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- 1 As this presentation aims at improving European exchanges and, hopefully, fostering greater collaboration, not only through better information but also through practical changes, it does not merely describe what is being done in France but also makes several critical statements on aspects of the situation of “American studies” that may be found wanting and unsatisfactory. These opinions remain personal, inspired by several years of study of the field and of direct involvement in various aspects of scholarly policy. They do not necessarily reflect a consensus in the profession but, being for the most part drawn from a report on the state and future of studies on the United States in France (<http://etudes.americaines.free.fr/rapport.pdf>) resulting from interviews with many researchers in the field, they may retain a modicum of overall relevance.
- 2 It is also hoped that the new interactive format of this publication will allow French colleagues to add their point of view, be it contradictory, and others to propose comparisons, ask questions and queries.
- 3 Many explanations and remarks applicable to the social sciences and humanities in France have been included. In that respect, although American studies have their own history they are of necessity linked to the state of the academic system in France. As this system is evolving under both European pressure and that of the internationalization of research in the humanities (where things have long remained heavily national) many of the traits portrayed below will mutate in a way yet impossible to foresee. But the basic conviction underpinning this presentation is that we, as European Americanists, have substantial messages to deliver and serious contributions to make because of the wealth of our research and the variety of our experiences. A general understanding, therefore, of the conditions of production seemed at least as important as descriptions of the actual work being done, since information concerning the latter can easily be found by all through specific contacts in conferences, via web sites and by reading existing publications.¹

Context

- 4 The study of the United States in France is ancient, even if one chooses to limit it to « modern » academic practice. The following lines, however, will not try to retrace its detailed history and genesis, but merely to focus on the specificities of its development over the past 40-odd years (roughly since the 1960s) and to give a sort of overall panorama of the present intellectual (or scholarly²), but also institutional, situation. Europe—and singularly France with its centralized and strongly national system—being at the dawn of a new age heralded by the Bologna process (first called 3-5-8 in France then commonly LMD—standing for Licence (BA), Master (MA), Doctorat(e)), the whole academic landscape is about to change, - in as yet unforeseen ways. My overall impression, however, is that the move will dramatically alter our national practices, as well, probably, as our university map in significant ways, that American Studies will thus be reconfigured as profoundly as the rest of academia.
- 5 Before the 1960s, the study of the United States was mainly conducted in some universities in Law schools, the School of Political Science in Paris (Science Po), history departments, and English departments; but there were few if any professors whose research or teaching was entirely devoted to the United States. The main impetus for the development of a broader and deeper study of American culture originated in English departments. The experience of the war for young academics who wrote their dissertations in the 1950s as well as the context of the criticism / admiration of the United States in the late 50s and early 60s created both a demand and an offer. The rising student population led to an increase in the teaching population. In English departments, the teaching of American literature was allowed to expand as curricular changes took place and teaching became more modular. But for the generation of such pioneers as Maurice Gonnaud, one of the former EAAS Presidents, it was an uphill struggle to gain some space against English literature.
- 6 At the same time, student—and, more generally, social—demand, led to the expansion of a new approach to “culture” which tried to define itself as the study of “civilization”. English departments had long proposed courses on the history of (English) ideas, but this always remained extremely close to literature. What was now sought, at least in courses, was the integration of readings of documents inspired by the social sciences (sociology, history, ethnology and political science) and that of the then-flourishing structural/semiological analyses (in particular in the realm of the media and images). But until the mid-seventies dissertation topics still remained rather traditional and American studies instructors often had to write on a British topic, or British writer, in order to have a chance of acquiring a position.
- 7 Americanists were not alone in their attempt at displacing boundaries, as the same demand was taking place within (French) British studies. Monica Charlot, an English academic married to a French politologist, pioneered the expansion of the social sciences in the field of English studies in English departments. Some joint projects were even conducted, and many instructors taught both American and English topics, at least in their junior years. The general trend, however, was rather to keep fields separate, as the problem of American studies was to build a double legitimacy: geographic, in both the fields of literature and “society”, and specifically intellectual for those engaged in « civilization » studies. The process was hardly eased by the relative absence of research on the United States in French social sciences³ (whereas the Spanish-speaking world for instance was very well represented) and by the strict

institutional organization in national academic « sections » which prevented any true interdisciplinary work, except very locally and often in a limited way.

