

Hinsley Hall, Leeds, UK

30 May–1 June 2025

TRANSFORMATION

abstracts & bionotes

WOMEN IN FRENCH UK–IRELAND

WIF 2025 IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:



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SESSION ONE: 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

PANEL 1: TRANSFORMING NARRATIVES OF NON/MOTHERHOOD

Christie Margrave (Cardiff)

Voice Solo Motherhood By Choice in French Life Writing and Fiction: A Transdisciplinary Approach

Studies of motherhood in literature have certainly begun to acknowledge representations of mothers in non-nuclear families. However, despite literary analyses of different single mothers and the stigmatisation they face, there is little-to-no reference to the figure of the Solo Mother By Choice (SMBC). Similarly, whilst telling stories has been understood as imperative to improving health services for many years (Charon, 2006), and whilst France has put out calls to understand better women's lived experiences of healthcare services, voices of many marginalised women are still absent. In recent years, becoming a SMBC is an increasingly popular path to motherhood, and the SMBC has begun to gain the public's attention in France. This is partly due to the rise in SMBC memoirs and increased discussion of SMBC in cultural production, and partly because of recent changes in the law around donor conception and solo motherhood in France (2021). Thus far, however, there is no critical analysis of these motherhood narratives, and the voices of SMBC are still absent from academic discussion on narrative medicine. This paper is part of a project which seeks to rectify this, addressing questions such as: How is such a mother imagined and (self-)defined in contemporary society? What challenges does she face in terms of policy and social discrimination? How are her medical needs and vulnerabilities different from those of couples undergoing fertility treatment and ante/postnatal care. How can healthcare services be improved to ensure that these needs and vulnerabilities are not overlooked? The paper takes a transdisciplinary approach to understanding narratives of donor conception. It applies a dual critical framework of narrative medicine and feminist philosophy as it investigates (and compares) the ways in which lived experiences of solo fertility treatment, pregnancy and motherhood are portrayed in contemporary French life writing and fiction. In so doing, it adds to the growing call for research into the ways in which narrating embodied experience can open out spaces for discussion promoting equality and healing, and widens academic focus on non-normative families and non-normative pregnancies.

Christie Margrave is a Lecturer in French at Cardiff University. Her research focuses on Francophone women's writing and marginalized voices. Currently, she researches narrative reproductive medicine, lived experiences of birthing, and representations of non-normative families in 21st-century women's life-writing. Her past research focuses on 19th-century women's writing, Ecocriticism, and (post)colonial fiction.

Kathryn Bryan (Cambridge)

Emasculated Flesh: The Male Hysteric in Camille Pert's *L'Autel* (1907)

By the turn of the twentieth century, concerns over French population decline raised issues of fertility and reproduction to the level of a national crisis. There were parliamentary debates and commissions tasked with finding the cause of the problem, including the alleged rising numbers of illicit abortions. The debates that played out in French politics were both informed by and reflected in the cultural production of the time, with a spike in literary depictions of abortion between 1885 and 1914, including the first of Émile Zola's unfinished *Quatre Évangiles – Fécondité* (1899). In the thirty or so works from this period, what is striking, but not surprising, is the surfeit of male authorial voices engaging in the discussion, and the dearth of female voices. In her largely forgotten 1907 novel, *L'Autel*, Camille Pert pays tribute to the 'chair sacrifiée' of the women thoughtlessly impregnated by their lovers or husbands and left to the mercy of the surgeon's scalpel. She depicts women's (reproductive) bodies as victims of both. Her powerful text brings out the narratives of these women in their service of her male protagonist: Robert Castély, whose sexual conquests align with his burgeoning career as playwright and rise to fame in the Parisian literati. The text is full of transformations, but rather than focus on the female bodily transformations through pregnancy and abortion, in this paper I will examine how Pert rewrites the nineteenth-century (French) bildungsroman, and her trans-gendered approach to Robert's decline into hysteria.

