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“The Cultures and Politics of Leisure in the British Isles & the United States”

Université Paris-Sorbonne – November 6th-7th, 2015

Auréliane Narvaez and Sarah Leboime



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"The Cultures and Politics of Leisure in the British Isles & the United States"

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Auréliane Narvaez and Sarah Leboime

- 1 This international conference was hosted by the research group "Histoire et Dynamique des Espaces Anglophones" (HDEA) and organized by Nathalie Caron, Laurent Châtel, Thibaut Clément and Andrew Diamond. After an introduction by Pascal Aquien, Vice-President of the Research Board at Université Paris-Sorbonne, Nathalie Caron presented HDEA, insisting on the usefulness for researchers in American and British studies to work together and find common approaches, leisure being a rich and engaging common ground. The conference spread over two days and four sessions were presented each day.
- 2 The first two sessions tackled the issue of "situating and materializing leisure," with a first panel on "the territories of leisure," chaired by Aurélie Godet (Université Paris Diderot). Elsa Devienne (Université Paris-Ouest Nanterre) gave the first presentation, entitled "Building the Beach for the Modern City: Urban Planning and the Making of New York and Los Angeles Beaches (1930s-1970s)." Like urban parks, urban beaches are hybrid spaces, both natural and artificial. From the 1930s to the 1970s, various groups competed for the right to use these areas and Devienne sought to understand how urban planners, assisted by engineers and the business elites, transformed New York and Los Angeles beaches and their impact on visitors. She first focused on the 1930s beach crisis, when erosion and sewage pollution issues arose, and on the subsequent creation of the first beach associations. She then moved on to Robert Moses's Jones Beach (New York) and the invention of the modern beach, enhancing the urban elite's efforts to turn the beach into an ideal middle-class leisure space: clean, respectable, and automobile-friendly. She eventually emphasized the building of beaches for the white middle-class family in the 1950s and 1960s, when hygiene and cleanliness were seen as a way to turn crowded, dirty beaches into family-friendly spaces. Yet beach

modernization also went hand in hand with what the urban elites considered to be sexual perversion, as beaches had become spaces of social encounter for the gay community. While New York and Los Angeles beaches in the 1930s were often private, overcrowded, polluted and dirty, two decades later, most of the same beaches were public, clean and equipped with modern facilities. Yet, as beaches were modernized, the leisure spaces of more marginalized communities like the gay community were destroyed. Devienne evoked beach segregation and grassroots involvement during the Q&A period.

- 3 Nicolas Martin-Breteau (Université de Lille 3) was the second speaker with a paper entitled "'Patient and Tolerant to an Extreme': the Desegregation of Baltimore's Leisure Areas in the 'Long Civil Right Movement' (1930s-50s)." He drew a parallel between the long struggle for racial equality and the new modes of consumption emerging along with the black middle class. He emphasized the parallel between the struggle for the desegregation of leisure areas, like golf courses, and the shift in African-American civil rights tactics. The black Monumental Golf Club for example became the spearhead of protest and its members both enhanced the respectability of black golfers and launched a legal battle to desegregate golfing facilities. Yet the segregation of beaches and swimming pools persisted in the 1950s, as the fear of racial and sexual promiscuity remained deeply rooted in the minds of many Americans. The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling did not affect the enforcement of "separate but equal" rules on Baltimore's public beaches. Swimming pools and beaches were eventually desegregated but white supremacists' resistance was massive. So the struggle over access to territory was crucial in Baltimore, not only in mandatory spaces like schools, but also in voluntary places of leisure. In the Q&A period, Martin-Breteau developed the idea of a "Long Civil Right movement" (J. Dowd Hall) and the distinction between private and public spaces, as well as city and the state levels.
- 4 H  l  ne Quanquin (Universit   Sorbonne Nouvelle) chaired the second session, which focused on the notion of "Bodies at Play." Lawrence McDonnell (Iowa State University) opened with a paper entitled "Dancing up a Storm: Elite Leisure and Gender Confusion in the Old South (1840s-50s)." At the core of his presentation was the Pinneville club, a small young planters' club in the South Carolina Lowcountry, which held an annual dance party each spring. McDonnell argued that the records of this local club tell a lot about politics and culture in the antebellum American South. Interestingly, the young men's frequent meetings leading up to the dance came to matter more than the dance itself. These meetings were important social and political events, as the young men strove to preserve and enhance their ranks, titles, and conservative way of life. They were about playful work or serious play, about power and honor. Jousting tournaments were sometimes organized to validate their standing as honorable men and assert their nobility of character. As McDonnell made it clear, men could assert their gender identity and social prominence in Pinneville club meetings, while they interacted with one another in fraternal and sometimes more intimate ways under the cloak of dancing with young women. In some way, antebellum culture was epitomized by the Pinneville club, where male voices were prominent and honor was everything.
- 5 Enhancing the socially and politically charged dimension of swimming in early 20th century America, Olaf Stieglitz (University of Cologne) presented a paper entitled "Debs and Surf Queens – Swimming and Modern Female Bodies in the US, 1900s-1930s." In the early 20th century, both swimming and the swimming suit came to symbolize the slim,