- 8 A word of explanation on the institutional peculiarities of French universities may here be necessary to shed extra-light on the stage. Much indeed can be explained by structural factors, shared by other academic fields. University departments are organized according to disciplines (or “sections”) defined by the ministry of education as leading to a particular diploma (BA, MA, Ph.D). Academics depend for their career (hiring and promotion) on the evaluation by local and national committees of peers active in their “section”. While many sections cover traditional “disciplines” in the scholarly sense of the term (history, sociology, philosophy, etc.), modern languages each belong to a specific section (German, English, Spanish, etc.) making them not disciplinary sections but area sections.⁴ So that a professor of American literature will not « belong » to a broad literature section but to an English-speaking world studies section comprising specialists of literature, linguistics and the social sciences.⁵ The negative side is obviously the lack of recognition of scholars by their discipline.
- 9 But there is also a positive side. Part of it is actual, the other still virtual. On the actual side lies the fact that the overwhelming majority of American studies specialists in France were trained through a broad curriculum including literature of the English-speaking world, “
- 10 « civilization » and language, and that all have a strong competence in the English language.⁶ This is reinforced by the existence of national civil service competitive examinations (the CAPES and the Agrégation). The Agrégation has long functioned as a means to certify a general competence in English that is highly appreciated by search committees, so much so that the “title” is (almost) an unwritten pre-requisite to land an assistant/associate position. The virtual side is that the English-speaking world section is a potential laboratory for true interdisciplinary research in the field of “culture”, the field being broad and the staff large.
- 11 The origin and development of American studies in France can be seen as a strange image of American “mythology”. Born of a struggle to create a space for itself (and its personnel) as well as to develop another way of looking at society, American studies has emerged from its marginality as a particularly dynamic field. From the 1970s onward, it has attracted younger scholars looking for greater freedom in their research. Literary criticism has been a particularly active field, both concerning the 19th century and (very) contemporary American literature. The case of Marc Chénétier is probably most exemplary of this expansion not only in the academic field but also towards the general public, many translations having opened the world of American contemporary writing to an ever-wider audience. He and other scholars have found in a fruitful dialogue with American colleagues and writers an original path, one that, while using the tools of modern criticism, attempts to lead beyond the various literary theories hatched in the 60s and 70s and ever since prevalent, to dust up and renovate critical attitudes.
- 12 In the study of society, however, a greater complexity has prevailed. Most French Americanists were not trained as social scientists and tried to develop a transversal alternative to the disciplines. Paradoxically, they took a long time establishing a dialogue with American theory (the American version of cultural studies in particular) that might have offered solutions. Many reasons can explain this distance vis-à-vis the research conducted in the United States. One is that a large segment of French interest

in the United States was originally rooted in a criticism of the policies of the United States and an ideological—often left-wing—agenda, which, so to speak, privileged the study of the underprivileged, the margins rather than the mainstream. Second is the presence of powerful French theories and models. Third is probably a French intellectual tradition that places the rhetoric of argumentation and theoretical coherence above the debate between methods (historiography and epistemology are still rather rare centers of interest in France). Last but not least, are the lack of documentary resources and the dire state of sources and documentation on the United States in French libraries, which until very recently made access to scholarly articles in journals difficult prior to the doctorate and a research trip to the United States.