Kathryn Bryan recently completed her PhD thesis on abortion narratives in five French novels from the Belle Époque at Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge. She has three published articles, the first of which, 'Fantine in the Belle Époque: Representation of the fille-mère in *L'Assiette au Beurre* and Marcelle Tinayre's *La Rebelle*', was awarded the Modern Language Review inaugural article prize at the end of 2023. She is currently working her thesis up into a book manuscript and is taking steps to get a new scholarly edition published of Camille Pert's *L'Autel*, the subject of this paper.

Julie Rodgers (Maynooth)

Transitioning Out of Motherhood: *Love Me Tender* (Constance Debré, 2020)

There is a strong tendency in Motherhood Studies to focus on the transformative experience of matrescence, that is, the transition *into* Motherhood, becoming a mother, being a mother. This paper, however, will examine a reversed form of maternal transformation – the transition *out of* motherhood – through a close examination of the deviant figure of the mother who leaves in *Love Me Tender* by Constance Debré (2020). To attempt to transition out of motherhood, that is, to move beyond the role of ever-present mother in the quest for an alternative, more fulfilling form of selfhood, is viewed with suspicion and condemnation by society. As depicted in *Love me Tender*, there is a clear refusal to accept or even try to understand any form of motherhood that threatens the normative patriarchal institution. In the first instance, this paper will discuss the various ways in which Debré's mother-narrator is ostracised and vilified as a result of her departure from the family home. Through an imposed alienation, as punishment for her decision to leave, she is prevented for being a mother from the outside even though it is clear that her departure is in no way related to any lack of feeling or concern for her son. Secondly, the paper will consider the subversive potential of the mother who leaves as a means of deconstructing the myths that are central to preservation of traditional motherhood and which serve to oppress women, such as maternal love, maternal instinct and maternal devotion. In the final section, the paper will discuss the extent to which the figure of the mother who leaves contains the possibility to transform and expand motherhood beyond the dominant narrative so as to include those who do not adhere to the 'rules' – a form of motherhood that allows for movement, fluctuation, transition and even the possibility of being a mother when absent from the family home through choice.

Julie Rodgers is Associate Professor of French at Maynooth University. Her research focuses primarily on narratives of transgressive motherhood in contemporary French and Francophone women's writing and film, and she has published widely on the subject. Her most recent article (2023) can be found in *Modern Languages Open* and relates to adolescent pregnancy in the film *17 Filles*. Some of the other topics that she has published on include the following: maternal ambivalence; non-motherhood; mother-daughter relations; maternal work; infanticide; maternal bereavement; single motherhood; and pregnancy denial. Dr Rodgers was part of the research team for the EU Horizon 2020 funded project 'MotherNet' (2012–2014).

PANEL 2: CONTEMPORARY TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE C19TH

Sonja Stojanovic (Texas Tech)

Feeling Robotic: Self-Service Checkouts, Affect, and the Transformation of Cashiers

In France, cashier is a gendered profession: currently, around 90% of supermarket cashiers are women. While in the 19th-century, when women started working as cashiers, the profession was viewed as enviable and symbolized a good education, in the contemporary French context being a cashier has come to signify a lack of intellect; many parents thus incentivize their daughters to do their homework: 'si tu ne travailles pas à l'école, tu finiras caissière!' This shift in the perception of cashiers can be partly attributed to technological advancements automating accounting tasks associated with the job. As a more and more stores have begun to replace cashiers with self-service checkouts and till-free shops relying on artificial intelligence have become a controversial talking point, the profession as we know it is changing yet again and allows us to consider the enduring question: will humans be completely replaced by robots? In this paper, turning to former cashier Anna Sam's two autobiographically-inspired texts: *Les Tribulations d'une caissière* (2008) and *Conseils d'amie à la clientèle* (2009), I first show how feeling like a robot has actually always been the

hallmark of the cashier's profession. As Sam has remarked, cashiers are interchangeable, they are seen as a mechanical body at work with *rien dans la tête*. Then, turning to the film *Discount* (2015) (dir. Louis-Julien Petit), in which cashiers at a supermarket about to be replaced by self-service checkout band together to propose an alternative economy based on solidarity and human interaction, I argue that while the push to automation has been seen as progress or as a consequence of unbridled capitalism, the human – as mechanical, robotic as one tries to make it be – remains ever central; incidentally, several stores like Casino in France and Booths in the UK are reversing course and returning to cashiers.