athletic beauty modern women were supposed to exhibit. Progressive Era swimming textbooks enhanced its benefits, both in terms of health and physical appearance. Swimming was considered to be a democratic physical activity, available to the old and the young, men and women, the well-off and the working class. The crawl style mirrored the movements of modern life while swimming itself paralleled the modern norms and ideals of physical appearance, ability, performance, and achievement. Then Stieglitz turned to race, gender, and class lines, with a specific focus on gender: swimming was a recurring topic in fashion magazines and female athletes were transformed into objects of desire. Not only did photographs teach swimming techniques, but they also displayed the athletic body's sex appeal. Stieglitz insisted on both the materiality (pools, swimming suits, textbooks) and political dimension (exclusion and segregation) of swimming in the first decades of the 20th century.

- 6 The afternoon's keynote address, "Remaking Leisure for the Modern World: Changing Practices, 1750-1914," was presented by Emma Griffin (University of East Anglia) and introduced by Laurent Châtel (Université Paris-Sorbonne). Although the pre-industrial period was often considered to be a golden age of leisure, one should not fall for the romanticized picture of pre-industrial peasants enjoying simple yet blissful lives. Furthermore, one should not look at leisure in 19th century Britain through the limited lens of decline, doom and deterioration. After underscoring that leisure was underestimated in the historiography of 19th century Victorian Britain, Griffin raised the question of the amount of leisure people actually had. In the countryside, Sunday evening was often the only time of recreation – in summertime, people enjoyed various outdoors activities, while during winter months they engaged in indoors activities like storytelling, singing or reading. The annual fair was the only time when people actually spent money on leisure. The experience of leisure changed with urbanization. Rural societies' paternalism, allowing employers to control employees' leisure-time activities, declined in towns as a whole new world of commercial entertainment became available. Reading also became more accessible and more private, as books got cheaper and could be borrowed from libraries. Town-dwellers started watching sports rather than playing them. Alcohol also became cheaper and virtually unrestricted; drinking was mainly a male urban phenomenon that did not decline until the First World War. Griffin briefly developed the questions of sexual behavior and gambling during the Q&A section.
- 7 The third session of the conference, entitled "Engagement, Resistance, Repression," was chaired by Paul Schor (Université Paris Diderot). The first speaker was Sarah Pickard (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle) whose presentation focused on "Serious Leisure, Serious Pleasure: Applying the Serious Leisure Model to Political Participation among Young People in Britain." Pickard assessed the usefulness and limitations of the Serious Leisure Perspective (SLP), a theoretical framework developed by Robert Stebbins in the 1970s, especially his concept of "serious leisure," i.e. "the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that is highly substantial, interesting, and fulfilling and where, in the typical case, participants find a career in acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience." According to Pickard, several variables are omitted in this framework, such as gender, social class or age. Furthermore, Stebbins almost never takes politics into account, even though leisure can also involve confrontational behavior and police repression, nor does he focus on the pleasures and rewards of protest, or on the enhancement of collective identity through a sense of shared membership.

