

ARTISTIC COMMITMENTS /L'ARTISTE DANS LA TOURMENTE

University of Burgundy/Université de Bourgogne

24-25 October 2013

Résumés/abstracts

Gwennaëlle Cariou: “Representing and Educating: African American Artists of the New Negro Movement’s Commitment”

During the 1910s and 1920s, a new artistic movement emerged in the USA called the “New Negro Movement” or the “Harlem Renaissance”. African American painters, sculptors, poets and writers, were exploring new artistic forms. Until the beginning of the 20th century, there were few black artists admitted as such (for instance Henry O. Tanner), the New Negro Movement is going to give young artists a platform to create a “true” black art, as Alain Locke defined it in *The New Negro* in 1925, influenced by African art (for style and subjects) and by urban life (Harlem in New York City), and not by European artistic tradition.

New Negro artists are going to commit themselves to represent historical events linked to African American history in murals such as *Aspects of Negro Life* by Aaron Douglas at the Schomburg Center in New York (1934); or with series such as *The Great Migration* by Jacob Lawrence in 1940-1941 (MoMA, New York and Phillips Collection, Washington D.C.). Those artists are acting as historians and committed to represent a history which was not well-known and studied then. Several artists of the Harlem Renaissance have also become teachers of art and history of black art (African and African American) in historically black colleges and universities, for instance Aaron Douglas created the art history department at Fisk University (Texas) in 1939 and Hale Woodruff taught at Atlanta University and Talladega College (Alabama).

New Negro artists have created a new way to look at black life in the USA, showing and studying their history but also their community’s energy. One can say that those artists are committed in the representation and the study of African American history and culture in a very tense political and social context, during which several racial riots burst (East Saint-Louis in 1917, the “Red Summer” of 1919 or the Zoot Suit Riots in 1943). Those examples are relevant to understand how artists can get involved in the representation of history and heritage.

Diana Cretu Millogo: “Some Aspects of Orwell’s Aesthetics of Commitment in the 1930s and the 1940s: the Orwellian *persona* as a Radical Humanist”

George Orwell incarnates commitment to such an extent that it is sometimes difficult to reassess his positioning with regard to the major and indeed, dramatic events that took place in the first half of the 20th century. The fact that he came to be a cultural icon and consequently a name one can use as an argumentative device seems to demonstrate that he achieved the celebrated fusion between political vision and artistry (“to make political writing into an art”, ‘Why I Write’, 1946). More important though, in this particular context of successful political writing are the decoding and interpreting of some key moments in Orwell’s building of aesthetics of commitment

as World War II became first a looming menace and then a dark reality. I will thus propose a reading of some of Orwell's essays written in the 30s and the 40s to illustrate the radical and humanist stance that still calls into question very recent historical events.

It is challenging to decode and interpret some of the key aspects of Orwell's vision commitment as a carefully thought-out manifestation of radical thought, consistent with a tradition of dissident voices. This is most obvious in the fierce pieces of criticism against totalitarian ideologies, for instance, in "Literature and Totalitarianism" (1941) or in the celebrated "The Prevention of Literature" (1946). I will argue that Orwell's purpose as an essay writer and journalist in the 30s and the 40s was to find a way to counteract a depressing worldview made of torn illusions. By strongly asserting the fact that the artist/writer could no longer practice "art for art's sake" ("The Frontiers of Art and Propaganda", 1941), Orwell had to find a stance and a voice that would present themselves as tokens of human dignity. I look at this attempt of making oneself heard as a manner of trying to be optimistic about how humans could alter their circumstances at a time when literature and the arts could be and were turned into propaganda. Orwell equated moments of profound crises (namely, the crisis of triumphant capitalism) with the need to take a stand and write about it. Bearing in mind a principle grounded in his knowledge of human psychology ("the need for *something to believe in*" [Orwell underlines] ("Inside the Whale", 1940), Orwell advocated the only belief free of the ideological chains he resented – the radical belief in the free spirit of man, and especially in a socially responsible writer, who neither accepts a doctrine, nor avoids commitment for the sake of technique. By drawing this portrait of what a writer should be like, he necessarily delineated his own *persona* and the dissident figures that can be viewed as worthy predecessors (the prophet Daniel, present in a revivalist hymn quoted in "The Prevention of Literature", Milton, Shakespeare, etc.) Orwell's aesthetics of commitment can be described as a passionate attempt to re-humanize a society whose main challenge would be to avoid the systems of organized lying and false.

