

Université de Valenciennes
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Franchir les frontières: Gender et Classes sociales dans la culture américaine

Cette journée d'étude s'inscrit dans une dynamique de recherche visant à redécouvrir, réinterpréter et revitaliser l'étude des relations entre *gender* et classes sociales. Au travers du filtre des études de la culture, de la littérature et du cinéma américains, on tentera de déterminer de quelle manière le *gender* et les relations de classes sociales se déterminent l'un l'autre. Comment l'appartenance à une classe sociale est-elle vécue, conçue et représentée par le biais des modalités du *gender* ? Pourquoi de nombreux schémas conceptuels n'ont-ils pas su rendre de manière adéquate la façon dont les femmes font l'expérience de l'appartenance à une classe sociale ou mettre en évidence le *gender* et l'origine ethnique comme déterminants de la formation des classes sociales ? Quelles sont quelques-unes des relations entre le symbolisme de classe et la formation d'une subjective identité de classe ? A travers l'étude de quelques phénomènes culturels américains, cet atelier espère explorer la manière dont tout processus interprétatif de représentations devient complexe dès lors que l'on considère les croisements entre *gender* et classes sociales. On tentera de suggérer que les relations entre *gender* et classes sociales forment des frontières qui semblent suffisamment souples et perméables pour permettre de maintenir la crainte de la constriction et l'espoir de la fuite. Plus encore l'atelier cherche à ouvrir les champs d'étude des relations *gender*/classes sociales, à bousculer les identités établies et restrictives construites le long des axes que sont le *gender*, la sexualité, l'appartenance ethnique ou toute autre forme de catégorisation et de distinction, mais aussi à s'engager dans un processus positif permettant de créer des potentiels d'identité là où rien n'avait été jusqu'alors perçu ou représenté

Crossing Borders: Gender and Class in American Culture

The debate on gender and class has ranged widely in the years since the critiques developed within "second-wave" feminism were first directed at class and stratification theory and research. This seminar is part of a growing endeavour to rediscover, reinterpret, and revitalize the study of the relations between gender and class. Through the filters of American cultural studies, literary studies, and film, we will be looking at how gender helps constitute class relations and vice versa. How is class lived, conceived, and represented through the modality of gender? Why have so many conceptual schemes failed to adequately explain the way women experience class and, further, render gender and race epiphenomenal to class formation? What are some of the relationships between class symbolism and the formation of subjective class identity? Arguably, the recent interest in the intersection of class and gender occurs at two related levels: at the macro-level of social formation, where these processes are mutually constitutive, and at the micro level of identity formation, where cultural meanings provide the material that make various subjectivities possible. Because insufficient attention has been given to the ways in which class is politically, historically, and situationally constructed (and performed) in relation to gender, one of the founding assumptions of this seminar is that no social category exists in privileged isolation; each

comes into being in social relations to other categories, if in uneven and contradictory ways. Further, these categories do not derive their signification from a fixed point of origin, but instead are articulated, unfolded from uneven and often opposing locations.

Through examinations of American literature, film, drama, and media, this workshop hopes to explore how any interpretive process of representation is complicated by the intersection of gender and class, and to question the “unquestionable” axioms derived from it, including the beliefs that there are two and only two genders; gender is invariant; all individuals can (and must) be classified as masculine or feminine; that class in America is mostly invisible; class mobility happens just as rapidly as it ever did; and that class is fading as a force in American life. The workshop wishes to suggest how the relations between class and gender (and this is not to deny or minimize other categories of identity such as ethnicity and race) form boundaries that seem just elusive and permeable enough to sustain both the fear of constriction and the dream of escape. Most important, the seminar is interested in opening up the fields of gender-class identity, of destabilizing established and restrictive identities constructed along the axes of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and other forms of categorizations and distinctions, and of engaging in a positive process of potentiating identities where none has previously been perceived or enacted.

Crossing Borders: Gender and Class in American Culture

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10:00-10:15: William Dow, Université de Valenciennes. William.Dow@wanadoo.fr

Introductory Remarks: “This Certain Conjunction: Gender and Class in American Culture.”

10 :15-11 :15 : Claire Delahaye, Université de Picardie. delahayeclaire@hotmail.com

“Le mauvais genre : la respectabilité publique féminine ou la classe moyenne en représentation.”

11 :15-12 :15 : David Coad, Université de Valenciennes. coad@neuf.fr

“Dressing Up : Metrosexuality in American Culture.”

Lunch : 12 :15-13 :15

13 :30-14 :30 : Michel Feith, Université de Nantes. michel.feith@yahoo.fr “A Comedy of Terrors : Slipping the Yoke of Race, Class and Gender in Some Works by Richard Wright.”

14 :30-15 :30 : Christine Lorre, Paris III. Christine.Lorre@univ.paris3.fr “Gender, Class, Race and War : Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Fourth Book of Peace*.”

15 :30-16 :30 : Reynold Humphries, Université de Lille. Reynold.humphries@club-internet.fr “ Les pièges de la sexualité dans *Frankenstein* (1931) et *La Fiancée de Frankenstein* (1935).”

Closing Reception