- 13 One of the questions that agitate French Americanists today is the redefinition of their “area”. The effect of post-colonial theory, as well as original questions raised by economists, historians, geographers and cultural studies that have tried to redefine an exceptionalist model centered exclusively on the US, has led many to broach the Transatlantic, Caribbean, Pacific space or that of the Western Hemisphere.⁷ Greater attention thus seems paid to debates in the United States and elsewhere in American studies. But more prosaically such moves have also been fostered by incentives from the ministry (the source of all research funds) to consolidate smaller research units under more federative themes, often for bureaucratic reasons; as well as by the definition of a national project to create an “Institute of the Americas” located in Paris and federating research groups working on South and North America.⁸ The policy of the ministry has been superciliously perceived by Americanists as it appeared to dilute and emasculate a specificity that they had tried to define and build on for 40-odd years without really improving training and research. It forced many groups rhetorically to alter and warp their projects simply to stay on the map. The most desirable perspective would be, it seems, a real comprehensive plan for American studies, organizing projects regionally by allowing a better collaboration between universities on specific themes.

The structures of production (research in France)

- 14 In France, most research in the humanities and social sciences is funded directly by the Ministry of Education through 4-year contracts with the Universities, or with the CNRS (<http://www.cnrs.fr/>). American studies are virtually non-existent in the CNRS, which funds only one research group : the CENA at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (<http://www.ehess.fr/centres/cena/>). The funding unit is the “research group”, recognized and certified on the basis of a particular project. There is also funding—albeit too limited—for outstanding researchers elected for 4 years to a prestigious chair (Institut Universitaire de France <http://www.cpu.fr/Iuf/Default.asp>). Those elected remain within their university but have a lighter teaching load and benefit from funds specifically awarded to conduct their research and aggregate colleagues and research students around their project. There are two IUF professors in American studies, one is Marc Chénétier (contemporary American literature) (<http://www.ufr-anglais.univ-paris7.fr/LISTE/c/Chenetier/Default.htm>), the other Bernard Cotteret (18th century British and American history of ideas) (<http://www.uvsq.fr/>).

- 15 At the national level, the French association for American studies (AFEA) (<http://etudes.americaines.free.fr/>) has a professional role (in defending the profession) and a scholarly one that consists in :
- organizing one conference a year with lectures and workshops, and a special one-day forum for doctoral students (“doctoriales”) who can thus present their work-in-the-making to senior researchers and peers for criticism, help and discussion;
 - publishing two scholarly journals, the *RFEA* (<http://etudes.americaines.free.fr/rfea.html>) and *TransAtlantica* (<http://www.transatlantica.org/>);
 - circulating information through a website and mailing list;
 - awarding scholarships to doctoral students and associates preparing for *habilitation* (the diploma required to get a full professorship) (<http://www.univ-pau.fr/saes/pb/saesafea.html>).
- 16 A smaller national association, the Société d’études nord-américaines (SENA)—not to be mistaken with the CENA—is devoted to the social sciences. It organizes panels and brief conferences, and it awards a yearly prize for the best dissertation and MA thesis in American studies. Canadian studies are represented by the AFEC (<http://www.afec33.asso.fr/>).
- 17 American studies thus remain essentially centered on English departments and on the few scholars working in history departments (Paris 1, with the only chair of North American history (<http://ameriquedunord.univ-paris1.fr/v3/presentation/presentation01.htm>), Paris 8...), in the only CNRS laboratory devoted to the study of the United States (CENA at EHESS <http://www.ehess.fr/centres/cena/>) and at Science Po (<http://www.ceri-sciencespo.com/cerifr/cherlist/lacorne.htm>). Most scholars of the United States coming from the other disciplines remain outside this network and little research if any is conducted in collaboration between them and the « core » of American studies. The reasons are numerous, one being that many only devote a limited part of their time or career to the United States or include the United States in broader comparative studies, another that the barrier of the disciplines is so strong that researchers working from within the « English section » often find it difficult to be recognized by traditional disciplines. This is undoubtedly a cause for weakness in the field. Other reasons are structural (the weight of teaching), financial (insufficient funding to conduct serious research *in situ* and be present at international conferences), intellectual (the paradigms issues discussed above) and political (the language of publications—French—greatly hampers international communication). But one thinks also of the insufficiency of European cooperation and of real exchange as well as the lack of recognition in the United States.

