ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE D'ÉTUDES AMÉRICAINES

2017 AFEA CONFERENCE – STRASBOURG

June 6-9, 2017

"THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"

Scientific Committee: Jocelyn Dupont (Université de Perpignan), Marie-Jeanne Rossignol (Université Denis Diderot Paris 7), François Specq (ENS de Lyon)

LIST OF WORKSHOPS

Please note that the deadline for all panels is ***January 15, 2017.***

Workshop 1

Environmental Protection and the Pursuit of Happiness: An American Dilemma **– Gelareh Yvard (Angers)**

The aim of this workshop is to examine various historical, political, economic and social aspects of environmental policy in the United States in order to understand the American dilemma that opposes the pursuit of happiness as well as a better quality of life in harmony with the natural environment, and the values of the consumer society and the myth of happiness through material success. As Steward Udall, the Secretary of the Interior in the sixties, said," the economic success of Americans is not a guarantee of happiness, we are not better prepared to inherit the earth or to carry on the pursuit of happiness." On the International Day of Happiness on March 18, 2016, Ban Ki Moon, the Secretary General of the UN, said that the protection of the environment is an essential element in the pursuit of happiness, He insisted on the ***"*** *importance of addressing climate change to create a safer, more sustainable and happier future for all ".*

How has the American environmental movement contributed to the American dream of the pursuit of happiness? Does the material happiness of individuals contradict the notion of happiness for all which is at the heart of the commitment of environmentalists? The anthropocentric view of a better environmental quality for American people and for future

generations has often been criticized by deep ecologists who prefer to highlight the well-being of both humans and non-humans. What is the impact of the quality of air and water on health, of the use of renewable and non-renewable resources, and of sustainable development on the happiness of Americans? Is there an ecology of happiness? What is the role of social justice, minorities and gender in the quest for a better environmental quality? What is the impact of the environmental justice movement on the reduction of inequalities of class, race and gender? Proposals relating to other approaches to the environment and the pursuit of happiness are also welcome.

Proposals in French or in English can be sent to Gelareh Yvard (gelarehdjyv@wanadoo.fr).

Worskshop 2

Has the Pursuit of Happiness been confiscated? New modalities of (in)equality in the United States (François Vergniolle de Chantal, Université Denis Diderot-Paris 7, Christine Zumello, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris 3)

The English version of the call for papers will be made available shortly. The French version is available in the French section of the AFEA website.

Workshop 3

Pursuing Happiness in African American Slave Narratives (Claire Bourhis-Mariotti (Université Paris 8) and Michaël Roy (Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense))

What could be more foreign to the institution of slavery than the notion of happiness? Such was what Frederick Douglass implied when he wrote about his time on William Freeland's farm in his second autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855): "For much of the happiness—or absence of misery—with which I passed this year with Mr. Freeland, I am indebted to the genial temper and ardent friendship of my brother slaves." For want of anything better, "absence of misery" was what the slave could yearn for, in an oppressive and brutal system based on the exploitation of man by man. If slaves worked for someone's happiness, it was that of the white master, as noted by Thomas Jefferson, probably the most famous slaveholder in American history (see Lucia Stanton, *"Those Who Labor for My Happiness": Slavery at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello*, 2012).
Yet this workshop seeks to uncover and address the "pursuit of happiness" in African American slave narratives. Even though African American slaves, since the origins of the American nation, had been placed at the margins of mankind, and therefore deprived of the inalienable rights—"freedom" and "the pursuit of happiness" in particular—listed in the Declaration of Independence, they were able to embrace the revolutionary ideals and the principles of liberty and equality embedded in the Declaration as their own best hope for freedom and/or better treatment: "And I believed then, as I believe now," Henry Bibb wrote, "that every man has a right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness" (*Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave*, 1849). Frederick Douglass, Solomon Northup

(*Twelve Years a Slave*, 1853), and William and Ellen Craft (*Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*, 1860), among others, also quoted the Declaration of Independence in their narratives. It seems therefore appropriate to examine the different forms this pursuit of happiness could take. Running away, a clear declaration of independence from the master, made it possible for the slaves to pursue their political and social happiness in the free States of the North or beyond the confines of the United States (in the Western territories, in Canada, in the British Isles or other European countries, in the British West Indies, in Haiti or Liberia). For the slave more than anyone else, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were closely intertwined. The search for relative happiness could also be one of the goals pursued by the slaves who did not flee, as Douglass suggested in the aforementioned quotation; solidarity between "brother slaves," family life, self-fulfillment in the clandestine study of reading and writing were all forms of resistance and expression of slaves' pursuit of their own happiness—which was nothing like the cheerful contentment that whites perceived in the slaves' songs they wrongfully considered "as evidence of their . . . happiness" (*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, 1845).
We thus invite participants to consider these various conceptions of happiness in slave narratives. This workshop will feature papers on classic slave narratives as well as on alternative sources. Recent scholarship has indeed emphasized that slave testimonies took many forms beyond that of the self-written, separately published, book-length narrative, so presenters are encouraged to address slave testimony from a broad range of sources, including traditional archives, Works Progress Administration (WPA) interviews, newspapers, diaries or memoirs, short stories published in the press, legal documents, petitions, etc., to better understand what happiness might have meant for the men and women who labored under the yoke of slavery. We encourage papers that draw from diverse fields including but not limited to: African American studies, literature, history, civilization and/or cultural studies.

Please send a 250-word abstract and a brief bio to both cbourhis-mariotti@univ-paris8.fr and michael.roy@u-paris10.fr before January 15, 2017.

Workshop 4

LGBTQ Americans Still Pursuing Happiness? (Anthony Castet et Georges-Claude Guilbert, Tours)

In 1776, the Declaration of Independence proposed a new contract to Americans, promising them full equality and the upholding of unalienable rights, including "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The latter was linked to the assertion of individual liberties, featured in the Bill of Rights that was to protect American citizens against the possible excesses of an overbearing government and allow them access to unbiased justice. Citizenship was the condition required to enjoy this ambitious social pact, but the pursuit of happiness of LGBTQ Americans, relegated as they were to a lesser rank because of their sexual or gender orientation, has been a long, hard struggle in the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. Only in 1996 did the Supreme Court, through Justice Anthony Kennedy, offer to protect homosexuals and define the fundamental liberties of a minority that was the victim of discrimination and hostile prejudices. This enabled the participation of homosexual citizens in political processes, so that anti-

discrimination laws might protect them against a heterosexual majority whose animosity sometimes encouraged them to act against the interests of the homosexual community.

Beyond juridical considerations, where do LGBTQ citizens stand in their pursuit of happiness today? What improvements can we still expect as far as the different modes of gay parenting are concerned? What about those who reject assimilationism? What are the consequences on the LGBTQ community of the popularization in its ranks of the "middle-class couple with two children and a house in a quiet suburb" model? What stage have the political and theoretical battles between gays and queers reached? At a time when the majority seems to rally behind essentialist declarations ("born this way"), so much more convenient to merge into the mainstream, what of radical constructionists and revolutionaries? As for the T in LGBTQ, why and how has their sudden ubiquity in the media helped society forget that most transgender people in the US are destitute and constantly subjected to violence? Their pursuit of happiness is not limited to their choice of public bathroom, an issue that was widely covered in the media in 2016. A few months after an eventful presidential campaign, some will want to make sure that the recent advances gained by the LGBTQ community are not undermined (notably by the religious right). This workshop will, among other things, look into the right to happiness of LGBTQ Americans, and the role of LGBTQ organizations in the defense of their interests.

Please send your proposals to Anthony Castet (anthony.castet@univ-tours.fr) and Georges-Claude Guilbert (georges-claude.guilbert@univ-tours.fr).

Worskhop 5

"Joys in minds that can no further go": Mourners and Celebrants in Modern and Contemporary American Literature" (Aristi TRENDEL, Le Mans, Theodora Tsimpouki, Athens)

In "Resolution and Independence," Wordsworth refers to the Icarian figure of the poet in this way, "Poets in our youth begin in gladness; /But thereof come in the end despondency and madness." American literature offers plenty of such figures (Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, Delmore Schwarz, Jack Kerouac, David Foster Wallace, Richard Brautigan...) who fail to fully live up to their talent in a sustained way and accomplish their oeuvre. Their very opposite are the prolific ones who write unstoppably and live a long productive life (Norman Mailer, John Updike, Susan Sontag, Philip Roth, Anne Tyler, Joyce Carol Oates...).