Henry Daniels: "Promising"? "Hiring"? "Coloring"? "Pawning"? Reflections on the notion of artistic "commitment" in the Indo-European arena

An etymological analysis of the forms used to represent the notion of literary and artistic commitment in a selection ancient, mediaeval and modern Indo-European languages, reveals a startling variety of notions ranging from "risk", "duty" and "punishment" to "embroidery", "stepping" and "hiring". Though it would be unscientific to attempt to say precisely how this constellation of often archaic notions has motivated any one individual, it is, however clear that writers like Giovanni Verga, Bertolt Brecht and Vera Brittain or artists such as Toulouse Lautrec, Otto Muehl and George Grosz all appear to share a preoccupation with injustice and suffering, while each has his/her own particular interpretation of "commitment" and each fuses it with art in a particular way and to greater or lesser effect.

The aim of this paper is to explore the rich philological foundations of commitment and to suggest that an appreciation of the complex and often disparate notions underlying the forms used in different languages and at different times might lead to a deeper understanding, be it unifying or individualizing, of all manifestations of committed artistic expression.

Béatrice Duchateau: “Hugh MacDiarmid’s Poetics of Commitment: the Modern Stigmata of Bereavement”

Modernity is inhabited by the lingering absence of reality. In the 1930s, this persistent void engulfed the work of the poet Hugh MacDiarmid, leader of the Scottish Renaissance Movement. This collapsed reality surfaces in his poems addressed to absentee figures where the ‘Death of God’ worsens his plight. The world has become, in Edwin Muir’s words, an “absence that receives us” (*The Absent*, 1949). To fill in this empty seat, MacDiarmid, like many others at the time, finds refuge in communism and nationalism. His political idealism comes into being in the poetic association of reality and ideal, symbolised by Jean and Sophia, the characters of *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1926), and duplicates later in the fantasised image of Lenin, perfect blending of idea and action. MacDiarmid’s idealism embodies the desire for a form of sur-reality that resembles that of Surrealism. Prompted by this unquenchable desire, MacDiarmid’s poetry forces the power of the ideal to become solid. Ceaselessly, necrophilic tragicomedies are performed in early poems that value life and violate death, spurning the shadows of threatening impotence. Calling upon the figure of the craftsman-poet, MacDiarmid gives him the power to transubstantiate reality. But to do so, one must write poetry as it is the only way to access the real world and politics. Rejecting Sartre’s denial of the political authority of poetry, the violence of MacDiarmid’s work desperately attempts to have reality submit to its aura. Its shrill imperative and nominal forms borrow their power of persuasion from advertisement slogans while its poetic margins endeavour to mimic performative oracles. The political and poetical ideal opens the doors of a reality that can only be conquered when holding idealism close. In his late poetry (40s-50s), the poet eventually seems to relinquish his historical role: creation of meaning is passed onto the reader, who is given the command over politics and history. The ideal has been processed and the real world accommodated. In Hugh MacDiarmid’s political commitment, one can recognise the marks of a modern mind which has to accept reality and mourn over an ideal too high for language, too high for a world born out of shrapnel seeds.

Cynthia Gamble: “John Ruskin, the Great Victorian Visionary and his Inspirational Impact on Marcel Proust”

The paper examines the crescendo-like power, range and forms of commitment of the polymath John Ruskin, his struggle within himself and confrontation with society in a state of upheaval in late Victorian Britain. It explores particular social, political, aesthetic and religious issues that Ruskin addressed through his lectures, writings and drawings in the last two decades of his life. These include: modernity, environment, architecture, lifestyles, education, architecture, religion and the secular state. His over-arching commitment to change the world contributed to his physical and mental health problems.

The paper demonstrates the impact of such a towering, autonomous figure of authority on Marcel Proust who revered Ruskin as his mentor and ‘maître à penser’. It explains how the encounter with Ruskin’s thought at the turn of the century was transformational and infused the dilettante with a total commitment to be a serious writer.