Themes and objects

- 18 The reader familiar with American Studies in France may find the following inventory somewhat simplistic. Its purpose, however, is to provide a sense of the general architecture by outlining the salient features of the edifice. Specific themes are changing, sometimes rapidly, teams can appear and disappear because of new contracts or of the hiring or departure of a colleague. Since misunderstandings may result from an inventory that can never be fully comprehensive, occasional names and references should be taken for what they intend to be : examples for the non-French reader to find his way around, and certainly by no means a Prize list...⁹

Literature and literary theory

- 19 The study of American literature is one of the strong points of American Studies in France. **Narratology and psychoanalysis** remain widely used approaches, often in linkage with epistemology and —mostly French—philosophy. Although “French Theory” is an American concept, and while Derrida and Deleuze are by all means major references, the search for and use of novel critical tools remain unabated.
- 20 **Literary theory and cognition** is the project conducted by Paris 8 (http://recherche.univ-paris8.fr/red_fich_equ.php?OrgaNum=16)
- 21 *19th century literature* is the object of study of the “Atelier dix-neuvième” (<http://www.univ-paris7.fr/recherche/pagetheme2.php?num=10301&numth=828>) (Université Paris 7). The approach mixes literature and history of ideas.
- 22 **Contemporary literature.** Many scholars are engaged in the study of the most contemporary forms of literature, producing a respectable number of dissertations. They question new fictions and post-modernist writing, having recourse to a variety of methods, with a rather frequent philosophical accent. ODELA (Observatoire de littérature américaine - <http://www.univ-paris7.fr/recherche/pagetheme2.php?num=10301&numth=829>), (Université Paris 7), led by Marc Chénétier, is one of the most active collaborative efforts in that direction, but other groups are active as well, in most universities. French literary Americanists have played a large role in the building of a serious public interest in American literature. They translated authors and promoted them through various publishers’ series, a tradition largely inaugurated by Maurice-Edgar Coindreau, the translator of Faulkner and Dos Passos in the 1940s and 1950s. A translation prize, founded by Michel Gresset bears Coindreau’s name and aims at diversifying the image of contemporary American literature that prevails in the country.
- 23 **Faulknerian studies** have given French American studies an indisputably international status (André Bleikasten, Michel Gresset, François Pitavy...). Their scope has now widely extended into « Southern studies » (they are part of the *Southern Studies Forum*.) One of the centers is the Fondation Faulkner (<http://www.uhb.fr/faulkner/wf/about.htm>) located at Université Rennes 2, under the management of Nicole Moulinoux. Developing interdisciplinary approaches, a small but active center is “Suds d’Amérique”, Université de Versailles-St.-Quentin (<http://www.sudam.uvsq.fr/>). It has opened the field of Southern studies to other periods and issues, for instance to the question of “frontiers”.
- 24 **The literature (and culture) of minorities** is another important field of investigation where literary studies have long integrated ethnological and sociological dimensions, without necessarily having veered towards a narrowly American version of cultural studies. Examples range from chicanos (Bordeaux 3 <http://www.u-bordeaux3.fr/Rech/page19.html>), to Native Americans and the cultural productions of migrant societies and people (Paris 7 <http://www.univ-paris7.fr/recherche/pagetheme2.php?num=10301&numth=827>).
- 25 Afro-American studies hold a special place. Initiated in the 1960s by Michel and Geneviève Fabre, they are now organized nationally as the *Cercle Inter-universitaire d’Etudes Afro-Américaines* (with specialists across the country, the major centers, however, being Aix-Marseille 1, Bordeaux 3, Paris 7, Tours...). It is affiliated with a European network, the *Collegium for African American Research*).

- 26 The work being done in the field of **poetry** is essentially concerned with 20th century verse, with the expectable exception of Whitman and Dickinson. A major Whitman Conference was thus organized in July 2005 at Paris 7 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of *Leaves of Grass*.

