

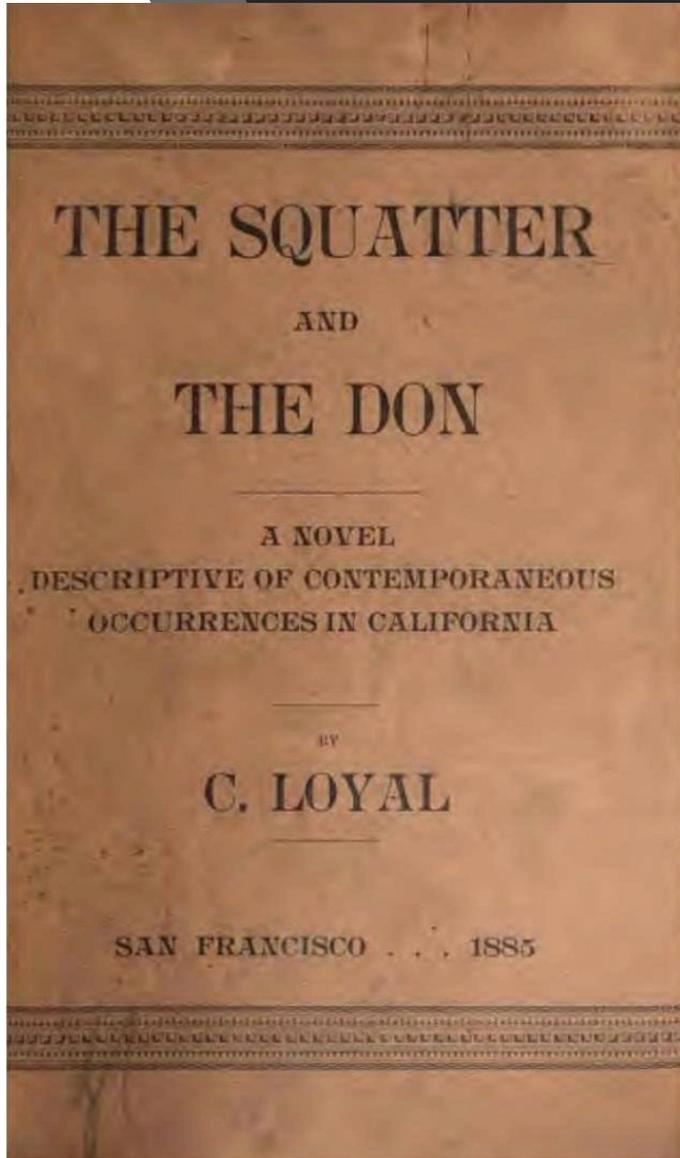


**SPAN322:
“North of the Río Grande”
US Latino/Chicano
Literature**

The Squatter and the Don IIa

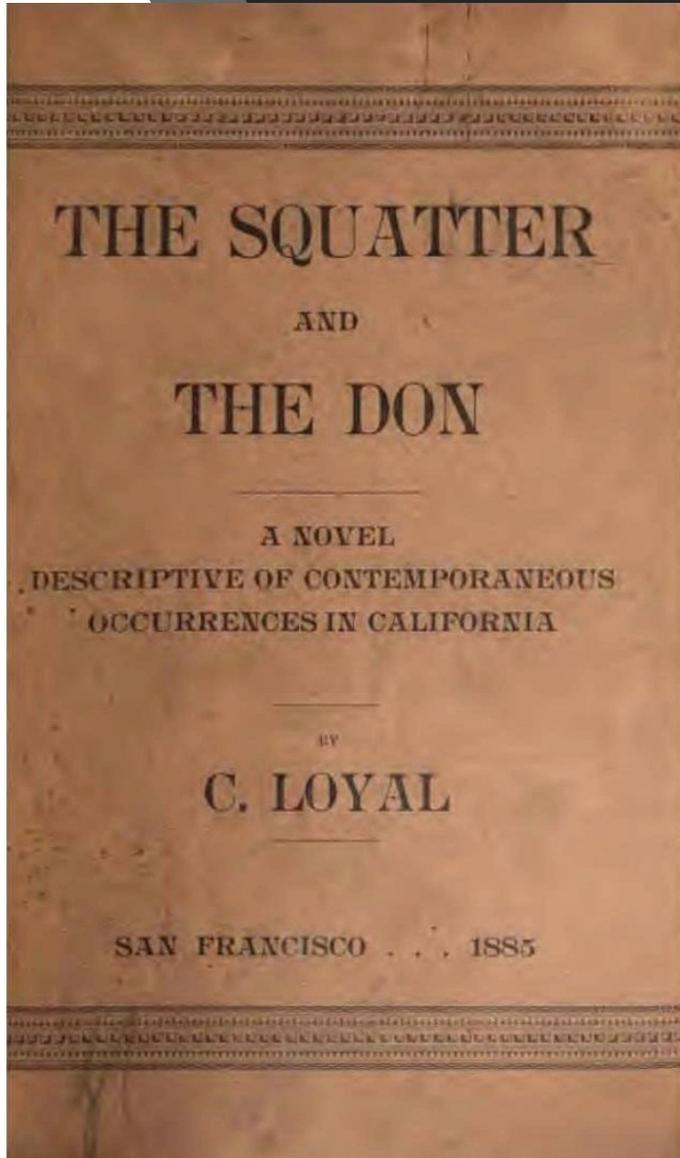
January 21, 2020

THE SQUATTER AND THE DON



The Squatter and the Don

- In what sense is Ruiz de Burton a “Ciudadano Loyal”?
- What does the book have to say about the role of the law and the legal system?
- What does the book say about the state, politics, and political representation?
- How does the love story mesh with the story about land and territory?
- How does affect interact with reason?



The Squatter and the Don

- What happens in the second half of the novel? How do the romantic and legal plots unfold?