- 8 The following presentation, by Michael S. Foley (University of Groningen), was entitled "We Are the One: Subcultural Leisure and Politics in Early San Francisco Punk." When it comes to the punk scene, San Francisco has often been overlooked and overshadowed by cities like London and New York. Foley described Punk as an anti-hippie pose and emphasized the political dimension of San Francisco's punk scene in the second half of the 1970s. Although the word leisure would probably have been rejected by punks as a bourgeois notion, politics and leisure – or fun, escapism – were entangled in the punk subculture. For instance, benefit concerts were given to support miners and railway workers or to defend a woman who used her gun against her rapist. Despite living on the margins of society, punks were committed to their community and often took a clear stand on issues like housing, homelessness and the promotion of diversity, confronting the police in the streets when necessary. According to Penelope Houston, the lead singer for the Avengers, they enjoyed great freedom: they shared flats in affordable neighborhoods, set up a system of mutual aid with the surrounding community, they had their own geography of cool places, worked part-time jobs and had enough time to write songs, play gigs, record their music. Work and fun went hand in hand as punks created a micro-model of society – a utopia? – in which anything and everything seemed possible.
- 9 Peter Marquis (Université de Rouen) concluded the panel with a paper on "The Politics of Leisure: Baseball and Anti-Communist Containment in Cold War Brooklyn." He emphasized the political dimension of postwar baseball, and more precisely the forms and functions of its anti-communist rhetoric. Between 1947 and 1957, anti-communist propaganda was omnipresent and baseball became an essential tool in containing communism and promoting the American way of life. During the 1950s, several notorious anti-communists, among whom General Douglas MacArthur, US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Congressman Richard Nixon, were invited to attend games at Ebbets Field in Brooklyn. Moreover, not only did anti-unionism pervade the baseball sphere but Marquis also insisted on the Dodgers' youth charities, like the Amateur Baseball Foundation and the Dodgers Knot Hole Club. Getting young Americans "baseball-minded" was seen as a potential weapon against juvenile delinquency and communism, as well as a way to maintain the color line. The Dodgers managed to tap into the popularity of the anti-communist rhetoric to serve local interests. Marquis concluded by opening up a number of questions: was this strategy efficient? Who did it benefit? Who orchestrated it? How did the Dodgers' fans respond? And was baseball even construed as leisure?
- 10 The last session of the conference's first day, chaired by Franziska Heimburger (Université Paris-Sorbonne), focused on the politics of leisure and more precisely on notions of boundaries and nationalism. Karine Chambefort (Université Paris-Est Créteil) opened the panel with a presentation on "Outdoor Leisure Activities in Simon Roberts's *We English* Photographic Project: Re-writing Landscape and Nation." She was particularly interested in the representations of leisure, and especially of outdoor activities like angling, sunbathing, hunting, etc. A certain sense of national identity, of Englishness goes hand in hand with this cultural theater of leisure. Chambefort enhanced both the project's documentary dimension and the pictures' narrative quality. She drew a parallel between Roberts's project and John Constable and Martin Parr's works, thus establishing a sense of lineage, memory and continuity. The photographer's work becomes his contribution to the creation of a constantly

reproduced "imagined community" (Benedict Anderson). The pictures take on a social dimension, emphasizing the connection between people in public spaces like beaches and parks. Chambefort highlighted the photographs' political dimension, as Roberts's visual language produced an inclusive narrative of nationality formation and belonging, as well as their moral dimension, as the moral geographies of leisure help maintain order and control in increasingly standardized activities. To conclude, Chambefort insisted on the very personal and complex depiction of cultural identity in Roberts's project.