Philosophy

- 27 Some philosophy research groups study pragmatism ("Groupe d'études sur le pragmatisme et la philosophie américaine", <http://pragmatisme.free.fr/>) (Paris 1), the philosophy of sciences (http://www-ihpst.univ-paris1.fr/rub.php?lng=fr&cat=_insti&rub=r01) and, more generally, American philosophy. Epistemology is the special field of research at the University of Amiens (<http://www.picardie.fr/>). This discipline has become the locus of much interesting interdisciplinary work (19th century, Atelier XIX^eme, the cinema, literature, etc.)

Film studies

- 28 France has a long-standing tradition in film studies. Two major research centers are devoted to the study of American cinema (CICLAHO, Paris 10 http://anglais.u-paris10.fr/article.php3?id_article=67; and UMR Intermédia, Paris 3 <http://www.univ-paris3.fr/recherche/sites/edea/intermedia/>) as well as a professional association: SERCIA- <http://sercia.u-bordeaux3.fr/>)¹⁰. Many academics however, inside and outside American studies, write occasional articles on the cinema even though this may not be their main activity. The first reason for this situation has to do with the importance of American cinematography in the world, the second being that many look at the cinema essentially from the point of view of narrative and aesthetics (and less from that of an institution or system of production).¹¹ Also many students choose to write their first research theses (MA and sometimes even MPhil) on movies and demand for tutoring in the field is great.¹² Movie scholars in American studies work closely with specialists of other cinematographies. Some of them are also movie critics in major national publications (Michel Ciment, writing for *Positif*, now retired from Paris 7 is one of the most famous examples). Among the dominant topics of interest are the history of the cinema, authors, genres and style, Hollywood, the relationship between literature and the cinema, and of course the place of the movies in the history of representations.¹³

Popular culture

- 29 Despite its presence in American universities, popular culture (beside movies and media studies) as an academic field is virtually non-existent in France, except through the work of a few talented, but still isolated researchers (Jean-Paul Gabilliet in Bordeaux, John Dean in Versailles-St-Quentin, Eric Gonzalez in Rennes...) dealing with popular music and cartoons. Popular literature and material culture are sparsely studied. The conservatism of French academia is not the only cause. The « English studies section » (as defined above) is probably in this respect rather progressive and universities try to take into account a real student demand in those fields; but senior researchers able to supervise dissertations are still too rare and often have to be found outside the "section"; furthermore, funds to undertake essential field trips and collect documents are lacking (history, ethnology and sociology have identical problems).

History

- 30 History is probably the best developed social science in the field of American studies. It grew on the basis of an older generation of historians in the 1960s and 1970s. It is beginning to be recognized in the United States; it has strong connections with the Organization of American Historians, and several prizes have been granted to French

articles and books. One series is specifically devoted to publishing books on American history (Belin publishers).

- 31 History is present in the work of many centers, but the main research centers are EHESS (CENA <http://www.ehess.fr/centres/cena/>), Paris 1 (<http://ameriquedunord.univ-paris1.fr/v3/presentation/presentation01.htm>), Paris 3-Sorbonne Nouvelle and Paris 7-Denis Diderot. Each has one or several specialties. Thus one group at Paris 7 specializes in the early Republic (<http://www.univ-paris7.fr/recherche/pagetheme2.php?num=10301&numth=811>) and economic and social history, as well as CENA ; the history of international relations (one of the most ancient fields of American history in France) is researched at Paris 3, Paris 1 and Science Po; historiography is still a relatively recent field in France (EHESS (<http://www.ehess.fr/centres/cena/recherche/axe1.html>), Paris 7), but has seen the publication of two reference works¹⁴ and an ongoing research program on the history of American studies in France and in Europe; one may also mention the history of science and techniques (<http://www.ehess.fr/centres/cena/recherche/axe4.html>), and cultural history, a rapidly expanding, very interdisciplinary field.