- The Don loses his cattle and has to mortgage his land, ultimately selling it to Clarence, as the railroad is not built.
- After a long absence, Clarence returns and the long-delayed wedding takes place.
- But the prevailing mood is of disappointment and loss.

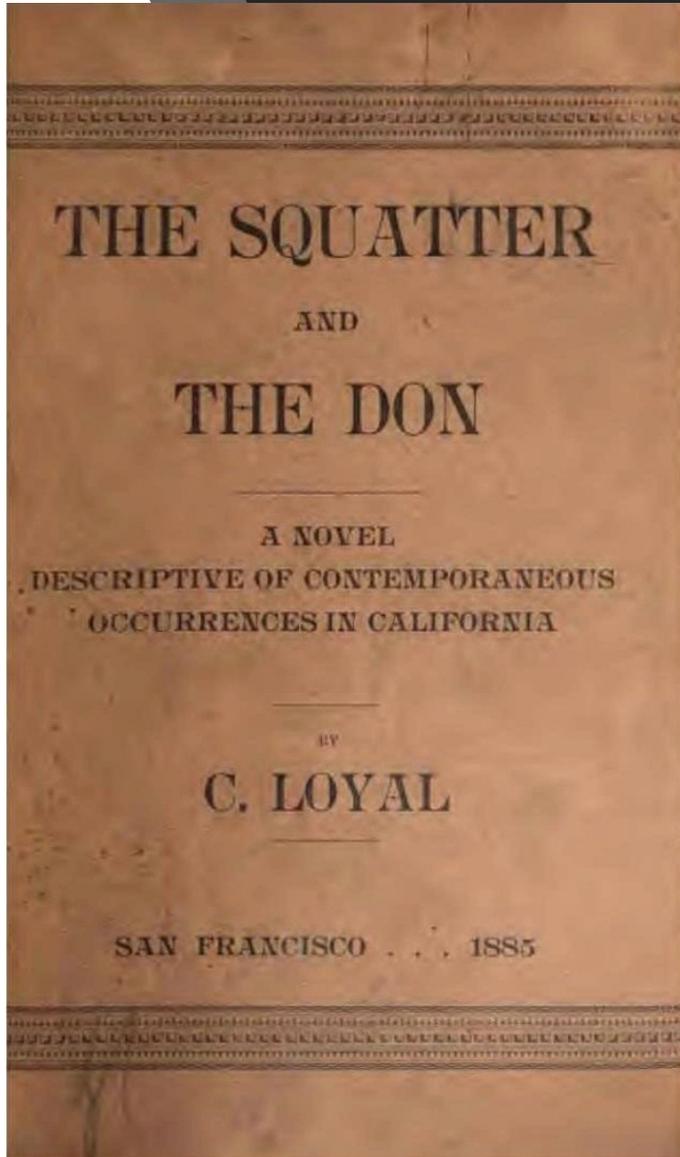
But if Gabriel had never complained, the eloquence of facts had said all that was to be said. In that hod full of bricks not only his own sad experience was represented, but *the entire history* of the native Californians of Spanish descent was epitomized. Yes, Gabriel carrying his hod full of bricks up a steep ladder, was a symbolical representation of his race. The natives, of Spanish origin, having lost all their property, must henceforth be hod-carriers.