This workshop invites papers which pore over the work of such figures that occupy the two ends of the literary continuum. Do the former consistently bemoan American life and the latter celebrate it in their work? Is prolificacy coupled with an even pursuit of happiness and does a short or relatively short spurt of creativity only give voice to a hopeless pursuit? What shades of misery or happiness color their fiction/poetry? Do the former abandon the very American pursuit of happiness in their work and the latter persist in this endeavor in spite of America's failings? What strength of mind does it take for a poet/writer to persist in his/her dream? What puts an end to it? What vision of life and death, happiness and despair does their work shape or record? What does the mourner/celebrant dichotomy suggest about the formation of the contemporary American (historical) subject?

Please send your proposals to **aristi.trendel@sfr.fr** et tsimpouki@enl.uoa.gr

Workshop 6

The "Nature" of Happiness: an Ecopoetic and Ecocritical Approach. (C-Y Grandjeat, Bordeaux 3, B. Meillon, Perpignan)

As A1do Leopold put it in his *Sand County Almanac*, "We all strive for safety, prosperity, comfort, long life, and dullness. [...] but too much safety yields only danger in the long run. Perhaps this is behind Thoreau's dictum: In wildness is the salvation of the world". For U.S. transcendentalists, truth, beauty, health, *and happiness* were to be found in nature. As R.W. Emerson wrote in 1836: "In the presence of nature a wild delight runs through […] man." Those in quest of "solar writing", can find many joyous songs in 19th century nature writers, from Thoreau to Muir, celebrating the links tying humans to their natural environment.
More recently, in contrast with a dominant praise of material and technical "progress" that goes hand in hand with the unceasing exploitation of natural resources–whether animal, vegetable, mineral, or elemental– an increasing number of voices have called on humans to scale down, return to the wonder and beauty of the natural world, and seek happiness in a peaceful coexistence with the "more-than-human world" (David Abram). Native American writers and ecofeminists have been arguing, together with ecopsychologists, philosophers, and mythographers, that our human condition as postmodern earth-dwellers is marked by a pathological alienation of humans from the natural world which we nevertheless stem from and remain embedded in. Intent on "reinhabiting" the land (Snyder), many voices advocate humility, frugality, and a sense of listening to "the voice of the Earth" (Roszak)–actually, its many varied voices. They argue that humans may well have to (re-)learn what most indigenous and Pagan cultures knew long before ecological science: that all members of the ecosystem exist within a complex web of interrelatedness and interdependence. This may entail recognizing the intelligence, sentience and intentionality–or agency–in non-human others (see Bruno Latour's recent rehabilitation of Lovelock's Gaïa hypothesis).
This panel is interested in papers looking at contemporary ecowriters who seek happiness through a healed relationship with nature, echoing Thoreau's musing that "the same soil is good for men and for trees." We welcome papers on activists, intellectuals, artists, and critics looking for common ground, exploring how such a call for new awareness might be rooted in a specific U.S. tradition, yet might also need to be framed in new artistic forms and languages, or ecopoetics.

Please send your paper proposals to both Yves-Charles Grandjeat : Yves.Grandjeat@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr (Professor at the University of Bordeaux) and Bénédicte Meillon : benemeillon@gmail.com (Associate Professor at the University of Perpignan).

Workshop 7

Versions of the Pastoral in American Literature – Richard Anker (Université Blaise Pascal, Clermont Ferrand) and Monica Manolescu (Université de Strasbourg)

In his influential *The Machine in the Garden. Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (1964), Leo Marx refers to Thomas Jefferson's well-known love of Virgil and the classical poets in formulating his thesis of American pastoral as deriving essentially from literary design and convention. This literalization of Arcadia would constitute thereby not only the core of the popular pastoral imagination in America, but, as feminist, culturalist, and environmentalist revisions of the pastoral aesthetic have shown, it remains a source of mystification even within many of the most self-consciously literary texts from the early 19th century to the present, where the representation of nature maintains its allure as a refuge from urban and technological complexity, and a conservative, hegemonic and typically masculine sensibility asserts a regressive hold upon what may have only appeared to be radical and liberating impulses awakened by the pastoral ideal. In "American Pastoral Ideology Reappraised" (1989), Laurence Buell, pointing out various tensions implicit in pastoral writing, noted in particular the conflict which arises in literary texts between a language of action, often co-opted by regressive political tendencies, and rhetorical strategies which run counter to such mystification. If these kinds of tensions are well-known, particularly perhaps in the "afterlife" of the deconstructive tradition of rhetorical reading practiced by Paul de Man, the critical analysis of them in works of pastoral imagination seems to take on a renewed, existential urgency as the peril of "environmental holocaust" increases. Now more than ever, it appears, it has become necessary to disentangle the various and competing strains – conservative and liberating, hegemonic and radical, mystified and critical – involved in literary representations of the pastoral. What such a critical effort perhaps implies is a reconsideration - from the point of view of the modern writer's more intense awareness of the temporality and the materiality of literary form – of the ambiguity between the idyllic and the elegiac that Erwin Panofsky pointed to in his famous revision of the "Et in Arcadia Ego" motif, wherein, against centuries of misinterpretation, he reminded us of the ancients' message that death exists even in the realm of the pastoral.

This panel invites papers which explore the tensions at work in the rhetoric of pastoral imagination in American literature, and which – beyond any particular strategy, political or otherwise, but without succumbing to ludic utopianism – work against the merely regressive allure of Arcadian happiness to sustain critical awareness of the promise still held perhaps in literary versions of the pastoral imagination.

Please send your proposals to manoles@unistra.fr and Richard Anker richard.anker@wanadoo.fr by 15 January 2017

Workshop 8

US Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Happiness – Gildas Le Voguer (Université Rennes 2) and Frédéric Heurtebize (Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense)

In spite of the universal dimension of its Declaration of Independence, the young American republic refrained from spreading its message abroad and refused to provide help to fellow revolutionaries who were also conducting their own 'pursuit of happiness.' In 1793, with his

Neutrality Proclamation, George Washington rejected Thomas Jefferson's plea on behalf of the French revolutionaries. Again, in 1821, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams did not share Henry Clay's enthusiasm for the revolutions in Latin America and the Greek independence movement, on the ground that "[America] does not go abroad, in search of monsters to destroy."
However, by the end of the nineteenth century, with the Spanish-American War, the United States was now prepared to help those who were seeking a better life. But the ensuing Filipino insurrection proved that the pursuit of happiness abroad was no easy task. The American experience in the Philippines served as a warning but it certainly did not lead the United States to give up its interventionist trend. Actually, throughout the twentieth century, American interventions abroad became quite frequent and the goal of bringing happiness to the peoples of the world was sometimes lost along the way.
Recently, the Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI) launched by the George W. Bush administration was meant to bring some happiness to the region by spreading democracy, bringing humanitarian relief, securing economic stabilization and development, improving governance and establishing the rule of law, and building up proper military and police forces. As we know too well, this nation-building experiment was not very successful.
The purpose of this workshop will be:

- to examine the American foreign policy doctrine(s) which sustain the U.S. nation-building efforts,
- to study the key moments when the United States helped foreign countries establish their own form of political happiness,
- to consider the actors of this policy: the administration, the diplomats, the military, the intelligence services, the NGOs, the think tanks, etc.

Please send your proposals to gildas.levoguer@univ-rennes2.fr and fheurtebize@u-paris10.fr by January 15, 2017.