Margaret Gillespie: “Mina Loy: Artistic Commitment and the Woman Modernist”

The early decades of the twentieth century remain noteworthy in the history of British literature not least because a significant number of the modernist writers of the period adopted a singular position regarding the issue of artistic and ideological commitment — self-consciously engaging with the political, taking inspiration from the social and economic upheaval that marked their age and yet also disenchanted and aloof, positing art as a last-ditch autotelic buffer to ‘shore up’ against the chaos of modernity and order the ‘immense panorama of futility and anarchy of contemporary history’ as Eliot had it.

Critical receptions of British modernism have tended to ape the dichotomy, alternatively chiding the writer their (often) reactionary politics, uncomfortably at odds with newly emergent mass democracy or conveniently emptying the artwork of political relevance to celebrate its ‘well-wrought’ aesthetic prowess instead.

The long-marginalised British women modernists (Dorothy Richardson, Mary Butts, Mina Loy, with Woolf standing as the one rule-confirming exception) increasingly in academic vogue following their rediscovery since the 1970’s, have provided modernist studies with a newly acceptable face, their writings assumed to embrace a more liberal, anti-supremacist literary tradition: ‘the radical force of the feminine, women’s writing [...] is produced through its disruption of the elitist male modernist text’ (Potter, 2006).

At first glance, the poet, novelist and artist Mina Loy would seem to fit the ‘woman modernist’ template exactly: critics have pitted her 1921 avant-gardist tract ‘International Psycho-Democracy’ against Eliot’s lofty *éloges* of authority and order, and Loy’s late modernist novel *Insel* can be read as a bathetic allegory of the demise of artist as self-sufficient island. Yet the artistic production of this self-confessed ‘Mongrel’, who, briefly enamoured with fascism, entertained liaisons with the Italian futurists Marinetti and Papini, before proclaiming ‘anarchists in art are art’s instantaneous aristocracy’, would seem to complicate such blandly schematic oppositions. Much of her writing indeed engages directly with the emergent mass democratic state, particularly with regard to the situation of women, challenging the intrinsic value of aligning men with women in the democratic equation and arguing for the radical specificity of the female subject. The writer dubbed by Man Ray a ‘stunning subject’ exhorts the female reader in her 1914 ‘Feminist Manifesto’ to constitute an autonomous identity clearly delineated from masculinist configurations of female selfhood: ‘seek within yourself to find out what you are. At the moment you have the choice between Parasitism, Prostitution and Negation’.

Xavier Giudicelli: “Aesthetics and Politics: The Afterlives of Oscar Wilde’s ‘The Soul of Man Under Socialism’ (1891)”

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) is regarded as the emblematic figure of Aestheticism and Art for Art’s sake and thus of the autonomisation of the arts in late nineteenth-century Britain. That is why “The Soul of Man Under Socialism”, an essay which he published in *The Fortnightly Review* in February 1891, has often baffled critics and elicited contradictory responses.

A highly personal synthesis of such various influences as George Bernard Shaw, William Morris and Walter Pater, “The Soul of Man Under Socialism” offers an idiosyncratic version of Socialism and artistic commitment. Its very

title, associating two words which seem at first sight antithetical—“soul” (pertaining to religious vocabulary) and “socialism”—prefigures the heterodox dimension of the essay, whose status and value are difficult to ascertain. Josephine M. Guy argues that in no way can “The Soul of Man Under Socialism” be called a political essay (Guy 77). For Jonathan Dollimore, on the other hand, Wilde’s essay presents us with “a radical socialist programme” (Dollimore 7). One certainly possible way of solving the problem and of reading “The Soul of Man Under Socialism” is to dismiss it as a mere playful variation upon such notions as Socialism, Individualism or Democracy and to regard it as a flippant response to contemporary debates in late Victorian Britain. Another way of looking at this essay is to take it seriously, so to speak, and to consider it as an attempt to hold in tension aesthetics and politics through the logic of paradox.

In order to assess the significance of this essay and its dissident political potential, I propose to look at its publishing history in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, taking into consideration the paratextual elements and the various translations and illustrations it has given rise to, in different contexts, as well as at the various readings and reinterpretations it has elicited in the academic field (and in particular the political uses of this essay in the context of Queer theory).