Unjust laws despoiled them, but what of this? Poor they are, but who is to care, or investigate the cause of their poverty? The thriving American says that the native Spaniards are lazy and stupid and thriftless, and as the prosperous know it all, and are almost infallible, the fiat has gone forth, and the Spaniards of California are not only despoiled of all their earthly possessions, but must also be bereft of sympathy, because the world says they do not deserve it.

George and Clarence entertained a different opinion, however, and in suppressed, earnest tones they now reviewed the history of the Alamares, and feelingly deplored the cruel legislation that had ruined them.

Lizzie, unable to sleep, had again taken her place by the bedside, and sadly watched the beautiful face which seemed like that of slumbering Apollo. Would he recover, or was it possible that her darling would die, now when relief had come? Oh, the cruel fate that made him descend to that humble occupation.

Lizzie shuddered to think of all the suffering he would yet have to undergo. Oh, it was so inexpressibly sad to think that his precious life was risked for the pitiful wages of a poor hod-carrier!
(351-2)



The Squatter and the Don

- What are the various motivations for the different characters' behavior?
- How does affect (emotion) contrast with reason (calculation) in these motivations?
- What is the relationship between body and mind in the novel?
- Is this aligned with the relationship between romance and business?

Mr. Darrell continued: "All I want before I leave here is to give your greaser father-in-law a sound thrashing and another to that puppy, Gabriel, who is so airy and proud, and such an exquisite, that it will be delightful to spoil his beauty."

"But why should you wish to do that? What has Don Mariano done to you? and if Don Gabriel threw his *lazo* on you, it was to protect his father."

"What has the old greaser done? He inveigled you into that land business, and you together have made me ridiculous. That is what the matter is."

"Then you don't believe me?" Mrs. Darrell said.