- 11 Expanding on this idea of nationalism and leisure, Kristin Hass (University of Michigan) examined "Militarism and Tourism in 21st Century Washington: High Stakes, Deep Play on the National Mall." She insisted on the militarized, racialized, and gendered dimensions of the National Mall in Washington, DC, one of the most symbolic and popular sites in the United States. Since 1982, three major memorials and three minor ones have been built, while many additional proposals were submitted. Hass first enhanced the late 20th century memory boom, which encompassed various periods and events, especially the Holocaust, the Cold War and the Vietnam War. It marked a new awareness in terms of history, legacy and memory, a new conscience of anniversaries and an urge to repair and retribute. After the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in 1982, it attracted millions of visitors but it also terrified the military elite, who feared it would prevent young people from enlisting. The Korean War Veterans Memorial was meant to be the opposite of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial: it was heroic and celebratory, it glorified American heroism and inspired people to join the military. It was created as a fantasy of a military that had never existed. The sculptor, Frank Gaylord, was asked to make the figures as masculine and racially neutral as possible. Since hair is a racial indicator, helmets had to cover the soldiers' hair and their features were to convey a sense of hyper-masculinity. Hass finally referred to the permanent exhibition entitled "The Price of Freedom: Americans at War," which opened in 2004 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.
- 12 The first day of the conference ended on a completely different aspect of leisure by focusing on "the British Sports Car and American Leisure, 1945-85," a paper presented by the curator of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, Jeremy R. Kinner. He emphasized the enthusiasm for racing in postwar America, as people were looking for more speed power and individuality. The automobile was considered to be at the forefront of the democratization of American leisure. Sports cars, which originated in Europe in the late 1930s, offered a fun, alternative automotive experience for a demanding sporting community. A variety of cars quickly became available for consumers, from middle-class Americans to millionaires. In the 1950s, magazines like *Time* and *Playboy* showed sports cars in virtually every issue. There were many women sports car enthusiasts and a significant number of female racers (Denise McCluggage, Donna Mae Mims). However, the world of sports cars was also shaken by class tensions, police persecution and pressure from trade unions to remain loyal to American work rather than import foreign sports cars. Among other problems raised by the automotive culture were the rise in deaths on the roads and in CO2 emissions. Stricter safety standards were introduced and car speeds were capped in the 1970s. While production largely decreased in Britain in the early 1980s, the baby boom generation did keep their parents' passion alive. In the early 21st century, the passion for British

sports cars took on a new meaning as car enthusiasts celebrated Great Britain, the mother country, for language, culture, and cars.