Wilde’s essay reflects and problematises the uneasy negotiation between words and action, aesthetics and politics, art and commitment. It also effects a redirection of our gaze, and, in that respect, may call to mind Jacques Rancière’s argument according to which distinguishing between aesthetics and politics is not relevant, in that both activities have to do with disrupting forms of belonging and with reorienting perceptual space.

Marina Mackay (Durham University): “National Modernism: British Writing and Consensus Politics in the 1940s”

This paper addresses the turn towards consensus politics in the years surrounding the Second World War among Britain’s major authors. It argues that discussions of modernist and 1930s politics have too often been dominated by considerations of more radical engagements, left and right, and indicates the range of interwar writers from across the political spectrum who came to converge on the ideological middle ground in the first decade of modern consensus politics in the UK. My aim, ultimately, is to interrogate the vestigial underlying assumption (paradoxically conservative, I suggest), in modernist studies that relationships between writers and the nation-state are axiomatically a bad thing – or, that the only good writer is a dissenting one.

Céline Mansanti : “Modernist Commitments and American cultural identity in the Interwar Period”

Tandis que l’on se figure souvent l’artiste moderniste engagé comme engagé contre l’ordre social et politique de son temps, la période 1933-1939 aux Etats-Unis constitue un laboratoire intéressant dans la mesure où le New Deal produit des politiques culturelles sans précédent consistant à intégrer la création artistique au projet politique d’Etat. L’ordre politique devient l’allié de l’artiste... théoriquement du moins. L’une des controverses qui s’est développée autour des politiques culturelles du New Deal porte en effet sur le soi-disant conservatisme artistique des porteurs de ces projets, conservatisme qui aurait eu pour conséquence de mettre à mal, voire d’empêcher la production moderniste. En d’autres termes, le rapport entre création moderniste et milieu

politique serait nécessairement antagoniste. Cette communication propose de rouvrir ce débat, notamment en examinant les parcours de certains artistes du New Deal, avant, pendant, et après la période en question. Que devient le modernisme américain pendant le New Deal ? Comment évolue-t-il ? C'est à ces questions que nous tenterons de nous confronter, à partir d'un corpus d'auteurs et d'artistes, d'œuvres littéraires et d'œuvres visuelles.

Oriane Marre: «Face au miroir déformant du vortex : la réception du mouvement vorticiste dans les milieux politiques »

L'objet de cette communication est l'analyse des échanges qui se développent à Londres entre les vorticistes et les militants des différents partis politiques à travers l'étude du suivi des manifestations artistiques par la presse d'opinion. Le vorticisme, issu d'une querelle entre l'avant-garde anglaise et le futurisme italien, naît à Londres en 1913. Tentative de synthèse entre le cubisme et le futurisme, ce mouvement se développe à un moment charnière, un moment de transition entre un ordre ancien stable et un nouvel ordre marqué par le mouvement. Ce n'est qu'avec l'entrée de l'Angleterre dans la première guerre mondiale, qui exacerbe les conflits intérieurs, que l'instabilité gagne le pays qui ne ressent qu'à partir de la fin de 1914 les différents coups portés par les suffragettes, les ouvriers et les unionistes. L'irruption de Marinetti et des futuristes italiens sur la scène artistique londonienne en novembre 1913 passionne les organes de presse des différents partis politiques anglais qui s'interrogent sur les répercussions de cette invasion sur la scène politique. Le 11 juin 1914, Wyndham Lewis, Edward Wadsworth, Jacob Epstein, Thomas Hulme et Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, membres de l'avant-garde anglaise, interrompent une conférence de Marinetti et Christopher Nevinson, se qualifiant pour la première fois en public de vorticistes. Ces artistes qui ne se reconnaissent pas entièrement dans le futurisme de Marinetti refusent de se laisser absorber par le mouvement italien. La violence de ce nouveau mouvement d'avant-garde inquiète les journalistes politiques. Avec la guerre naît une deuxième réception du vorticisme qui consacre son rôle de miroir des bouleversements de la société anglaise. Les œuvres vorticistes deviennent inséparables de l'engagement de leurs auteurs, reflétant les réactions des partis politiques face à la guerre. Les journalistes politiques associent les recherches abstraites des vorticistes à la disparition de l'humain et de la civilisation, transformant ces artistes en oracles qui se doivent de guider les hommes.