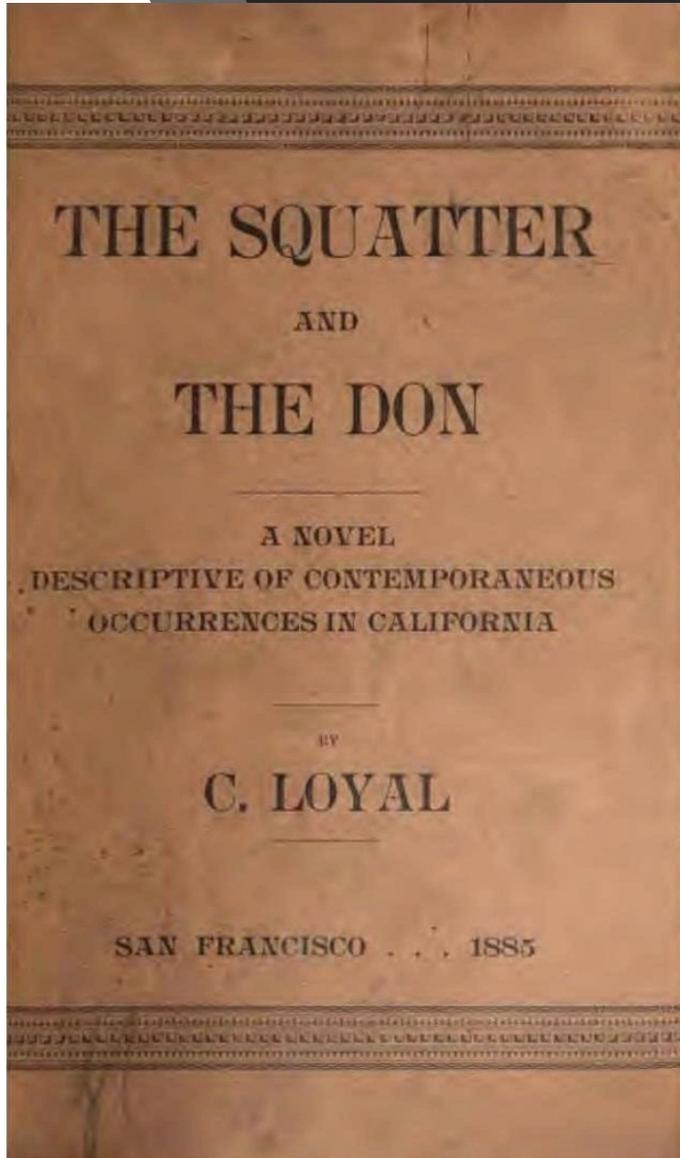
"Don't you take so much credit to yourself, and throw yourself into the breach like a heroine. If the Don hadn't had that pretty daughter, Clarence would not have been so obedient to his mother, perhaps."

Clarence rose to his feet, very pale, but he sat down again, and controlling himself, said as calmly as possible:

"I had never seen one, not one of Don Mariano's daughters when I went to offer to pay for this land."

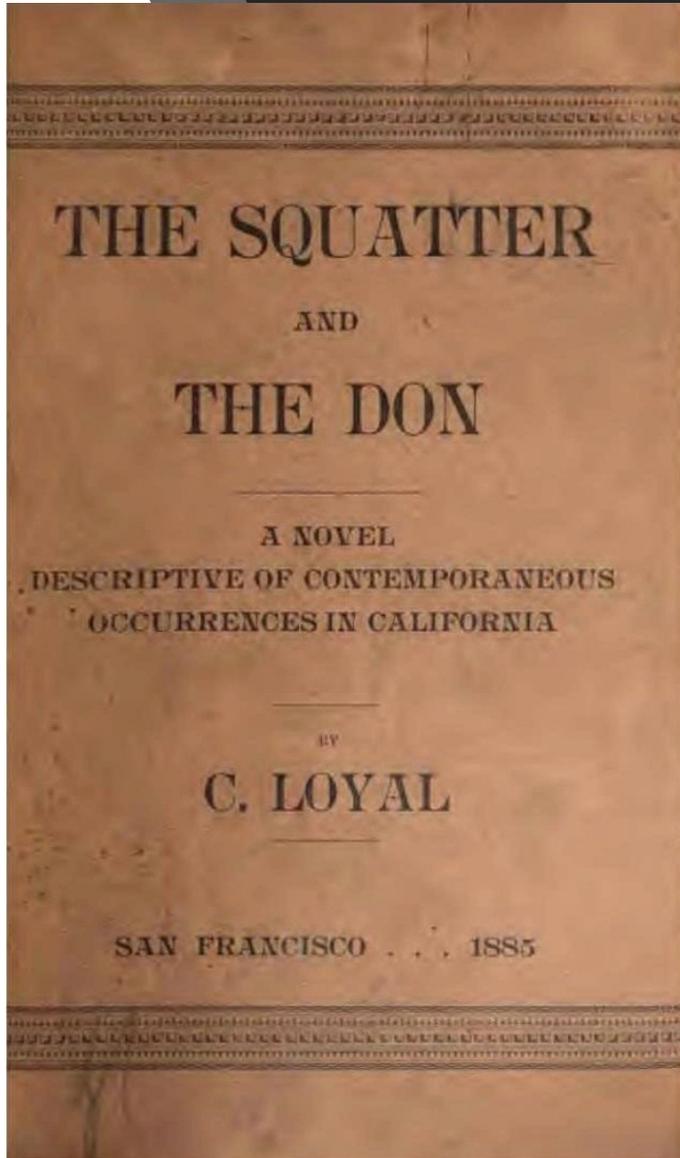
"Do you mean that you wouldn't have done so if your mother hadn't wished it?"