- 13 The second day of the conference opened with the fifth session chaired by Pierre Lurbe (Université Paris-Sorbonne). Entitled "Communities of Leisure," the panel addressed the question of leisure as a means of emancipation and self-empowerment, but also as a tool for unsettling the traditional high versus popular culture binary.
- 14 In her paper "'Making the Art of Fun Freely Available': Leisure Practices as Tools of Emancipation in Community Art Experiments in Britain in the 1970s," Mathilde Bertrand (Université Bordeaux-Montaigne) examined how the community arts movement that emerged in Great Britain in the 1970s placed leisure at the center of its projects promoting social changes. Investigating how artistic and political alternatives were conjointly pursued, Bertrand focused on several community art projects such as Interaction or Jubilee Arts and showed how they addressed access to culture as a class issue. Taking the lack of leisure as the starting point for action, community artists engaged in a variety of local initiatives and experiments such as converted buses, meeting spaces for women's organizations, facilities for children, to foster genuine cultural pluralism, promote diversity in cultural practices and transform disadvantaged communities' self-perception through the arts. By challenging hierarchies and elite definitions of art, community artists elicited new forms of agency in underprivileged social groups, making leisure a force for social empowerment.
- 15 Tracing the politically charged trajectory of gardening in Great Britain, Arnaud Page's paper "Work or Leisure? The Politics of Allotment Gardening in Great Britain" tackled the evolutions of early allotments in the broader context of the politics of leisure. Interpreting them as a means for the working class to reclaim their lives through leisure activities, Page (Université Paris-Sorbonne) called for a reappraisal of gardening in 19th century Britain and questioned the traditional perception of early allotment gardening as being merely based on subsistence culture and devoid of any political implications. While allotment gardening in 19th century Britain is often interpreted as a form of charity and a means for landowners to discipline agricultural workers and deflect their discontent, gardening is in fact a hybrid ground entwining the useful and the esthetic, the natural and the man-made, work and leisure, discipline and empowerment. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, allotment gardening represented an ideal of self-improvement and empowerment, and a potential cure to social disruptions. A patriotic activity during the two World Wars, gardening is today a means for citizens to address environmental questions, engage in the political debate about sustainable agriculture and, like their 19th century forerunners, reclaim a form of social agency.
- 16 Entitled "Institutions of Leisure," the sixth session chaired by Nathalie Caron (Université Paris-Sorbonne) opened with Claire Delen's presentation on "Organized Leisure at Huntley and Palmers' Biscuit Factory (1841-1976)." Outlining four main periods from 1841 to 1971, Delen (Université Paris-Sorbonne) examined how leisure gradually developed from a paternalistic instrument of social control into a social institution where men and women, directors and employees could socialize and cultivate a sense of shared identity and loyalty to the firm. Leisure first developed between 1841 and 1870 as a means to educate workers by providing free entertainment and a place to meet outside work. Leisure became institutionalized between 1880 and 1910, with the creation in 1898 of the Recreation Club and the diversification of

activities such as cricket, football, choral and drama sections. Although the two World Wars put the development of the Recreational Club to a halt, leisure activities resumed in the post-war period with the opening of new activities, popular sports, but also dancing clubs and a Film Society where men and women could meet. As an opportunity to find a future spouse, leisure at the firm was also a chance for women to engage in activities traditionally reserved to men.

- 17 Turning to a more lucrative aspect of leisure, Emmanuel Roudaut (Sciences Po Lille) examined the various attempts at providing a satisfactory policy on gambling in his paper "Tote Clubs, Dog Tracks and Newspaper Competitions: Moral Panics and Popular Leisure in Interwar Britain." Initially focused on sports betting, gambling was banned in 1823 and remained illegal until the 1960s. Yet, the paternalistic attempt to prevent working-class gambling by prohibiting cash betting failed to preclude this form of leisure. Indeed, gambling moved to the streets and became a distinctive feature of the underground economy, facilitated by a high level of police corruption and the development of an unofficial administrative regulation. Though illegal, street betting remained highly popular after World War One, giving rise to a debate between supporters of a gambling regulation and defenders of the prohibition status quo. In the Interwar period, the introduction of pool-betting represented a significant evolution with the invention of the totalizer, or the "tote," a form of betting controlled by government and racing organizations appointees. However, the "tote" never challenged the influence of bookmakers even though it contributed to legitimizing betting and developing cross-class entertainment.
- 18 Building on the potentially manipulative dimension of leisure, Thibaut Clément (Université Paris-Sorbonne) examined how Disneyworld's rhetoric and imagery exploit the properties of play in order to enforce specific emotional and social reactions. In his paper "'Adults Are Only Grown-up Kids Anyway': Play and its Practical Uses at the Happiest Place on Earth," Clément underscored the three-fold dimension of playing in Disneyland's commercial strategy, identifying play as a) leisure time outside the time of productive time, b) playacting, and c) a reality-building activity whereby social norms are elaborated and negotiated. An extension of the Disney Company's studio and television activities, the park is a place where the studios' staging techniques cross-fertilize and canonical environments are reproduced in order to immerse visitors in a world of predetermined fiction. The customers' subjection to a prearranged script extends to employees. Indeed, Disneyland's managerial policy relies on the internalization of official emotional guidelines, which blurs the distinction between personal feelings and professional behavior. Despite the wide array of procedures conducive to a "willful suspension of disbelief," visitors willing to subvert the rules can sometimes regain control of the attractions' storylines. The resistance to the behavioral imperatives prescribed by Disneyland questions the park's social and emotional norms and thereby proposes an alternative form of creative playacting.
- 19 The afternoon sessions resumed with the second keynote address "Dangerous Play: Racial Conflict in Twentieth-Century Urban Amusements" delivered by Victoria Wolcott (State University of New York at Buffalo) and introduced by Andrew Diamond (Université Paris-Sorbonne). Wolcott reconsidered the struggle for racial equality through the lens of recreational places and expanded the scope of the historiography of the Civil Rights Movement by showing how African-Americans challenged segregation at amusement parks, swimming pools, and skating rinks throughout the 20th century.