Sonja Stojanovic is Assistant Professor of French at Texas Tech University. She is the author of *Mind the Ghost: Thinking Memory and the Untimely through Contemporary Fiction in French* (Liverpool University Press, 2023) and the co-editor with Siham Bouamer of 'Taking Up Space': *Women at Work in Contemporary France* (University of Wales Press, 2022). Her current book project is entitled: *Cautionary Tale: Gender, Labor, and the Sociocultural Imagination of Cashiers in Modern France*.

Natalie Edwards (Bristol)

Virginie Despentes Transforming 19th Century Realism

Many critics have drawn parallels between Virginie Despentes's *Vernon Subutex* and Balzac's *La Comédie humaine* on account of their panoramic representations of society, their representative characters and their portrayal of the urban life of their times. While these parallels are apt, both on the level of form and content, this paper seeks to move beyond the rapprochement between Balzac and Despentes to offer a rethinking of the trilogy through another nineteenth-century writer: Stendhal. This paper reads the eponymous character of *Vernon Subutex* in terms of Julien Sorel's urban trajectory. It first looks at how Despentes presents a panoply of Parisian society and how the protagonist weaves through it in the hope of rising through the social strata. I then suggest that reading the *Vernon Subutex* trilogy through the lens of Stendhal's realism furthers our understanding of Despentes's unique twenty-first-century realism, and, moreover, that this comparison further questions the connections between the work of Despentes and Balzac. It is my contention that Despentes has developed a particular approach to realism throughout her work, but that it is in *Vernon Subutex* that this innovation comes to the fore. The argument of this paper is twofold. It first offers a re-reading of *Vernon Subutex* by comparing the trajectories of Vernon and Julien. Second, it moves scholarship on Despentes forward by advancing a new approach to her work; by recalling Stendhal's approach to realism and using theories of utopia, it theorises her development of a twenty-first-century utopian urban realism. Overall, it argues that Despentes transforms understandings of realism into a relentlessly contemporary phenomenon, moving beyond the work of writers of *littérature urbaine* and taking full advantage of intermediality to create a paratext aimed at a wide spectrum of readers.

Natalie Edwards is Professor of Literature in French and Head of the School of Modern Languages at the University of Bristol. She specialises in transnational writing, life writing and women's writing. She has published three monographs in these fields, most recently *Multilingual Life Writing by French and Francophone Women: Transnational Lives* (Routledge 2020).

Bohyun Kim (Kyonggi)

Faire exister les protagonistes féminines en plein (x-)morphisme – vers une approche latourienne

Peu de chercheur·euse·s s'intéressent à la réflexion de Bruno Latour sur la littérature, probablement en raison de sa dévalorisation apparente de la langue, souvent considérée par lui comme une voile empêchant l'accès aux êtres. Dès lors, notre communication explore la possibilité d'aborder la littérature à travers l'ontologie de Latour, notamment en focalisant sur le (x)-morphisme qu'il valorise pour analyser les protagonistes dans des œuvres de fiction. Nous montrerons d'abord comment Latour réévalue la relation opposée entre le « fait » et la « fiction », en accordant plutôt un privilège aux « êtres de fiction ». Nous analyserons ensuite la manière dont ces derniers existent, en portant une attention particulière aux protagonistes féminines telles que Thérèse Raquin d'Émile Zola (*Thérèse Raquin*) et Marie-Ève de Henri Lopes (*Sur l'autre rive*). En effet Latour évoque une série de multiples transformations 'morphiques'

que connaît la protagoniste Adie de Richard Powers (*Plowing the Dark*) au moment où les mots d'un poème de Yeats qu'elle récite sont prononcés, coexistant et interagissant avec d'autres entités humaines et non humaines. Nous pensons que cette façon d'écrire et lire les romans fera exister les protagonistes féminines romanesques autrement qu'auparavant.