Charles-François Mathis : « Les héritiers de Ruskin : l'art, la nature, le socialisme »

Les années 1870 voient, en Angleterre, l'essor d'un puissant mouvement de protection de la nature, qui compte parmi ses membres de nombreux artistes. Son succès l'amène à se scinder en deux mouvances, l'une plutôt réformiste, l'autre plus radicale. C'est, au sein de ce deuxième groupe, l'engagement socialiste de certains artistes aussi éminents que William Morris ou Edward Carpenter par exemple, que cette communication se propose d'étudier.

Il s'agira tout d'abord d'évaluer l'empreinte de la pensée ruskinienne sur ces créateurs : figure tutélaire de tout le mouvement de défense de la nature, Ruskin y devient en effet, à partir justement de la fin des années 1870, un sujet de controverses très vives du fait de son opposition à l'économie politique victorienne et de ses

expérimentations utopistes. Cette approche permettra de mesurer la particularité de la pensée de ces héritiers de Ruskin, et notamment la manière dont leur conception du rapport à la nature, intimement liée bien sûr à leur vision de l'art, a pu les mener à un engagement proprement politique, qui plus est socialiste.

Mais il faudra s'interroger en retour sur la façon dont ce glissement a été perçu par ceux qu'ils rejoignaient : l'arène politique est-elle vraiment un terrain adéquat pour des artistes ? L'intégration aux partis ou aux actions politiques n'a pas toujours été aisée, et la marginalité de ces grands penseurs au sein même du mouvement socialiste en atteste. Enfin, il importe de comprendre l'impact que ce champ d'action nouveau a pu avoir sur la création artistique de ces engagés volontaires. Peut-on percevoir une évolution dans les thèmes abordés par Morris, Carpenter ou d'autres ? La forme même de leurs réalisations évolue-t-elle ? Se tournent-ils consciemment vers un nouveau public ?

En étudiant ce passage de l'art au socialisme à travers la nature, c'est donc une évolution très particulière d'artistes exceptionnels que cette communication se propose d'analyser, mais qui permet d'éclairer quelque peu les interrogations de cette Angleterre fin de siècle sur l'essence de son identité et ses voies d'avenir.

Fabienne Moine : « 'Are monads so much less than men?': Nature et socialisme chez les femmes poètes (1880-1900) »

Certaines femmes poètes de la fin du XIX^e siècle préfèrent la poésie engagée à l'esthétisme. Si la poésie de la nature, entreprise largement féminine au XIX^e siècle, est mise au service de l'engagement politique, ce n'est pas pour défendre une vision essentialiste soutenue par une prétendue affinité entre les femmes et la nature. Refusant l'esthétisation ou la sacralisation de la nature, ces femmes poètes procèdent à une utilisation pragmatique et rhétorique des ressources de la nature et font en sorte que leur discours naturaliste replace la nature au sein de la sphère publique.

Le développement des nouvelles valeurs matérialistes, la persistance des inégalités sociales, l'industrialisation et l'urbanisation semblent contrecarrer les forces naturelles que les femmes poètes convoquent, par la méthode naturaliste, pour dénoncer la rupture néfaste avec le monde naturel dans lequel se trouvent, à leurs yeux, les réponses politiques appropriées. Les deux tendances poétiques qui favorisent l'engagement politique, grâce à la mise en évidence de la valeur de la nature, sont le poème socialiste chrétien et le poème scientifique. Ils replacent la nature au cœur des intérêts sociétaux que le profit et l'individualisme ont mis de côté.

Edith Nesbit adosse ses nombreux poèmes socialistes à son engagement politique au sein de la Fabian Society. La nature trouve une large place dans sa poésie urbaine et périurbaine car les traces naturelles qui persistent dans les villes sont les derniers indicateurs d'un monde qui bascule. Chez d'autres femmes poètes, Constance Naden ou May Kendall, le discours politique est calqué sur la démarche scientifique. L'observation scientifique, voire microscopique, des phénomènes naturels révèle des structures démocratiques dans lesquelles les femmes poètes puisent leur modèle utopique d'organisation politique. Enfin, certaines femmes poètes comme A. Mary F. Robinson ou Isabella Southern, s'inspirent de la théorie évolutionniste pour montrer que l'homme devrait laisser les forces naturelles agir librement plutôt que de contrecarrer l'évolution et de produire des inégalités que la

nature aurait su résorber. Elles dénoncent ainsi les variations de l'environnement qui sont causées par l'influence néfaste et non naturelle des groupes sociaux dominants.