Contrary to the commonplace image of urban amusements as places of democratic leisure, segregation and violence were also key features of these spaces. Thus, African-Americans challenged racially exclusive recreational facilities and vindicated their rights to access them. Indeed, desegregation in the 1960s coincided with disinvestment in recreational places increasingly associated with African-Americans, while narratives about juvenile delinquency and the necessity of segregation for violence prevention flourished. In this context, violence in recreational spaces played an ambiguous part, both as an imagined narrative linked with African-Americans, and as a strategy used by white mobs attacking recently desegregated recreational facilities in order to have them shut down. The decline and devaluation of collective recreational spaces ensued in the 1970s when white consumers started to shun these places, many of which were either closed down or privatized in the years following desegregation. The current nostalgia for urban recreation therefore ignores the violence of racial exclusion, which remains a blind spot in the historiography of Jim Crow segregation.

- 20 The seventh session, "Playing Indian, Indians at Play," was chaired by Guillaume Marche (Université Paris-Est Créteil) and opened with Fabrice Delsahut's presentation "Du Baggataway au Lacrosse: Sportivisation des Jeux Amérindiens." After tracing the origins of Lacrosse and underlining the religious dimension of Baggataway, Delsahut (ÉSPÉ Paris-Sorbonne) examined the transformation of Baggataway into Lacrosse. The question was raised as to whether the translation of a ritualized practice into a professional sport and a form of leisure could be considered as an epistemological break or a hybridization process. Baggataway was considered by Native American populations as both sport and worship insofar as playing was a propitiatory ritual and a means to communicate with the spirit world. The practice was also appropriated by Canada in an effort to promote its national identity. The institutionalization of Lacrosse as a sport derived from Baggataway resulted from a strategy to inscribe modern Canadianism in a lineage of Native American sports, differentiate Canada from the United Kingdom and the rest of the Commonwealth, and encourage immigration from Europe. Despite its folklorization of Native American practices, Lacrosse remains indebted to the original spirit of Baggataway insofar as the violence inherent to the traditional practice has resisted the codification of the game.
- 21 Moving to more Southern parts of the North American continent, Suzanne Berthier-Foglar (Université Stendhal – Grenoble 3) reflected on the link between politics and recreation in the context of the conquest of New Mexico by the United States. In her paper "Indian Detours in New Mexico: Primitivism Pastime or Tools of Integration," Berthier-Foglar showed that the development of the railroad in the mid-19th century contributed to the emergence of tourism in the territory of New Mexico with the first hotels built along the tracks in 1898 and 1902. The Fred Harvey Company played a central role in this process by perceiving that Native cultures and populations might appeal to people traveling by train in the Southwest region and eventually boost tourism in New Mexico. Buildings, Navajo rugs and other traditional artifacts were intended to attract tourists and potential buyers, and promote a sort of local color conducive to the development of the Native economy. In the 1920s, the increasing popularity of the automobile further bolstered tourism in the Southwest region as the concept of "Indian Detour" emerged. Automotive tours were meant to divert passengers from the railroad and drive them through New Mexico from Indian sites to living pueblos. Despite the colonial undertone of these projects, Native American

populations, especially women could also find in this economy a means of empowerment.