Bohyun Kim a étudié la littérature française en licence et en master à l'Université de Corée (Séoul). Après un mémoire consacré aux caractéristiques du point de vue dans Nedjma de Kateb Yacine, elle a réalisé une thèse doctorale sous la direction d'Anthony Mangeon à l'Université de Strasbourg, analysant les postures littéraires de Henri Lopes et de Linda Lê. Actuellement Professeure Assistante à l'Université Kyonggi (Suwon, Corée du Sud), elle poursuit ses recherches et son enseignement sur la littérature francophone et les perspectives critiques postcoloniales.

PANEL 3: TRANSFORMING FILM: FROM EARLY FEMINIST FILM TO #METOO

Coraline Roffo (Sassari)

Rediscovering Transformation: The Feminist Reappraisal of Early Female Filmmakers

In the annals of cinema history, certain names have long been relegated to the periphery, overshadowed by their male counterparts. Among these is Alice Guy, a trailblazer in silent cinema whose innovative work was once dismissed or forgotten. This paper investigates the transformative impact of feminist rediscovery on early female filmmakers, with a special focus on Guy, whose pioneering contributions are now being reevaluated through contemporary feminist lenses. The theme of transformation is central to understanding this reappraisal. Feminist scholars and activists from the 1970s, and those continuing today, have initiated a profound shift in how we perceive the contributions of early women in film. Their work reveals not only the historical oversight of these filmmakers but also how their rediscovery challenges prevailing narratives about gender and creativity. This exploration goes beyond mere historical correction; it confronts the very frameworks through which we understand artistic achievement and gendered innovation. By reevaluating early female filmmakers, we are not simply revisiting their past contributions but actively transforming our present understanding of cinematic history and gender dynamics. This process of reappraisal exposes the ideological barriers that once obscured these pioneering women and highlights how feminist scholarship continues to reshape the cultural and historical landscape of early cinema. Through this lens, the paper will examine the dual process of rediscovery and transformation, exploring how feminist critique has redefined the significance of early female filmmakers and what this means for ongoing discussions about representation and equality in the arts. This provocative reexamination challenges us to reconsider the narratives of the past and their implications for our understanding of creativity and gender today.

Coraline Roffo is currently a Research Fellow at the University of Sassari, working on the PRIN 2022 project "WOW – Women Writing around the Camera". This project focuses on mapping the autobiographical texts of Italian actresses. She previously completed her PhD in Film and Media Studies at the University of Florence, in *cotutelle* with Sorbonne Nouvelle University. Her thesis explored the French filmography of Alice Guy. In 2020, she was awarded the Fotogramma Award for the best master's thesis in cinema in Italy. Her PhD thesis was also awarded the distinction "eccellente cum laude," the highest academic honour in Italy.

Diana Holmes (Leeds)

Jacqueline Audry: transforming gender/transforming genre

Jacqueline Audry has been largely absent from histories and studies of French cinema since her sixteen films – most of them popular and commercially successful – appeared between 1946 and 1969. Part of the reason for this is her contemporaneity with the hugely influential New Wave, the pioneers of which dismissed her as part of the 'Tradition of Quality' they professed to despise. But Audry was much more interesting than the male directors and critics of the New Wave saw. A feminist who struggled initially to make a career in a heavily male-dominated industry, she adapted novels by Colette to the screen (*Gigi* [1949], *Minne* [1950], *Mitsou* [1956]), made one of the first openly lesbian love stories

(*Olivia* [1950]), and remained popular with the female cinema-going public with films that conformed to the conventions of mainstream entertainment whilst taking on controversial questions of gender and sexuality (not least *Le Secret du Chevalier d'Éon* [1959], based on a famous historical case of sex transitioning). In this paper I will focus on just three of her costume dramas that relate to the conference theme of transformation through their re-shaping of a predominantly conservative film genre into an unostentatiously contestatory form of cinema, and their engagement with gender identities on the cusp of radical *remise en question* by second wave feminism.