Socialiste, scientifique ou naturaliste, le poème au tournant du siècle porte les traces de l'engagement politique des femmes poètes qui croient dans le pouvoir régénérant de la nature contre ceux qui y opposent d'autres forces hégémoniques.

Michel Monteil: "L'Ashington Group' ou comment l'art vient au peuple"

En 2009, une pièce de l'auteur dramatique Lee Hall, intitulée « The Pitmen Painters » connut un certain succès, plusieurs journaux, dont le *Guardian* lui consacrant même un long article. Cette pièce repose sur des faits réels, la création d'un groupe de peintres dans une petite ville minière du nord de l'Angleterre. Dans l'Angleterre des années 30, qui vit à la fois la montée du chômage mais aussi la progression des idées travaillistes au sein de la classe ouvrière, l'expérience qui s'est déroulée à Ashington est en effet unique en son genre. Dans cette petite ville minière située seulement à une trentaine de kilomètres au nord de Newcastle, toute la vie sociale tournait autour de la mine de charbon, pourvoyeuse d'emplois à la quasi-totalité des habitants. Et d'une association fondée en 1903, la *Workers' Educational Association*, dont le but était de relier le monde du travail au monde extérieur à travers l'éducation au sens large. C'est ainsi que la WEA organisait régulièrement des conférences sur les sujets les plus variés : l'histoire, la sociologie ou la philosophie, encourageait les mineurs et leurs familles à aller aux ateliers divers, à participer à un orchestre, etc.

Le groupe d'artistes amateurs commença à se réunir en 1934. Ses membres ressentirent très vite la nécessité de faire appel à un « professionnel », et c'est à ce titre que Robert Lyon, enseignant spécialisé dans la peinture au King's College de Newcastle, vint donner ses conseils régulièrement, et épauler les peintres débutants. La suite est l'histoire d'une passion, et à travers elle de l'émancipation, de la naissance d'un véritable groupe. Le groupe de Ashington, aussi appelé les « Pitmen Painters » fut bientôt connu dans tout le nord-est, puis nationalement, jusqu'à constituer à l'heure actuelle une partie intégrale du patrimoine de la ville... Cette communication essaiera d'étudier les processus à l'œuvre dans l'élaboration du groupe, sa force et sa portée.

John Mullen: "Art and Commitment in the British Music hall during its Golden Age (1860 to 1925)"

The music hall of 1860 to 1925 was one of the main forms of entertainment for working class people in Britain. Constantly changing under the dual pressures of the centralization of capital and the drive towards "respectability" it nevertheless retained in many aspects a working class voice and an anti-establishment tone.

Is it possible to talk of commitment in such a genre of mass culture? Or conversely, is the main dynamic one of « a culture of consolation », encouraging passive acceptance of society and its ills? What made music hall so much more popular than other claimants to the crown of popular culture, such as folk music? What forms of audience identification do we find, and how do the audiences influence what the singers decide to sing?

T.S. Eliot famously commented, in an obituary of the great music hall star Marie Lloyd, that "no other comedian succeeded so well in giving expression to the life of that audience, in raising it to a kind of art". Is this claim for music hall to be taken with a pinch of salt, a simple complaint from those of the elite who liked to slum it at

working class music halls? Or can music hall produce complex artistic representations of ordinary people's lives and problems? My talk will look at a series of popular music hall songs in order to explore these different aspects of music hall, and we shall listen to a few extracts to help us imagine the atmosphere produced at the time.

