

Dissertation Defense: Audrey Dobrenn

Friday, May 17, 2013

2:30 PM

IMU

Sassafras Suite

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Écriture Masculine and the 21st Century: Impotent, Flaccid and Useless Members of French Literature

In 1975, Hélène Cixous published “Le rire de la Méduse” in which she coins and tries to develop the characteristics of écriture féminine. In doing so, she investigates the possibilities of gendered writings. Ever since, research has strived to differentiate écriture féminine from its “masculine” counterpart—alternatively called phallogentric or masculine.

The goal of this dissertation is to prove that after feminism, after the establishment of the concepts of gender and the rise of écriture féminine, écriture masculine is an event of the twenty-first century. But while écriture féminine liberated itself from the Phallus, by basing its themes and styles outside phallogentricism, écriture masculine is establishing itself within phallogentricism, in order to question its hegemony more effectively. The masculine/male character (personage masculine), the erotic/pornographic subject matter, as well as the style of writing, are being renegotiated in order to bring forth a new fictional discourse; one that disputes the symbols of the Phallus. The works of three popular authors are analyzed in order to determine what constitutes this emerging genre.

First, in the work of Michel Houellebecq, whose novels depict the life of ordinary people, we can see an evolution from the tortured male character to the creation of a liberation neo-human race, made possible with the help of cloning. The race, detached from any sexual desire, or human contact, has made possible a life without gender and mark the end of masculinity. With the novel Partouz by Yann Moix, the naked male body will be studied as a place of cultural re-inscription in which the flaccid member and sexual tension push towards an anti-pornography esthetic. Finally, the first and last novel of Virginie Despentes, as well as her movie adaptation of Bye Bye Blondie, will help us trace the evolution of her esthetic from heteronormativity to homonormativity and its constitutive elements.