Workshop 9

The documentary quest as utopia – Delphine Letort (Université du Maine) and Zachary Baqué (Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès)

Often constrained by its didactic intent aimed at showing the whys and wherefores of a given situation, the documentary is a film genre with an explicitly political discourse. The presence of the documentary filmmaker on the scene testifies to his sincere commitment and desire to provide an authentic recording of the facts. Quite paradoxically, the documentary may also convey a militant message in the shape of a quest often expressed by utopian segments, encouraging the spectator to imagine and visualize the possibility of another world. In this workshop, we endeavor to examine the documentary from a fresh perspective, by moving beyond its obvious critiques, and consider the hopes ingrained in the genre. Is the documentary mostly an oppositional genre or can it participate in the construction of a political utopia? The American documentary tradition can indeed be reconsidered in light of the "pursuit of happiness" dear to the Founding Fathers: the history of the genre tells us that

it aims for an ideal aesthetic form and an actualization of a political utopia which might prompt the viewer to act.
Documentary filmmakers from various eras have engaged with the theoretical and practical debates of the genre in an attempt to devise the best ways to reach the truth about the world. For example, the direct cinema practitioners criticized the manipulations of documentary materials in the expository mode whereas *cinéma vérité* filmmakers have lampooned *direct cinema* for being another form of deception. In accordance with this teleological perspective of documentary history, Bill Nichols identifies six documentary modes, which, he contends, "expand […] the sense of the possible in documentary representation."
Dominique Baqué considers that the committed documentary draws its political strength from its capacity to challenge ideas. However, it seems that the perlocutionary force of politically inclined documentaries is somehow limited to an audience of already convinced viewers. The utopian dimension of documentaries may very well be reduced to their political message, which represents the quest for an ideal, expressed by formal experimentation. For example, one may analyze the webdocumentary practice as an interactive network aiming to develop the participation of citizens in collective projects (*Highrise*, Katerina Cizek, 2010) or Peter Wintonick's manifesto for "docmedia" supposed to actualize utopias.

This workshop wishes to further the ongoing reflection on the tension between realism and utopia at the heart of the documentary contract. Contributors may want to address the following questions (among others):

- The representation of utopian social and political systems: from the mutual help of workers in 1930s documentaries to the utopian experiments analyzed in *Documents of Utopia: The Politics of Experimental Documentary*, is the documentary a tool for solidarity?
- The technological quest underlying the evolution of the documentary: did direct cinema translate into freedom of interpretation? To what extent do reflexive documentaries renew and further the documentary pact?
- The propaganda of happiness: do 1930s and 1940s documentaries have the power to convince audiences of the hegemony of American happiness (*Why We Fight*) or of the benefits of spatial planning (*The River*, *The City*, *The Plow that Broke the Plains*)?
- Committed or engaged cinema: what kind of tools are used by political filmmakers and what for? Do documentaries have the potential to change the world by influencing an election (see the 2004 presidential campaign documentaries) or by raising awareness (*An Inconvenient Truth*)? Can and should the social impact of a documentary be empirically measured, a tendency recently decried by Bill Nichols or is it possible to envision another way to evaluate the political, emotional, and utopian impact of the documentary on viewers?
- Can minorities (women, African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, LGBT, etc.) change public perceptions by appropriating the cinematic apparatus, not necessarily as a means to retrospectively appraise their respective histories, but as a tool for self-actualization?

Please send your proposals to Zachary Baqué **baque.zachary@neuf.fr** and Delphine Letort **Delphine.Letort@univ-lemans.fr** by January 15, 2017.

Workshop 10

Do business enterprises foster happiness (19th-21st centuries)? (Alexia BLIN, Ophélie SIMÉON, Évelyne PAYEN-VARIÉRAS (Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle))

The individual farm of the Jeffersonian era, the General Motors corporation of the mid-20th century and the 'startups' of the early 21st century have little in common except perhaps their association with the nexus of values, beliefs and hopes usually subsumed under the 'American dream' label. Since the early 19th century, the pursuit of happiness has inspired both experiments with new forms of business organization and more radical efforts to challenge private property or to reverse the order of priorities between economic profit, self-fulfillment and social harmony.

This workshop questions the economic dimension of the American dream, and more specifically the role assigned to business enterprises in the pursuit of happiness. In what terms have the different actors of business enterprises defined this contribution, and how have they articulated the material, moral, individual and collective components of happiness? Aspirations to more satisfying social relations in business and work have coexisted with plans to expand the sphere of leisure, philanthropy and consumption. To some extent, the State has also shaped the pursuit of happiness in business enterprise.

Another set of questions pertains to the relation between mainstream and marginal or alternative enterprises. From the Shakers to Edward Bellamy and the communal movements of the Sixties, utopian projects have often foundered on the difficulties of breaking with established business practices. Conversely, paternalistic schemes, innovations in 'human resources management' and public relations strategies may owe more than is generally acknowledged to the radical champions of happiness. We invite contributions addressing some of these questions in different periods of US history, including in our time.

Please send your proposals to Alexia Blin **alexia.blin@gmail.com**, Evelyne Payen-Variéras **Evelyne.Payen@univ-paris3.fr** and Ophélie Simeon **ophelie.simeon@univ-paris3.fr**

Workshop 11

Popular Cultures and Cultural Practices: Illusions and Delusions of Happiness – (Elodie Chazalon et Danièle André, La Rochelle)

"The pursuit of happiness" has long been equated with a better future and happiness with the idea that the American Dream could allegedly be reached by everyone; yet it has become a delusion for many.

The North-American popular culture emphasizes both the gap between reality and an ideal to be reached, and the multiple and diverging meanings that the word "happiness" takes on according to time periods as well as geographical and cultural areas. The extensive use of the term "the pursuit of happiness" as the title of many cultural productions or as a marketing strategy, shows that even though this notion is an unalienable right – that is part and parcel of the North-American heritage and values – it is also elusive and deceptive. The North-American society is based on a capitalist economy and one of its wheels is to persuade the individuals that consuming/getting goods is the necessary and sufficient

condition for happiness. Popular culture thus questions what is at the core of happiness and its pursuit and what they imply.

Science fiction and some of its precursors have shown that a society that wishes to be the picture of happiness and to have all its citizens happy can only succeed by imposing its own vision of happiness and by compelling and/or persuading them to be happy or that they actually *are* happy. This requires the enforcement of social norms on individuals who, therefore, have to give up – be it willingly and consciously or not – another major North-American value: individual freedom.

Cultural practices, and more specifically the cult(ure) of leisure also reflect the contradiction inherent in consumer societies and in the lifestyles they promote. Just like *trends*, fashion both promises happiness and conveys its transient nature. In his essay *Philosophy of fashion* (Der Mode, 1905), Georg Simmel states that fashion – as a phenomenon – is an ongoing alternation between desires satisfied and unsatisfied and between fullness/fulfilment and emptiness/frustration, for fashion presents itself as a reconciliation of contradictory needs such as imitating others/differentiating oneself from others.

The cultural industries have grasped this duality so well that cultural productions (novels, movies, TV series, comics, etc.) and practices have gradually been incorporated into the founding myths of the American nation (Marienstras) and into its core values (the *American dream*, the *self-made man*, the *Gold Rush*, the *land of plenty* and the Pastoral – individualism, competitiveness, freedom, free enterprise, affluence and upward mobility, etc.).

Several questions can be raised. Should we rethink and redefine “happiness”? According to which criteria? Isn’t the pursuit of happiness rather an “experiment” that would go through more and more extreme practices and behaviors? Vegan and *free* diets and natural cosmetics (gluten-*free*, sugar-*free*, paraben-*free*, etc.), conspicuously sober and alternative lifestyles that are statements against mass production and consumption, or on the contrary, extreme sports, conspicuous and hyper-consumption are excessive practices which conjure up the idea that accumulation or its apparent opposite, detachment, bring happiness. Popular culture and cultural practices show that these equivalence relations are not as obvious as they may seem.

Although a return to values that have nothing to do with money or consumption is perceptible, aspects that are mirrored by popular culture, it would be relevant to wonder if these movements towards other values would not be, in turn, new trends and market values that pave the way for a new commodification and normalization of individual and collective needs and desires.

Proposals may include, but are not limited to:

- works that deal with the pursuit of happiness and those that offer alternative or critical visions

- works that question “popular culture” and “mass culture” as both judge and jury when it comes to linking “happiness” with (consumer) “goods”

- cultural industries and cultural products as remedies to the feeling of emptiness and as producers of desires

- cultural practices (clothing, food, sport, games (RPG, video, etc.), body rituals, lifestyles) in their twofold movement of imitation/differentiation, satisfaction/frustration

- the representation of “desire,” of “emptiness” and of “excess” in popular culture

- the link between the pursuit of happiness and the notions mentioned above.

