boundary between the South and the West, particularly Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana, tangling together the racial history of two regions as the cotton plantation met the cattle frontier. Drawing on archival evidence from the Texas Department of Corrections, I demonstrate the ways in which prison employees, imprisoned persons, and audience members used rodeo performances in different ways to construct the meaning of a particularly racialized and sexualized cowboyism. By scrutinizing these prison rodeo performances, I argue, we can triangulate use of the cowboy icon as a redemptive symbol, even as it simultaneously marked so-called convict cowboys as aberrations of Americanism.

Increasingly associated with urban, black men and situational homosexuality, the convict cowboy represented captivity and dependence in contrast to the image of the ruggedly independent and highly mobile free white cowboy. Yet, despite vast differences between the convict and the free cowboy, the penal system offered inmates a form of cultural redemption for their supposedly unforgivable crimes through its celebration of and reward for excellent cowboy dexterity. The development of the convict cowboy as both irretrievable sinners and redeemed men exposed the larger implications of a national narrative of self-improvement and self-redemption in the mid-20th century. Thus, I contend, in the minds of many Americans the mainstays of the imagined West—grit, determination, and self-invention—could redeem a nation tried by economic depression and war in a way that social reforms and government programs simply could not. Indeed, prison rodeo organizers and inmates alike argued that convicts could improve their lot in life through proving their masculine mettle in the arena, more readily than by gaining an education in prison classrooms or by working hard on prison plantations.

My analysis of prison rodeos supports my larger dissertation's examination of the complex intersections between region, race, gender, and sexuality in the cultural imagination. Urban rodeos, gay rodeos, and prison rodeos each illuminate rodeo's position at the nexus of the real and the imagined, the rural and the urban, and the regional and the nation. Ultimately, I assert that changing forms of gendered, racialized, and sexualized westernness functioned as central narratives for American identity in the 20th century, even as many communities inhabiting these imagined "Wests" survived at the margins of society.

Sigrid Schönfelder (Passau, Germany)

"Saints in the Golden West"

In the 19th century, significant social and economic changes were in progress which also resulted in the transformation of appropriate roles for women in American society. Health care was most often considered an acceptable 'profession' for women, because care giving was a domestic task given by women (and not men) to family, friends, and neighbors. Throughout history women commonly practiced medicine as midwives, nurses, and doctors. The leaders of the Mormon Church wholeheartedly approved of the medical profession for women. In 1868, Brigham Young announced that, "The time has come for women to come forth as doctors in these valleys"(quoted in Enns 62) and in support of their education, suggested that physiology and obstetrics classes be formed in Salt Lake City. Patty Bartlett Sessions was one of these women who later became recognized as the "Mother of Mormon Midwifery" (Enns 63). During her long life (she lived to be 94), she kept very accurate lists of the births she attended and the daily activities of the healthcare she administered to the many families heading West who "lovingly referred to her as "Doctor Patty".

The focus of my paper will be on Mormon banishment and odyssey (diaspora) to the American West - which I will emphasize, not as a geographical location- but rather as a "place" for the founding of a new Kingdom of Zion on the footsteps of "Mother Sessions". I will focus on the transformational impact of migrating to the American West reflecting a 19th century Mormon female perspective and the concept of "place" focusing on Mormon displacement and the role of women, medicine, and religion in settling in Salt Lake, Utah. I will draw on the diaries of patty Bartlett Session in order to illustrate how her life and the life of the Mormon community transformed in the West.

Pierre Mendel Gueï (Paris Sorbonne)

Quaker Women and Feminist Mobilization in the United States (1848-1920)

The year 1848 will certainly go down in history as one of the most significant, and probably the most important date for the first wave of feminism in North America. In the summer of that year about 300 hundred American women met to discuss their social, political and economic conditions. Initially named the Woman's Rights Convention, this gathering, which is commonly known as the Seneca Falls Convention, was held from the 19th to the 20th of July 1848, in a small Wesleyan chapel in the Seneca region, in the State of New York. It was the first time American women had met at the national level. The Seneca Falls Convention became the opportunity for these women to voice their dissatisfaction, demands and insist that all the wrongs, injustices and other artificial barriers imposed on them by men, which had so far hindered their emancipation be redressed or removed.

At the end of the meeting sixty-four of them and thirty-six men who supported them signed a resolution: The Seneca Falls Declaration, or Declaration of Sentiments which served as road map for the first wave of feminist mobilization in the United States. Out of the five women who instigated this important gathering, four were Quakers, and only one was not. Quaker women played a key role in the feminist struggle in the United States. Quakers also known as Friends or the Society of Friends, offered more liberties and opportunities to women compared to the other religions of the Christian traditions. One of the basic pillars of Quakerism is that all humans (men and women) have natural rights in all spheres of life, and that these rights should not be abridged on account of their sex or any other considerations.

This research seeks to show how Quaker women used these principles of sexual equality and natural rights as tools to conquer their rights. It aims to show how faith or spirituality, and particularly Quakerism was used by Quaker women as a stimulus or an incentive in their struggle, especially their battle for the suffrage. This faith-based mobilization will be analysed through the lives, speeches and strategies of three prominent American feminist leaders, Lucretia Mott (1793-1880), also known as the mother or grandmother of American feminism, Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) whose name is

associated to the Nineteenth Amendment granting the vote to American women, and Alice Paul (1885-1977), a well-known feminist leader whose radical strategies, especially her protest against President Wilson, are believed to have widely helped secure the vote for American women in 1920. All of them were Quakers. This study covers the period between 1848 and 1920.