"No sir, not that. I think I would, for I felt great sympathy with the Don for the contemptible manner in which the squatters received the propositions he made them. I was convinced then that the land belonged to him, and nobody had a right to take it without paying for it." (252-3)



The Squatter and the Don

- What are the “kinks” in this novel?



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“You don't seem to think of business principles. You forget that in business every one is for himself. If it is to our interest to prevent the construction of the Texas Pacific, do you suppose we will stop to consider that we might inconvenience the San Diego people?”

“It is not a matter of inconvenience—it is ruin, it is poverty, suffering, distress; perhaps despair and death,” said Mr. Mechlin. “Our merchants, our farmers, all, the entire county will suffer great distress or ruin, for they have embarked their all in the hope of immediate prosperity, in the hope that emigration would come to us, should our town be the western terminus.”

“You should have been more cautious; not so rash.”

“How could we have foreseen that you would prevent the construction of the Texas Pacific?”

“Easily. By studying business principles; by perceiving it would be to our interest to prevent it.”

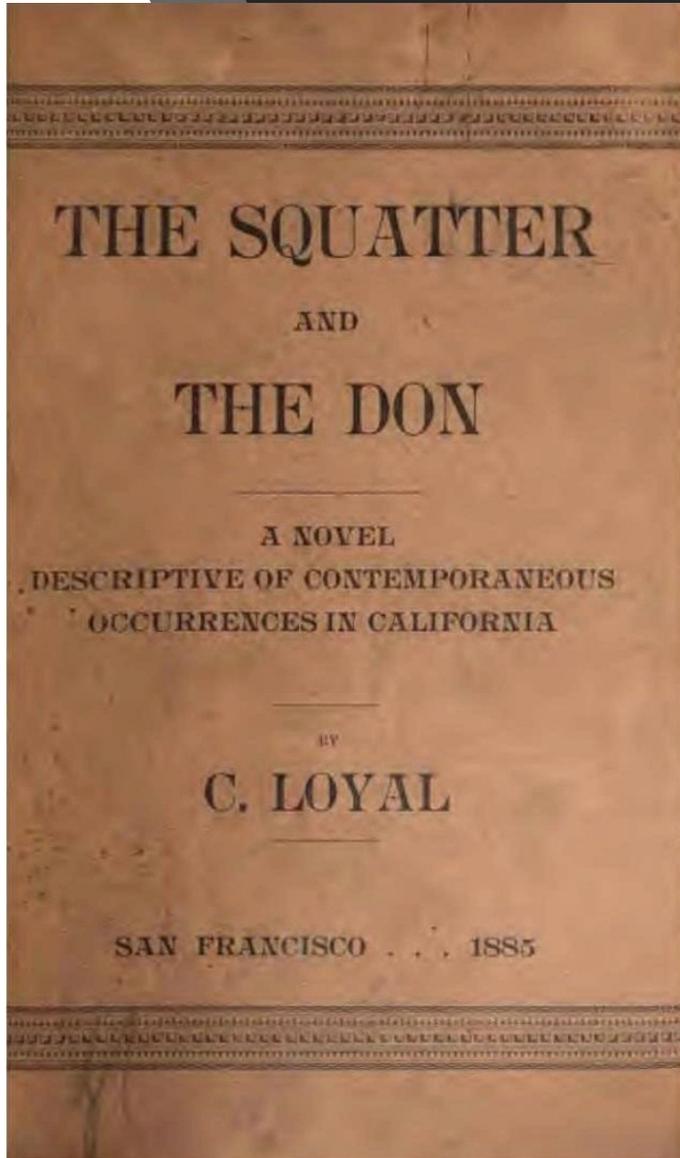
“We never thought, and do not think now, that it is to your interest to prevent it. But even if we had thought so, we would not have supposed that you would attempt it,” Mr. Mechlin replied.