We welcome interdisciplinary approaches. A 300 to 500 word abstract and a short biography should be sent to Danièle André, daniele.andre.univ.larochelle@gmail.com et Elodie Chazalon, elodie.chazalon@univ-lr.fr

Workshop 12

Pursuing Happiness through Religion? (G. Christoph, S. Remanosfsky, ENS de Lyon)

Pascal wrote that "all men seek happiness", but cautioned that happiness is an infinite void which only another infinite – God – can possibly fill. Conversely, Saint Just famously said that "happiness is a new idea in Europe" precisely because up until the 18th century, Christianity had favored the salvation of the soul and obedience to God's commands over the pursuit of earthly happiness, in a mortal world otherwise fraught with toil, suffering and temptation.

In the Christian tradition, therefore, the relationship between happiness and religion seems riddled with contradiction, Pascal advocating religion as the means to happiness (be it mainly after death) while Saint Just and other radical thinkers of the Enlightenment thought religion a major obstacle to earthly happiness. Working within the framework of this apparent contradiction and seeking to widen the question to all religions – and not just Abrahamic monotheisms – this workshop will endeavor to explore the relationship between happiness and religions in the United States, a new country where the idea of happiness was deemed so important that it was enshrined as a right guaranteed by the State in the Declaration of Independence.

Contributions to this workshop could explore the relationship existing between religions and happiness in America by approaching the problem from a philosophico-theological standpoint. How do the religions of America endeavor to define "happiness"? Do they condemn it, considering that only the saints in heaven can reach a state of blessed happiness, or do they advocate its earthly pursuit? Is the pursuit of happiness even considered compatible with religious morality?

Contributions to this workshop could also approach the problem from the standpoint of sociology and examine the correlation purportedly existing between happiness and religiosity. Indeed, a great number of studies maintain that religious people are, on average, happier than non-religious people; yet an equally high number of counter-studies aim at denouncing the link between religiosity and happiness, arguing that no significant correlation exists and that the studies endeavoring to prove the existence of a positive link between religiosity and happiness are riddled with methodological problems (the principle of "self-reporting", as well as the totally contradictory results obtained by different questionnaires being the most commonly cited issues).

A final and perhaps more encompassing sociological line of questioning might ponder the contribution of religions to the happiness of society as a whole, rather than its contribution to the happiness of the religious individual or to that of the religious group alone.

Papers should be sent conjointly to gilles.christoph@ens-lyon.fr and sabine.remanofsky@ens-lyon.fr by January 15, 2017.

Workshop 13

The Pursuit of Happiness: the Day After – Eléonore Lainé Forrest (Nouvelle-Calédonie) et Yvonne-Marie Rogez (Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas)

"But somewhere along the line something turned sour"

A symbol of the American Dream, the pursuit of happiness was born in a reality which is different from ours, but not less difficult. The grievances of American colonists then are echoed by the complaints of Americans today: those hit by the subprime crisis, by relocations, those who do not have health insurance, who try to survive within poor districts with a sea of other ghettos as their only horizon. In what looks like a post-apocalyptic world, what could be left but the dream of the inalienable right to happiness promised by the Enlightenment?

More and more today, American movies, TV series, graphic novels, but also short-stories and novels put on their post-apocalyptic or "postapo" costume to tell the story of the pursuit of happiness. In those fictions, the United States appears either devastated by an epidemic, a nuclear catastrophe, or "eaten" by the walking dead, with survivors striving tirelessly to build a better world, the new city upon the hill. In *The Village* (M. Night Shyamalan, 2004), a group of people has fled the world as we know it to start anew, like pilgrims. Otherwise what would be the point of living? Why keep on walking like the man and the child in *The Road* (Cormac McCarthy, 2006) when horror is the daily routine (Julia Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*, Paris, Seuil, 1980)?

The pursuit of happiness is American postapo's background and postapo nothing less than the costume of Uncle Sam if not the world's reality. No need of Dorian Gray's portrait to reveal abjection in man. Like the shades in *They Live* (John Carpenter, 1988), postapo allows us to see the world as it really is. A world where men, women and children die everyday because they dreamed of reaching the happiness of a democratic and better world. Hence, American post-apocalyptic fiction tells our story, the story of our world today. If it is the first to criticize the United States, American postapo also sheds light on the whole world's lack of well-being (Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York, Schocken Books, 1951 / Bruce Bongar, *Psychology of Terrorism*, 2007 / Jeffrey Kaplan, *Terrorist Groups and the Fifth Wave*, 2010). No country is spared, especially not those which bragged about how they would make the twenty-first century a model of social progress (Evan Osnos, « The Fearful and the Frustrated », The New Yorker, August 31, 2015 Issue).

Teddy's big stick, self-righteousness, whatever its nationality, has reached its limits. How many times do we witness *The Walking Dead*'s characters either asking themselves whether they are going to help someone who is in danger, or being denied assistance themselves by other survivors (the legal concept of "non-assistance à personne en danger" is, in most cases, not punishable by law in common law countries). And the expression "kill or be killed" rings all too familiar (Michael Waldman, *The Second Amendment : a Biography*, New York, Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2015). What we think was happening far, very far away from our borders seems to be taking place right inside them. And we can smell the odour of an all

too warm truth. Hence, postapo does not offer any solutions but mirrors a world in which democracy seems to have become an agent of destruction rather than of happiness (John Brenkman, *The Cultural Contradictions of Democracy : Political Thought since September 11*, Princeton University Press, 2007).

These different trains of thought constitute the themes of this workshop. They are varied and not limited to literature or cinema. Scholars from all fields are invited to share their work on post-apocalyptic representations and what they say about the inherent contradictions of the American dream of the pursuit of happiness, if not of democracy.

Please send your abstract to:
Eléonore Lainé Forrest (Université de la Nouvelle-Calédonie) : ellieforrest@yahoo.fr
and Yvonne-Marie Rogez (Université Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas) : ymrogez@gmail.com

Workshop 14

Psychotropic Joy. American Artifices of Happiness. Nicholas Manning (Université Paris-Sorbonne)

Within the American pursuit of happiness lies a crucial ambiguity: is the value of happiness as an affective state threatened if it is seen to have an "artificial", pharmacological or psychotropic origin? Should experience engendered by psychotropes be considered a lesser, fake or ersatz joy? Is its value as an affective experience distinct from its causation?

The term "psychotrope" will be at the centre of this panel's interrogations. Indeed, psychotrope can be understood in a variety of literal and symbolic ways, ranging from socially accepted or standardised psychotropes such as alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, and more recently cannabis, to the mass expansion, in the context of the booming pharmaceutical industry in the American post-war, of the use of antidepressants, various psycholeptics (such as ritalin) and psychoanaleptics (amphetamines). The panel will thus not be limited to those works, literary or otherwise, which take drug culture and psychedelic experiences as a central thematic, but will take the notion of psychotrope in its widest acceptations. Indeed, we invite wide-ranging and theoretical interrogations on the meaning and use of the notion of psychotrope itself.

This panel also hopes to interrogate the notion of psychotropic happiness in an American culture historically conditioned by a range of counter movements of limitation and control. From the Puritan valuing of purity and restraint, to the temperance movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the context of Prohibition in the 1920s, and up until the War On Drugs instigated by Richard Nixon from the early 1970s on, the counter values of self-restraint and limitation are frequently criticised and satirised by American literature and culture.

Proposals from specialists of both American literature and civilisation will be welcomed, as will propositions related to media studies, television series, and film. Comparative perspectives which are not simply monographic are encouraged.

Please send a 250-word abstract and a short biography to Nicholas Manning (nicholas.manning@paris-sorbonne) by January 15, 2017.