- 32 In many other social sciences listed below research on the United States is conducted by competent individuals but rarely by structured groups able to support costly long-term projects. Their contribution is thus yet much below what is demanded by “society” and expected by students.

Sociology

- 33 Sociology is present in many aspects of teaching, but hardly in research, due again to lack of funding. The same goes for ethnology, whose status is practically that of a *terra incognita*, due exception being made for Native Americans (Philippe Jacquin, Marie Roué (CNRS) et Michelle Therrien (linguistics, INALCO), and for Louisiana with Sara Le Menestrel (CENA <http://www.ehess.fr/centres/cena/recherche/axe3.html>). Some dissertations are in progress on such topics as music and religion considered from an anthropological perspective. Religion, a field located at the border of sociology, anthropology and the history of ideas, is represented by a few colleagues working in centers with broader interests (Groupe de sociologie de la religion et de la laïcité at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes <http://gsrl.iresco.fr/>), Centre Interdisciplinaire des Faits Religieux de l'EHESS (<http://www.ehess.fr/centres/ceifr/pages/presentation.html>), Urban studies is a strongly interdisciplinary field, where a few individuals conduct research in close contact with United States researchers (http://www.paris4.sorbonne.fr/fr/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=1389). Such are Sophie Body-Gendrot and others. The same holds true of other sectors.

Economics

- 34 Only one center specifically works on the US, the CERVEPAS (Paris 3 <http://www.univ-paris3.fr/recherche/sites/edea/cervepas/>), with a very broad approach from macro- to micro-economics and political economy. Its particular focus is on the effects and consequences of NAFTA. Many centers in economics departments, however, in think tanks and national institutions, such as INSEE, conduct important research on the United States economy (the CEPREMAP has a strong American program [<http://www.cepremap.ens.fr/~levy/usa.htm>]) but contacts between American studies specialists and economists are still regrettably few and far between.

Political science

- 35 Most of the work is done at Science Po Paris (CERI, Denis Lacorne), Paris 2 (http://www.u-paris2.fr/html/recherche/fiches_individuelles/fiche_ens.php?choix=217) with Jennifer Merchant and Science Po-Lyon (Vincent Michelot). « Current affairs » are but exceptionally represented by political science specialists, often covered by non-academics operating within a few think tanks or parties, or simply being utilized as “experts” by the press.

Law

- 36 American law, often in a comparative perspective, has long been a subject of study (with dissertations on the topic throughout the 20th century). But despite the internationalization of the practice of law, at least in some sectors, little is yet developed. The Centre de droit américain (file:///Paris 2 <http://www.u-paris2.fr/cda/>) is active, and one should mention the work of Professor Gwenaëlle Calves (Université de Cergy-Pontoise).

Media studies

- 37 Outside the cinema (often studied as art form rather than as media), few researchers work in media studies, and they always do so in interdisciplinary structures. The centers are either part of a university (Metz or Institut français de presse (<http://www.u-paris2.fr/ifp/> in Paris 2)) or are public institutions such as INA (<http://www.ina.fr/recherche/index.fr.html>).

Overview

- 38 As suggested in the above inventory, the major difficulty in American studies, except for literature, still lies in insufficient contact between social sciences and area studies. Intra-European and US-Europe exchanges through a learned society such as EAAS therefore appear of paramount importance. There are many reasons for hope. Our doctoral students are better trained through studies abroad programs (in the US and in Europe) and the modularity introduced by the Bologna process. Transdisciplinary research is now blooming, structuring a distinctive (European) voice in American studies which may well appear as decisive for the future.
- 39 The following directions for development would thus appear to be promising:
- 40 -The relationships between literature, philosophy and the history of ideas (often to be understood as cultural history) in the 19th century, Transatlantic exchanges, the representations of minorities, the question of identity.
- 41 -Intermédia (<http://www.univ-paris3.fr/recherche/sites/edeia/intermedia/>), CICADA (Pau),
- 42 -The relationships between the arts (<http://www.univ-paris3.fr/recherche/sites/edeia/vortex/>).
- 43 -The study of images as a practice (technology, technique, usages et uses) and their emergence as a major cultural mode in the United States since the 19th century
- 44 On such possibilities and propositions, further bases for increased European exchanges could surely be found.