- 22 Mathieu Charle's paper "Public Festivals, Private Rituals: An Analysis of Contemporary American Indian Pow-Wows in the Northwest" explored how Native Americans negotiate the tensions between the need for continuity and adaptation to changing environments through the practice of pow-wows as both festive and ritual events. Reflecting on the ambivalent nature and functions of this recreational activity, Charle (EHESS-LIAS) argued that despite the public nature of the reunions, pow-wows represent a deeply private and communal moment as well as a means to reclaim Indians' presence in space and time. Although pow-wows declined in the second half of the 19th century, Indians regained control of the practice during the 20th century as the power of missionaries weakened and tensions between the federal government and indigenous tribes abated. Underscoring their symbolic quality as unintelligible spaces to the uninitiated, Charle argued that pow-wows were not only recreational and performative activities but also places where births, deaths, political alliances, marriages and the redistribution of goods could be honored and celebrated.
- 23 The last session, "Technologies of Leisure," chaired by Laurent Roesch (Université d'Avignon) opened with Yves Figueredo's paper entitled "The Uses of Photography and the Definition of Leisure Practices in California and the West (1880s-1910s)." Reflecting on the history of conservation ecology, Figueredo (Université Paris-Sorbonne) explored the role of photography in the development of early preservationism in the West by examining the personal trajectory of Theodore P. Lukens. A successful investor who conceived forestry as a central element of his real estate activity, Lukens was also a keen photographer who blurred the line between work and leisure. Lukens undertook to document the development of his tree nursery and reforestation in a didactic way that contrasted with the sublime esthetics of 19th century landscape photos and their emphasis on grandiose wilderness devoid of human presence. Underscoring the ambivalence of Lukens's photos, neither strictly personal, nor truly professional, Figueredo contended that taking pictures and comparing them over time would contribute to a better understanding of natural processes and enrich the history of forest conservation two generations before the institutionalization of landscape preservation in the 1930s.
- 24 In his paper, "Leisure and Technical Milieu in the 21st century: Inhabiting Fantasy Worlds through Video Game Playing and Literary Reading," Pierre-Louis Patoine (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle) examined how fantasy literature and video games rely on the inhabitation of secondary fantasy worlds. Patoine investigated the political and economic consequences of immersing oneself in literary or digital landscapes, and argued that the codes of videogames transform the practice of leisure. After stressing the influence of fantasy and science fiction novels on video games, he showed how the construction of fantasy narratives around explorable universes promoted immersion in and contemplation of the environment, highlighting the touristic and genuinely esthetic dimensions of exploration in role-playing games. For Patoine, contemplation is subversive because it is detached from the demands of teleological activity: this calls for a reassessment of video games' esthetic quality and of the notion that they are antisocial and anti-productive.
- 25 The conference concluded with Olivier Frayssé's paper "Leisure in the Age of the Internet: Solution and Dissolution." Rather than opposing work and leisure, Frayssé

(Université Paris-Sorbonne) explored the theoretical parameters at stake in the dialectic of labor and leisure, and examined how their relationship was refashioned in the digital age. After reminding the audience that capitalism distinguished between the realms of production and reproduction, with leisure pertaining to the latter, Frayssé conceptualized leisure by pointing the limits of the sphere of obligation, and interrogated the degree and type of control required in the leisure sphere. As a counterculture born out of a reaction against cultural Fordism and characterized by a dual process of revolution and dissolution of the distinction between labor and leisure, the digital age provides a blueprint for new labor regimes. Frayssé ended by outlining the way this new framework was produced and underscored how various factors – the maximization of the production sphere, the commercialization of labor, the increasing surveillance and monitoring of leisure time, but also the intensification of unpaid labor time and labor necessity – refashion the relationship between leisure and labor and blur the two categories.

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