Workshop 15

Bound laborers and the pursuit of happiness (Lawrence Aje, Université de Montpellier, Anne-Claire Faucquez, Université Paris VIII, Elodie Peyrol-Kleiber, Université de Poitiers)

In the 1776 Declaration of Independence, American colonists stated that the following truths were self-evident: all men are endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Although the main author of the declaration, Thomas Jefferson, was inspired by the English philosopher John Locke, he chose to replace the reference to the right to property, which was dear to the philosopher, by a more abstract, philosophical, if not existential notion, namely, that all men were entitled to pursue their happiness. Far from being a stylistic coquetry, or a wish to minimize Locke's ideological influence, Jefferson's rephrasing illustrates his will to produce a document which would federate the North American colonies, by taking into account their different political sensibilities, especially in relation to the question of slavery. Indeed, the inalienable rights which are mentioned in the Declaration did not apply to bound laborers who were, regardless of their race, excluded from the political community, as they were subjected to a master who possessed them — temporarily in the case of indentured servants, or on a perpetual and hereditary basis for slaves. The correlation between the pursuit of happiness and the access to property constituted the basis and the driving force behind the peopling and the economic development of the United States. Yet, this interdependence also planted the seeds that would divide the Union. The fact that masters owned both the production of their bound laborers and their laborers as chattel property, seemed to belie the cardinal tenets which the Declaration of Independence presented as natural human rights. The gradual substitution of indentured servants, who were mostly white, by a black enslaved labor force encouraged proslavery advocates to justify the access to property as being a natural right, while they simultaneously called for the naturalization of a social order based on racial distinctions, through customary or positive law, thus limiting the individual liberty of colored people. As the 1793 Fugitive Slave Law or the defense of the 5th amendment by the 1857 landmark Supreme Court Decision in the Dred Scott case exemplify, slave masters chose to assert, on the national scene, their constitutional right to enjoy their individual liberty and to defend their bound property, all of which they deemed to be inalienable. Abolitionists, who aimed at opposite objectives, castigated the theory which presented slavery as a positive good that contributed to the personal development of slaves and argued that depriving bondsmen of their liberty constituted a violation of their natural rights and a hindrance to their happiness.

This workshop, which builds on a reflection on the status of unfree laborers in the Atlantic world, aims at examining the interrelatedness between the right to property and the pursuit of happiness, from the colonial times to the abolition of slavery, through the prism of bound labor. How did Southerners instrumentalize the notion of the right to property in order to defend the "peculiar institution"? To what extent did the servile population aspire to the egalitarian ideals which were expressed at the time of the American Revolution, in particular, the natural right of any individual to pursue happiness? Were bound laborers entitled to the pursuit of happiness? If so, did the forms of happiness the bond population enjoy vary historically and geographically? Was the emancipation of bound laborers, namely the process whereby one (re)gained natural possession of one's self, the corollary or the

prerequisite to other forms of happiness? These are some questions, among many others, that we hope to address.

Please send your paper proposals to Elodie Peyrol Kleiber elodie.peyrol.kleiber@univ-poitiers.fr, Lawrence Aje lawaje@gmail.com, Anne-Claire FAUCQUEZ acfaucquez@gmail.com

Workshop 16

The Pursuit of Happiness as Anti-Urban and Anti-Materialist Ideology, 17th – 19th centuries

The *Declaration*'s use of the term, the "pursuit of happiness," has traditionally been seen as a lyrical way to discuss property as a human right. Our panel proposes to view the expression in various historical contexts that challenge the materialist assumptions of this narrow reading. The panel will compare uses of the term, happiness, in various contexts: the revolutionary Atlantic (Allan Potofsky); the pelt trade in North America (Gilles Havard) and as the promotion of a new and virtuous rurality opposed to the corrupt urbanity of old Europe (Steven Sarson and Nathalie Zacek). In sum, the origins and practices of the "pursuit of happiness" were not only a materialist celebration of possessive individualism, but rather evoke a search for alternative definitions on the margins of a purely capitalist-oriented construction of happiness.

Steve Sarson will discuss what Thomas Jefferson meant by replacing Locke's property with the pursuit of happiness. Jefferson's pursuit of happiness amalgamates concepts of migrants as free agents and an agrarian concept of widespread landownership, on the one hand, and his pastoral ideas portrayed in colonial promotional literature, on the other. Gilles Havard will examine the choice of the lifestyle of the *coureur de bois* as a non-economic engagement in the early modern period. In the French Atlantic, the pursuit of happiness could be enlarged to include alternative lifestyles and alternative ways of defining masculinity in the context of fur trade mobility in Indian countries and in interactions with Native Americans. Allan Potofsky will examine the political use and abuse of the term happiness/*bonheur* as an appropriated concept applied during the French Revolution. The famous phrase of Saint-Just that happiness was a "new idea in Europe" insists on the collective "happiness of all" and was a critique of the individualized Lockean English and Jeffersonian political definition. Finally, Natalie Zacek will focus on the example of Kentucky horse racing in the nineteenth century as an example of the utopian and rural dimensions of happiness. It was the emotional, as opposed to the financial, pleasures of horse sport, and its connection to regional and national identities, that compelled the sport's development. The popular sentiment that racing should be enjoyed entirely as a source of happiness unto itself meant that those who attended races in the hope of winning large sums of money through betting were rejected as profiteers whose presence diminished the enjoyment of other attendees. Taken together, the papers of this panel will demonstrate that an anti-urban and anti-materialist ideology, more than possessive individualism, inspired multiform meanings of the phrase, "the pursuit of happiness." Proposals to enrich the panel are also welcome. Please send them to Allan Potofsky allan.potofsky@univ-paris-diderot.fr and Steven Sarson Steven Sarson@univ-lyon3.fr steven.sarson@univ-lyon3.fr by January 15, 2017.

Workshop 17

Regarding the Happiness of Others: US Foreign Policy in Deeds and Discourses – Pierre Guerlain (Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense) and Raphaël Ricaud (Paul Valéry Montpellier 3)

United States foreign policy has always been characterized by intense periods of isolation and others of intervention. In the late 19th century, Progressives, influenced by German philosophers, laid the foundations for Interventionism. The latter stipulated that American foreign policy would go from being selfish to selfless. Consequently, all speeches relating to America's role on the international scene at the time incorporated the well being of others.

Ethical idealism and historical evolution led to passionate debates before and during the Spanish-American war, but also under President Theodore Roosevelt's watch, during which America became "the world's policeman". Under president Wilson, the United States reaffirmed a moral duty to bring freedom to the peoples of the world. America lived up to its promise by decisively entering World War I, but it then retreated into a new isolationist phase.

Since World War II, however, the US hyper power has shown itself to be resolutely interventionist. This was specifically true during the Cold War. But the fall of the wall did not end this trend: under George Herbert Walker Bush, there were interventions in Kuwait (1991) and Somalia (1992). Under president Bill Clinton, the United States sent troops to Haiti (1994), Bosnia (1995), and Kosovo (1999). Both presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama sent GI's to Afghanistan and Iraq.

To justify these military interventions, it is often argued that the pursuit of happiness is a universal right. Yet can a nation provide for the happiness of the citizens of other nations? What concepts support this claim? How are such concepts put into practice? How do audiences (both in the U.S. and beyond its borders) feel about America pursuing the happiness of others?

This workshop aims to look at the issue by welcoming papers on speeches and acts that characterize democracy promotion and nation building, specifically when done in the name of the pursuit of the happiness of others.

The pursuit of the happiness of others in US foreign policy might be studied in its different phases (conception, transmission, and / or reception). The issue may be studied from a historical perspective or from a theoretical standpoint. Case studies and taxonomies are also welcome. Of course, these suggestions are by no means restrictive.

