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Mapping gender. Old images ; new figures

Preface

Elizabeth de Cacqueray and Karen Meschia

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Preface

Elizabeth de Cacqueray and Karen Meschia

Preface

- 1 In 2004-05, the first meeting of the still embryonic gender group within *Cultures Anglo-Saxonnes* (EA 801) took place. It was quickly to expand and was christened, in modest imitation of Mallarmé's *Mardistes*, *Les Jeudis du [genre]*, referring to our bi-monthly Thursday seminars, which, from the start, aimed to involve not only those working habitually within women's or gender studies, but any researchers interested in revisiting their own work from a gender perspective. Ten years, and countless seminars, study days, and conferences later, we have a robust network of occasional or permanent partnerships, several publications to our credit, and a wealth of unforgettable experiences of shared scholarly moments and generous exchanges. All demonstrate the inexhaustible capacity of the transversal, inclusive approach that gender studies offers for finding new ways of looking at familiar objects, generating new problematics and creating encounters. This issue of *Miranda* has been specially designed to mark the 10th anniversary of *Les Jeudis* and happens to coincide with the departure of its original founders, who leave the group in the capable (and numerous) hands of a team of younger colleagues, full of enthusiasm for perpetuating what works well and ideas for renewing and innovating where required, to adapt to new challenges in a fast-changing world. Our thanks go particularly to H Charlery, Emeline Jouve and Cristelle Maury, who were our partners in editing this issue.
- 2 The collection of articles appearing here reflects the group's commitment to cross-disciplinarity and our belief in its heuristic value; the certainty that each of us is enriched and dynamised, in her/his own field of research, by contact with other thematic interests, other methodologies and conceptual tools. The common denominator is the foregrounding of gendered identities and relations in their historical, cultural, social or artistic expression, as articulated around the CAS's collective research topic of the last five years "Circulations", to which *Les Jeudis* appended the question "... du centre la marge ?" This is a particularly stimulating

question in the wake of Judith Butler, queer studies, postmodernity and the consequent undermining of binaries such as ‘man’—‘woman’, and indeed of the very notion of gender as the social construction of a fixed and stable sexual identity. The contributions thus address in different ways old and new definitions of masculinity and femininity, the de/re-centring of gendered norms and hierarchies and the productive potential of marginality. They clearly demonstrate that *Les Jeudis du [genre]* have as much to contribute to the debate as they did ten years ago – may they prosper and thrive!