“Why not?”

“Because it would have seemed to us impossible that you could have succeeded.”

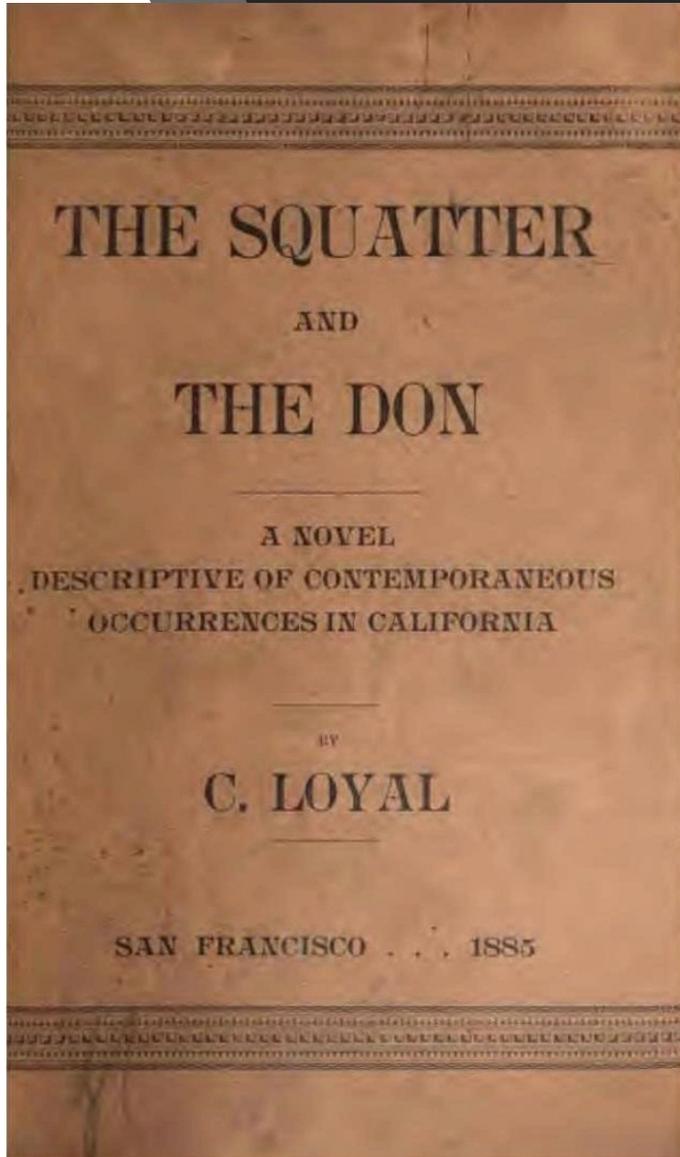
“Why impossible?”

“Because we would have thought that the American people would interfere; that Congress would respect the rights of the Southern people.” (310)



The Squatter and the Don

- A reminder of some key concepts...
- Identity, Community
- Belonging, Difference
- Race, Gender, Language
- History, Time / temporality
- Trauma, Fantasy
- Performance / appearance



The Squatter and the Don

- A reminder of some key concepts...
- Representation, The Law, The State
- Crime, Deviance, Violence
- Territory, Space / spatiality
- Affect, Shame, Pride
- The Particular, The Universal

NEXT STEPS

For Thursday

- Write brief comments on two of your classmates' blog posts.
- Look through Wikipedia resources and guidelines. Start to plan what needs to be done with your article.
- Bring laptop to class for Wikipedia day.