Workshop contact: Pierre Guerlain (CREA, université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense) pierre.guerlain@gmail.com & Raphaël Ricaud (EMMA, université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3) raphael.ricaud@univ-montp3.fr

Workshop 18

Technès of Happiness in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction – Thomas Constantinesco and Cécile Roudeau (Université Paris Diderot)

The Declaration of Independence's claim for the inalienable right of "all men" to the "pursuit of happiness" introduced the challenge of what it could mean to enforce happiness across the nineteenth century. Could it be implemented through law or applied "by force," "whether this force be direct or indirect, physical or symbolic, exterior or interior, brutal or subtly discursive and hermeneutic, coercive or regulative" (Derrida, "Force of Law")? A vast range of regulatory institutions, practices and discourses throughout the century attempted to come to terms with this problem, from the policing of bodies and minds with a view to minimizing the distribution of individual suffering and maximizing the happiness of the greatest number, to a variety of efforts at ensuring the conditions of collective harmony through "bribes of pleasure, threats of harm, use of force" (John Dewey, *Ethics*, 1908). These technologies were extraordinary and seized the literary imagination: reform movements that traversed the nineteenth century (from temperance societies to abolitionism, from women's rights to free love movements); variegated experiments in pedagogy (Bronson Alcott, the Peabody sisters, Margaret Fuller…) or medicine (homeopathy, vegetarianism, water-cures…); new techniques of work management (Lowell manufactures…); experimental communes across the country and their attempts to enforce brotherhood or sisterhood through communality (from the Owenites to the Fourierites to the Icarians); sustained interest in home management (Catherine Beecher); urban sociology and planning (Jane Addams); alternative plans to settle the West; the designing of prisons and asylums, hospitals and sanatoriums; or the pseudo-scientific dabbling at social, racial and psychological typologies the better to "cleanse" and "civilize" the nation. Appropriating these technologies as literary material, fiction—or literature more broadly conceived—not only reflected but also contributed to manufacturing happiness, by rehearsing a national imperative or laying bare its internal faults and failings.

Focusing on the long nineteenth century, this workshop welcomes papers that connect the "idea" of happiness with the forms of its production, its practices and methods. More specifically, we are interested in papers that explore the literary art and arts of happiness: the making of happiness as an American fiction.

Possible sources include, but are not limited to:

- Henry Adams, *Democracy: An American Novel* (1880);
- Louisa May Alcott, T*ranscendental Wild Oats: A Chapter from an Unwritten Romance* (1873), *Work: A Story of Experience* (1873);
- Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* (1889), *Equality* (1898);
- Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (1845);
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Human Work* (1904), *Herland* (1915), *Moving the Mountains* (1911);
- William Dean Howells, *A Traveler from Altruria* (1894);
- Henry James, *The Bostonians* (1886);
- Herman Melville, *Mardi* (1849);
- Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee* (1890);
- Walt Whitman, *Democratic Vistas* (1871)

500-word proposals and short biographical statement to be sent to: thomas.constantinesco@gmail.com and cecile.roudeau@gmail.com

Workshop 19

Food as a principle of/metaphor for the pursuit of happiness in American literature (Françoise Buisson, Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour)

Even before the American nation was founded, the New World was perceived as "the land of plenty", "the land of milk and honey". Food was not only part of the quest for "the fruits of the earth", but it was also a metaphor for the pursuit of happiness in a land that had to be tamed before being farmed, where newcomers aimed to find vast resources and material wealth. The Thanksgiving feast itself conveys the gratefulness, harmony and happiness symbolized by food sharing. The purpose of this workshop is to study the representations of food as a principle of/trope for hedonism and the pursuit of happiness in American literature, in fields ranging from fiction and poetry to diaries and travel writing. Such representations are sometimes tinged with the pleasure experienced by the male or female author who enjoys playing with words while describing meals as well as visual, olfactory or gustatory sensations. In this context, "food" refers to what we eat—whether raw or cooked, solid or liquid—and to the eating habits and rituals belonging to the domestic sphere and pointing to the ethnic and social diversity of the American nation. The study of these representations inevitably draws readers' attention to the worship of physical well-being: Marie-Claire Rouyer writes that "Représenter, en ses avatars, la nourriture apprêtée, socialisée ou travaillée par l'imaginaire, c'est à la fois dessiner et déchiffrer la carte du corps. " (*Food for Thought ou les avatars de la nourriture*, 1998, 18) *The Road to Welville* (1993) by T.C. Boyle closely interweaves several American mythologies, among others the road motif and the pursuit of eternal bliss depending on the obsession with food hygiene in a sanitarium where millionaires embody the American dream, only a few blocks away from a sometimes starving population deprived of the very same dream.

Although eating or drinking results in some joyful, carnivalesque liberation, it can also reveal a malaise, through its surfeit or shortage, in an American body of literature that often describes cases of morbid addiction to alcohol or drugs, thus throwing a light on the failure of the pursuit of happiness in American society. The latter is then criticized for its hyperconsumerism and waste production. Besides, whereas in women's literature, and notably in Southern literature, the kitchen may be the place where to prepare a "happy meal" and to fulfill oneself, it can also be the stage for marginalization and subservience. Moreover, food consumption exemplifies the problems raised by our links with Nature and animals, for it leads writers such as Jonathan Safran Foer (*Eating Animals*, 2009) or Eco-Writers to question the overexploitation of the fruits of the earth and then to show the hardly concealed face of agribusiness mirroring the inverted image of the pursuit of happiness in a land that is anything but pastoral. Food hedonism, indeed, also brings about slaughter and predation, and is thus the very antithesis of Epicureanism, which is expected to rely on moderation and respect towards animal or human Others. This brings to mind the *clichés* around junk food and its representations, among which the effects of poisonous overconsumption on a collective and individual body which, far from having found happiness, falls a prey to malaise, disease and entropy.

Paper proposals should be sent to francoise.buisson@univ-pau.fr

Workshop 20

American Dance and the Pursuit of Happiness – Adeline Chevrier-Bosseau (Université Paris-Est Créteil) et Claudie Servian (Université Grenoble-Alpes)

As a visual art form where emotions are expressed and conveyed to the spectator through the body of the dancer, as an art where the body rejoices, acts out in shapes and steps an uncontained happiness that exceeds words, dance appears as an apt medium in the very American principle of the pursuit of happiness.

This panel wishes to interrogate the way American dance participates in this American *ethos*, in this American mythology, and reflects its founding principles. The pursuit of happiness in North America is often connected to the quest for success and to the notion of individualism: in dance, this is exemplified by the rise of the solo (Fuller, Duncan, Saint Denis, in the early 20th century) – along with the pursuit of a liberation, an emancipation and a self-assertion of the female dancer. From Isadora Duncan's rejection of the torture of the body imposed by classical ballet training and its endless quest for perfection and her defense of the female dancer's body and right to happiness in her practice of dance, to Martha Graham's contraction-and-release technique founded on emotions which bring forth movement – we will examine how the great founding mothers and fathers of American dance have integrated the pursuit of happiness in their conceptions of dance.

American dance becomes the mirror of the American society and its preoccupations, for these early masters and for more contemporary choreographers (Balanchine, Alvin Ailey, Complexions Ballet) alike; far from a mere form of entertainment, American dance takes part in ongoing national debates on social and political issues like race, gender, war, class, and the many disguises of a divided and sometimes contradictory society.

The argument of some choreographies can for example showcase an individual looking for love in a violent and disrupted world, reinterpret the dreams of the Pilgrim Fathers grappling with a hostile and wild territory, or westward expansion. In the 1960's, it seemed that this American dream of freedom, equality and prosperity was coming true: the arts held a special place in this society as the mirror of a rejuvenated American society and a modern consciousness. The Kennedy era was particularly favorable to their development, since ballets were now sponsored. In the wake of the Greenwich Village avant-garde and the development of Pop art, the Judson Dance Theatre blossomed. As Andy Warhol was introducing Pop movies, the Fluxus group was coming to NYC and Charlotte Moorman organized the first avant-garde festival. American dance was then extremely innovative: its capacity for innovation exceeded that of European ballet companies which seemingly found it harder to break free from classical conventions.

This panel particularly invites papers on:

- The question of dance as entertainment, as a source of pleasure for the audience, to the expense – or not – of the dancer's welfare and happiness: possible topics include the plight of 19th-century female dancers, often exploited by unscrupulous theatre managers, the fate of burlesque, girly show or leg show performers, often commodified and turned into mere erotic objects (or on the contrary, challenging this commodification and eroticization), but also the ever-smiling "happy darkies" of minstrel shows and early Hollywood movies who dance for the entertainment and pleasure of white masters.
- The representations of happiness through dance, in classical, jazz, neo-classical and contemporary dance, but also in musicals and movies, with icons like Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Gene Kelly or Cyd Charisse.

