

Literature, Theory, Gender

COLT 377, Class #22037R, Fall 2009, Mon & Wed 3:30-4:50, THH 118



William Kentridge, "Felix in Exile," Charcoal, pastel, and gouache, still from animated film, 1994.

How does sexual difference play itself out in and through language? This course will investigate and articulate ways in which sex, sexuality, and gender shape literary texts. We will read a range of modern and contemporary literary works, from realist novellas to experimental novels to poetic essays to dramatic monologues, and from different geopolitical contexts—France, India, Jamaica, Germany, and the U.S. We will read sexual difference as it shapes, and is shaped by, nationality, race, class, and colonialism. We will read a range of important thinkers, critics, and philosophers, such as Shoshana Felman, Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Klaus Theweleit, and Jasbir Puar.

The course will consist of 5 sections. The first section will investigate sexuality and rhetoric via Shoshana Felman's influential reading of Honoré de Balzac's novella, *The Girl with the Golden Eyes*. We will also read Gayle Rubin's essays, "The Exchange of Women" and "Thinking Sex" (2 weeks). The second section will examine language, the issue of sexual difference in language, mimicry, and plagiarism, via a reading of selections from the work of philosopher Luce Irigaray with Kathy Acker's collage novel, *Pussy, King of the Pirates*, and Dodie Bellamy's collection of poetic essays, *Academonia* (4 weeks). (We will examine some key essays by Judith Butler here as well.) We will read *Imaginary Maps*, a text containing essays by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and short stories by Mahasweta Devi in the third section, where we will investigate gender, nationality, and postcoloniality in language and texts (2 weeks). Next, we will read masculinity via a text by Brian Evenson, *Last Days* (3 weeks). Finally, we will read Jasbir Puar's *Territorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* with Elfriede Jelinek's short texts about the U.S. invasion of Iraq, *Bambiland* and *Babel*, and Michelle Cliff's novel, *No Telephone to Heaven* (4 weeks).

Students will write 5 short papers (3-4 pages long) after each section, and a final long paper (8-10 pages).

COLT L/M/CT Track: This is a Critical Thought Concentration Course.

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