Rod Rosenquist: "Remembering the Aesthete: 1930s Memoirs and Commitment to Change"

Literary memoirs of the modernist period, appearing with increasing frequency from about 1929, reflect a significant shift in the modernist approach to the art-life praxis, helping to usher in and popularise the more politically-engaged phase of the movement. The proposed paper would argue that the sudden appearance of a significant number of literary memoirs during the 1930s reflects the end of a high modernist era devoted to a (notional) autonomy in art and commitment to aesthetics alone and the arrival of a period when commitment to 'life on the streets' takes over. Memoirs by Margaret Anderson, Storm Jameson, Malcolm Cowley, Robert McAlmon, Claude McKay, Herbert Read and Richard Aldington (to leave out a dozen other 1930s memoirs I have studied) would provide a rich archive for exploring the rising distaste for high modernist autonomy and literary culture and the new desire for engaging directly with real life and real political problems. A couple examples of what can be found might make this clearer: Malcolm Cowley writes in his memoir about setting out for Europe to meet 'the saints', literary heroes like Eliot, Pound and Joyce. These heroes, encountered in the flesh, disappoint. They often appear removed from life, closed off and cold. There is a commitment to their craft but not to life. Joyce is described as 'a fourth or fifth-rate mind' on everything except literature and opera. Cowley wants to discuss things with Joyce; Joyce is non-committal, and only wants him to buy him stamps. McAlmon's text is similarly anti-literary, lamenting the quasi-mystical séances and literary gatherings. McAlmon finds Pound only interested in the business of poetry, lacking a commitment to any ideals (though this itself changes as McAlmon is writing). Aldington's title alone, *Life for Life's Sake*, reveals an aversion to the high modernist aesthetic of autonomy, one he had viewed up close through friendships with Pound and Eliot. Framing these memoirs within a late modernist revision of modernist commitment, the paper will reveal memoir writers promoting the real artist as engaged with 'real life', illustrated with a broad sample of these texts.

Marion Sage : « Paris-Londres : deux réceptions des exils chorégraphiques allemands »

A la prise du pouvoir par les nazis, le chorégraphe allemand Kurt Jooss profite d'une tournée à Paris pour fuir le pays et installer sa compagnie à Londres, ville plus réceptive à sa danse que la capitale française. De manière plus générale, il s'agira d'observer la réception artistique des danseurs exilés d'Allemagne dans les deux villes, Londres et Paris. Les différentes expériences de l'émigration chorégraphique dans les deux capitales seront étudiées à partir des réseaux de sociabilités inventés par les artistes exilés et de l'influence de la critique journalistique sur leurs carrières en exil.

Marc Smith: "The Political Commitment of Kenyon Cox: An Artist of the American Renaissance"

By the end of the nineteenth century, the second industrial revolution brought the United States' economy and financial power to new heights and eventually led to a repositioning of the country on the international scene.

New policies led to the annexation of Hawaii in 1897, the Spanish-American War of 1898, the adoption of the Open Door policy in 1900 and Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine in 1904. Yet, such a development was counterintuitive, for the US had been an English colony and made the War of Independence a founding part of the country's cultural and national identity. As a consequence, the growth of the country's imperial desires clashed with the traditional anti-imperial values on which it had been built. So for foreign expansion to occur, the country needed to rationalize imperialism in new ways.

In the arts, the American Renaissance helped justify such an ideological change and it became a vehicle for the diffusion of new values and new concepts on which the country could reimagine itself. The American Renaissance conceptualized History and the position of the US inside its continuum in new ways. Many artists linked the country's national past directly to the European Renaissance and the Greek and Roman Antiquity. Certain artists saw themselves as the inheritors of the genius of masters from Athens, Sparta and Rome; and by doing so they positioned the US at the turn of the twentieth century as the legitimate inheritor of the hegemonic and imperial values which were linked to such imagined concepts.

One way artists accomplished this was through the diffusion of new values in their art. Like their Renaissance counterparts, US architects, sculptures, painters, muralists and decorators worked together to give to the country new monuments. These associations and productions were only possible because federal, state and local governments commissioned art projects on large scales for the first time in the country's history. Statues and Triumphal Arches appeared in cities, while court houses and state capitols were decorated and public libraries were given new facades. The United States had become an economic and financial power to be reckoned with and many agreed that public financing should help mirror this change in status.

The goal of this paper is to show how the development of such values by artists of the American Renaissance was a form of political commitment at a time when the country needed to legitimize imperialism and international expansionism. Kenyon Cox can be used as a prime example of this phenomenon, for as a painter and muralist, his art productions can serve as witnesses of such values. As an art critic and art historian, his writings clearly reveal the emergence of concepts that helped justify new international policies and developed an intellectual landscape that made it possible for the political sphere to overcome the cultural paradox of a former colony becoming colonizer.