Paper submissions should be sent to Adeline Chevrier-Bosseau (achevrier.bosseau@gmail.com) and Claudie Servian (claudie.servian@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr) by January 15, 2017.

Workshop 21

Happiness in the writing / Writing, or what happens – Amélie Ducroux (Lyon 2), Marie Olivier (UPEC)

Upon the occasion of the annual ceremony of the Hopwood Creative Writing Award at the University of Michigan in 1996, American poet Louise Glück delivered a lecture entitled "Fear of Happiness" where she explained her fear that psychoanalysis would make a balanced and happy individual out of her, and eventually prevent her from writing: "For five years I had been struggling desperately to become whole and sane [. . .]. And I remember very clearly my panic and the terms in which I accused my analyst, who had conspired in all this: he was going to make me so happy I wouldn't write."

As the call for papers argues, the pursuit of happiness unquestionably is "a foundation of the American *ethos*." Yet, this notion remains questionable in the creative process and in the writings of American authors and poets wherein happiness expresses itself as a counterpoint to the fantasy of a plenitude. Rather than consider the pursuit of happiness as the quest for an object – intangible as it may be – , this panel is an invitation to discuss the act of writing as an active search for forms of happiness spawned by writing itself.

More negatively, writing can result from disappointment or disenchantment (social, existential), inviting social outcast or rebels to look for happiness elsewhere. Writing could be another New World, the possibility to explore unknown territories, fueling a perpetual return to the American dynamics of exploration and conquest, renewing the possibility to experience the moment of its independence. Happiness in the writing may be the secret resource one turns to when other chances of happiness seem to have died out.

The etymology of *happiness* in English (*hap, happe, happa*) refers to good fortune but also to *what happens* without being planned: "Is happiness the name for our (involuntary) complicity with chance?" Lyn Hejinian asks in *Happily*, a poetic exploration of this proximity between *happiness* and *happen*, of this *hap* whose echo can be heard throughout the text. This buried meaning of *happiness* seems to contradict the idea of pursuit. But couldn't writing also be envisioned as a *counter-pursuit*, as an activity which, unburdened of happiness as an aim, would accept happiness as it comes, in the act of writing seen as adventure, experience, rather than as the creation of a finite object eventually bringing happiness? This panel will focus not so much on writing as a constant release of pleasure as on the happy events occurring sporadically in the process of writing, on writing practices in which happiness is closer to the jouissance of language and the accidents that befall language. The label *happiness* sometimes hangs loosely over *pleasure* or *jouissance*, which can be understood only in their relation to negativity and death. Writing as a search of lost happy times, as a longing for an ever-receding object, may instill in the writer something else than happiness, something meaningful that begs to be addressed. Poetry will certainly occupy a place of choice here; the particular spacing and "staging" it implies can make something (happily) happen on the page, perhaps redefining happiness itself.

As a quest and as a perpetual investigation, happiness in the writing may be the answer to another sort of happiness: that of reading, but one that may not be found in a comfortable experience. For instance, the oscillations and disjunctions structuring Faulkner's novels, Lorine Niedecker's poetic condensations, the idiosyncratic hesitations in the compositional work of contemporary American poet Keith Waldrop, the stammering of Melville's Billy Budd, Gertrude Stein's repetitions and *jouissive* babbling, all of these are instances which do not present happiness in their pages, but which are mere happiness to read. We also invite the participants to address and question their own "pleasure of the text," to deconstruct the binary opposition between *pleasure* and *jouissance* in order to study how the pursuit of happiness manifests itself in the American writings.

Please send your paper proposals to Amélie Ducroux (Lyon 2) amy.ducroux@gmail.com et Marie Olivier (UPEC) <marie.olivier@u-pec.fr> before January 15, 2017.

Workshop 22

Is America entitled to happiness ? And to what kind(s) of happiness ? What do American comedy films and series tell us about it ? – Grégoire Halbout, (Maine), Gilles Menegaldo (Poitiers), A.-M. Paquet-Deyris (Paris Ouest Nanterre)

This workshop will address the way in which Hollywood comedy and contemporary American comedy series inscribe on screen the American Constitution's peculiar promise that happiness is an inalienable contitutional right on par with life and freedom. Constitutional promise, democratic ideal but also inevitable disillusionment ?

Texts remain vague on the definition of the kind of happiness the anglo-saxon tradition presents as articulating individual and conjugal happiness (Milton, *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, 1643) on the one hand, and the Republic's common well-being on the other. This founding myth (Marienstras, 1976) is however an ongoing process. In the recent years, President Obama advocated the need for happiness in his inaugural speech (2009) and his latest National Democratic Convention address (2016).
Does American audiovisual fiction hold happiness as a right or duty and does it support a search for constitutional happiness (*Le Bonheur*, Simha, 2005) ?
In a diachronic perspective and so as to broaden the scope, we'll analyze three main dimensions while focusing on comedy films and series:
The ideals of classic Hollywood cinema and conformist aspirations; happy ending rules ("And they lived happily ever after"); mythical figures (The Tramp, the cowboy…); the thirst for Post-World-War II material comfort (suburbia, family, *neighborly association*).

We'll also comment on:
Cavell's ontology of American cinema first introduced in *The World Viewed* (1979) and further theorized later in *The Pursuit of Happiness* (1981),

- Remarriage comedy from the classic Hollywood era to post-Cavell contemporary mainstream comedy positing that matching and happy love and conjugal conversations (Cavell, *Cities of Words*, 2004) can be traced back to Emersonian

Moral Perfectionism. It also entails a fight for some utopian form of Mutual Freedom formulating a nation's internal priorities (*Ibid*.),

- Contemporary disengagement; from ideals to disillusion (filmmakers) and the choice of disengagement (spectators) ? For a few examples, see the new American comedy school with the Farelli Brothers, Judd Apatow, Wes Anderson, the « frat pack », anatomy of a dysfunctional society, economy etc. ; and for TV series, *Breaking Bad*, *The Middle*….

Please send your ten-line proposals *conjointly* to Grégoire Halbout, gregoire.halbout@gmail.com, Gilles Menegaldo, gilles.menegaldo@wanadoo.fr, A.-M. Paquet-Deyris, apaquet-deyris@u-paris10.fr

Workshop 23 – The pursuit of happiness in teaching and learning: Epistemological and practical challenges in teaching North-American « civilization » and literature

For the second year in a row, we offer members of the AFEA to meet up for a pedagogy workshop. The idea is to provide a venue for sharing ideas and qualms regarding our practice as teachers in a collaborative spirit possibly during an extended lunch break. After having tackled the problematic history of the word « civilization » in English department since the 1960s, last year in Toulouse, we would like to build on this and open up the dialog onto new lines of questioning. What about the pursuit of happiness in the ways we teach? This workshop will be a forum for discussing our happiest pedagogical inventions (from bachelor to postgrad and *concours* students) while not losing sight of the methodological challenges tackled in 2016: historiography and ethnocentrism, teaching and power relationships, the contribution of social sciences to « civilization ». In 2017, it would be interesting to open up to the possibilities offered in decompartmentalizing literature and civilisation, of rethinking lectures in a less teacher-centered way, of using project-based pedagogy, service learning, flipped classrooms, new technological tools such as Google Docs, Quizlet or the collaborative handbook *The American Yawp* and of course in team teaching with other language departments. Finally this workshop will give us the opportunity to update the alternative civilisation handbook initiated in Toulouse.

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Proposals should be sent to Peter Marquis, peter.marquis@univ-rouen.fr, Jean-Marc Serme, Jean-Marc.Serme@univ-brest.fr and Emilie Souyri, emilie.souyri@unice.fr. Thanks for letting us know if you want to attend only as well.