NOTES

1. This article draws heavily from the following research papers and reports (in French): - François Weil. « Les études américaines en France : un essai d'analyse ». Bulletin du CENA-EHESS 5 (février 1999) : 95-100. Online at <http://etudes.americaines.free.fr/amstudiesoulouse.html>; - Papers on American studies given at the Toulouse Conference of the AFEA (<http://etudes.americaines.free.fr/amstudiesoulouse.html>); - Jean Kempf, *Rapport sur les études nord-américaines en France*, 2002 (<http://etudes.americaines.free.fr/rapport.pdf>); - Société des anglicistes de l'enseignement supérieur. Serge Ricard. Rapport sur la recherche en civilisation des Etats-Unis (1996-1999), Daniel Royot. Rapport sur la recherche en littérature américaine (1996-1999), Dominique Sipièrè. Rapport sur la recherche en cinéma. (<http://www.univ-pau.fr/saes/pb/rech2001.htm#rapports>); - "Répertoire des thèses soutenues en histoire/civilisation américaine de 1970 à 2005" (<http://www.univ-paris3.fr/recherche/sites/edea/thesesus.doc>), as well as on the ongoing research project and seminar conducted at the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales on the history of American Studies in France (<http://www.ehess.fr/centres/cena/recherche/axe1.html>). I have not systematically attributed information to specific pages. I can only advise readers of French who want to know more to read them.
2. What the French call "scientifique" as opposed to pedagogical.
3. See Weil, 95 ff.
4. For national certification board see : <http://www.univ-pau.fr/saes/pb/cnu97.rtf>. For agrégation see : <http://www.education.gouv.fr/bo/1999/17/perso.htm/>
5. Comparative literature departments exist in France, but they are relatively minor ones in size and importance
6. Conversely, the interest of social scientists for the American field—as well as for many foreign fields—is partly due to a certain lack of proficiency in foreign languages.
7. Obviously, one of the first questions in that respect is the type of link that should be developed with Canadian studies. As, except for a few colleagues who define themselves as both Americanists and Canadianists, the two fields have remained relatively separate so far.
8. This sort of center for advanced study has been gestating since 2002, under various administrative forms and has encountered some opposition on the part of the Americanist community. It is yet to be concretized by buildings, equipment and staff.
9. For a list of University departments and their webs sites see <http://etudes.americaines.free.fr/departements.html>. See also <http://www.univ-pau.fr/saes/pb/equipes/equipes.html>. The names of groups, however, can be misleading or opaque, since they often federate several research themes, as mentioned above.
10. On this matter, cf Dominique Sipièrè's report to SAES (<http://www.univ-pau.fr/saes/pb/rech2001.htm>).
11. In France many of the pioneers in the field of film studies were professors of French literature. They brought to the study of movies the theoretical corpus of structuralist narratology and psychoanalysis already at work in the study of literature.
12. The interest in the study of the cinema is 1) a direct image of the personal culture of the students; 2) an indirect one of the paucity of access to primary resources in other fields and of research funds which make the study of movies one of the few fields, with

literature, where early/junior research can be conducted without leaving one's institution.

13. This last point is a source of many misunderstandings, especially among younger scholars, as many take American movies as a window on American society, a position that has come under considerable criticism in literature.

14. Jean Heffer and François Weil, dir., *Chantiers d'histoire américaine*. Paris : Belin, 1994.
Claude Fohlen, Jean Heffer, François Weil, *Canada et Etats-Unis depuis 1770*. Paris : PUF, Nouvelle Clio, 1997.

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Keywords: Literature, philosophy, film, popular culture, history, sociology, law, economics, media