Workshop 24

#VastEarlyAmerica: **Repositioning the foundation narrative of the United States : Towards a history of North America – Emmanuelle Perez-Tisserant (Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès,) et Tangi Villerbu (Université de La Rochelle)**

Generally, the history of the United States is built on a narrative that is firmly rooted in the East, in the 13 colonies who rebelled against the British Crown, proclaimed their independence in 1776, were recognized as such in 1783 and who, as the United States, founded a new political model outside Europe. Flawed, tainted by slavery despite its democratic ideals, this model is presented as having broken down at the onset of the Civil War, before reinvented itself. However, approaches focusing on race, gender, and class, for example, have completed this narrative model and offered new ways of describing the United States, repositioning it socially and widening its scope beyond the white elites who long dominated the nation's history. This repositioning, or decentering, is also spatial, taking into account the spatial expansion of the United States and the integration of societies and territories that were not part of the original British colonies. In the manner of historian Karin Wulf's ongoing project, the goal of this workshop is to portray a "vast early America", made of interconnected regional histories, that is sensitive to the globalized history of the United States.
In this workshop, we would like to contribute to this project through presentations that show how a perspective that is regional, even peripheral or considered as such, can shed new light on the construction of the United States.

Please send your paper proposals to Emmanuelle PEREZ emmanuelle.perez@ehess.fr and Tangi VILLERBU tangi.villerbu@wanadoo.fr

Worskhop 25

Jacksonian America: a "happy" nation? Yohanna Alimi-Levy (Université Paris Dauphine) et Augustin Habran (Université Paris Diderot)

The Jacksonian Era is often described as the era of the "Common Man". Due to the apparent political and economic freedom (white male universal suffrage and laissez-faire) Americans seemed to enjoy at the time, one may believe the promise of happiness contained in the Declaration of Independence had come true. Yet, even if optimism and confidence in progress appeared to be driving forces in Jacksonian society, one can wonder if the Early American Republic, more than fifty years after the Revolution of 1776, lived up to the ideals and expectations in line with its very creation. Thus, in 1828, when President Jackson was elected, the American society, for it had undergone intense transformations, had stepped aside from the model envisioned by the Founding Fathers (industrialization, growing urbanization in the north-east, development of modern capitalism, westward expansion, etc.).

This workshop will allow papers to reflect on the ambiguous relation Americans had to happiness at the time. Whereas some political figures, such as Andrew Jackson in his official addresses, developed a discourse based on self-congratulation that presented the United-States as a "happy" nation, dissonant voices were rising that challenged this optimistic vision. These reformist voices questioned the idea according to which the promise of happiness made at the time of the American Revolution was fulfilled and tried to have all those who were excluded or marginalized (women, laborers, African-Americans, Native Americans, etc.) take part in the so-called Pursuit of Happiness.

Please send your paper proposals to Yoanna ALIMI-LEVY yohanna.alimi@gmail.com and Augustin HABRAN augustin.habran@orange.fr by January 15, 2017.

Workshop 26

Mapping, travelling, wandering: Geographies of the pursuit of happiness – Pierre-Antoine Pellerin (Lyon 3) & Pierre-Louis Patoine (Paris 3)

From road movies (*Easy Rider*, *Mad Max*) and travel narratives in their multiple forms (Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, Kerouac's *On the Road*, Dave Eggers' *You Shall Know Our Velocity*) to video games (*Colossal Cave Adventure*, *Journey*, the *Elder Scrolls* series), American culture is imbued with themes of journeying, wandering and questing. How are these themes connected to the pursuit of happiness? How do American literature and culture associate geography and hedonism?

While fantasies of happiness in the US are closely linked to the protection and comfort provided by domestic spaces, the experience of mobility follows a certain conception of happiness that is defined in radically different terms. Wandering in the wild (Jon Kraukauer's *Into the Wild*, Thoreau's *Walden*, Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*), strolling in the city (Henry Miller's *Sexus*, Diane di Prima's *Memoirs of a Beatnik*) or fleeing on the road (Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, Mark Twain's *Roughing It,* John Updike's *Rabbit, Run*) enable the narrators of those narratives to escape from social constraints, to question the American dream and to redefine their identity.

Though often utopian in their principles and fruitless in their results, quests for another form of happiness revolve around precarious heterotopias fostered in the margins of consumer society. Following the failure or the rejection of the good life promised by capitalist ideology, defined by the accumulation of commodities and the heteronormative ideal, many characters in American literature and cinema prefer to flee on the road (*Wild at Heart*, Jim Harrison's *A Good Day to Die*) or on the sea (Melville's *Moby Dick*, Joshua Slocum's *Sailing Alone Around the World*), redefining their identity around a nomadic ethos which generates « positive affects » (Kosofsky Sedgwick) that do not conform to the narrative codes of the success story and exclude happy endings.

Though movement and traveling were long the prerogatives of male characters which recreated homosocial spaces outside the constraints of family life, women (Bonnie Bremser's *Troia : A Mexican Memoir*, *Thelma & Louise*), blacks (John A. Williams' *This Is My Country Too*, Amiri Baraka's *The Circles of Dante's Hell*) and queers (*Girls,* Sarah Schulman's *Visions and Everything*, *The Living End, My Own Private Idaho*, *Postcards from America*, *The Doom Generation*) have followed routes that draw out a radically different idea of happiness. It is possible to map out those literary journeys of disorientation and deviation, of wandering and drifting on back roads and in alleyways. Chance meetings and unexpected discoveries pepper those stories of great escapes and joyful deviances. However, when nomadic and domestic notions of happiness come up against each other, one's dreams can become another person's nightmare (Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, Kerouac's *Big Sur*).

Through the exploration of a territory, those narratives generate geographical syntaxes which determine the affective states of both characters and readers. Environments, atmospheres, surroundings condition the text, imposing their logic on the psychological and social dimensions, which often dominate nineteenth and twentieth centuries literature. The text becomes a psychogeography and drifts along a wide variety of ambiences. For Debord, this drifting is opposed "in every way to classical notions of traveling and strolling." How does this apply to the adventures offered by American literature and culture? And how does the reader experience those imaginary wanderings? While visiting or revisiting those textual landscapes, s/he can rush towards the destination of his /her trip (to find out the outcome of the plot, to know the end of the narrative) or choose to wander, to roam, to inhabit a geography of words and images. Those two regimes of reading embody different types of pleasure and diverging conceptions of happiness.

This workshop aims at exploring those questions which bring together geography, aesthetics and politics. We invite you to send paper proposals (250 words) with a short biography before January 15, 2017, to the following addresses: papellerin@gmail.com and pl_patoine@yahoo.fr.

Workshop 27

Felicitous Pursuits: New Objects and Methods of Research in American Literary Studies (Mathieu Duplay, Université Denis Diderot Paris 7)

The "pursuit of happiness" is an epistemological, as well as an ethical, imperative. What kind of pursuit is research—and what keeps, or makes, researchers happy? What happily fulfills, or exceeds, their expectations? What fails to do so (and why)? Is a clear idea of what counts as an acceptable result a precondition for doing research (in which case the phrase "research project" must be taken at face value)? Should research be understood as the paradoxical attempt to prepare for serendipitous, unsought-for discoveries? Or is it necessary for some kind of project to have been formulated in order for the unexpected to manifest itself? Successful (and happy) researchers are those who welcome the felicitous appearance of what is suited to the inquiry they have undertaken; they revel in happy encounters with what they have desired, and prepared for, without having a clear idea of its nature. This may be particularly true of research that takes literature as its immediate object; Ralph Waldo Emerson makes much the same point in "The Poet" (1844), when he attempts to describe the poet's task (broadly understood as *poiesis*): "The signs and credentials of the poet are, that he announces that which no man foretold." Likewise, such questions may have a bearing on what is meant by "America," "American literature," and "American (literary) studies": to study "America" is to accept that it may never be found anywhere, or to delight in the felicitous discovery of something quite different from one's preconceived idea of it.

On this basis, the purpose of this workshop will be to take a look at recent developments in American literary studies. In the last few years, new objects of research have attracted attention; they include new and/or hitherto unexplored texts, as well as previously unformulated issues, especially those that have come to light as a result of the current preoccupation with the boundaries of literature (and its interaction with other fields and

practices such as photography, film, the visual and performing arts, music, digital media, etc.). Meanwhile, canonical texts have been approached in innovative ways as they turn out to differ unexpectedly from our previous perception of them, justifying a renewed pursuit of their elusive specificities. As a consequence, problems of method must be addressed afresh, as the nature of questioning itself becomes a question, the answer to which defies anticipation.

Please send your paper proposal to Mathieu DUPLAY <mduplay@club-internet.fr> by January 15, 2017.