Diana Holmes is Emerita Professor of French at the University of Leeds, and a founder-member of the UK-Ireland feminist network Women in French. She has published widely on French women's writing from the late nineteenth century to the present, ranging across the hierarchy of culture from 'high' to 'low' brow, with a particular interest in what women choose to read. Her first book was on Colette, on whom she continues to publish, and her latest monograph, *Middlebrow Matters: Women's Reading and the Literary Canon in France since the Belle Époque* (Liverpool University Press, 2018), won the American MLA Scaglione Prize for French and Francophone Studies, 2019. Her co-edited book *Making Waves: French Feminisms and their Legacies 1975-2015* (with Margaret Atack, Alison Fell, Imogen Long) was based on the WIF UK-Ireland conference of 2015 and appeared in 2020. From 2021 to 2025 she has been president and vice-president of the Society for French Studies. She also works on film and co-founded the Manchester University Press series French Film Directors. Currently she is working on the director Jacqueline Audry (1908-1977) who in the course of a stellar and diverse career adapted three Colette novels for the screen.

Kate Ince (Birmingham)

Transforming abuses of power in the French film industry

#MeToo's campaign about sexual violence against women has pervaded French cinematic and media culture since Adèle Haenel, Céline Sciamma and Aïssa Maïga walked out of the Nuit des Césars in February 2020 to protest the award of Best Director/Meilleure Réalisation to convicted paedophile Roman Polanski. Complaint about abuses of power by male 'stars' (directors and actors) was already a live issue beforehand, as Haenel had in November 2019 accused director Christophe Ruggia of sexually harassing her over a three-year period in the 2000s after casting her in *Les Diables* (2002) when she was 13. Haenel, who now declares she has given up film acting for theatre, remained a focal point of #MeToo in France until acceptance by the 2024 Cannes film festival of older actress Judith Godrèche's short film *Moi aussi/Me Too*. Godrèche had been in a relationship with director Benoit Jacquot in the 1980s and in February 2024 filed police complaints about sexual assaults by both Jacquot and director Jacques Doillon, over 35 years after the events took place: Jacquot was formally charged with the rape of two actresses other than Godrèche on 3 July 2024. Debate has simmered in France about exactly what offences Ruggia, Jacquot, Doillon, and Gérard Dépardieu are guilty of: Jacquot and Dépardieu have been charged with rape, and sexual harassment and sexual assault have also been alleged. What is in no doubt is that these men have abused the power they enjoyed as leading lights of the French film industry. In 2024, however, Godrèche's and Isild Le Besco's public accusations of Jacquot have been seen as a turning point in the #MeToo movement: this paper will ask whether France is now at a 'Weinstein moment' in which its film industry's celebrated directors and actors will finally be convicted for their historic sexual violence against (younger) women.

Kate Ince is Professor of French and Visual Studies at the University of Birmingham, and a specialist in French and Francophone film and the visual arts. She has published widely on women's cinema and on the importance to feminist film theory of moving beyond psychoanalytic feminism (in *The Body and the Screen* (2017)). Most recently she has co-edited the essay collection *Serge Daney and Queer Cinephilia* with Marc Siegel and Pierre Eugène, and her essay on the psychology and phenomenology of play in Céline Sciamma's *Petite maman* appears in Kelli Fuery's edited book *Film Phenomenologies: Temporality, Embodiment, Transformation* (2024).

SESSION TWO: 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

PANEL 1: TRANSFORMING NARRATIVES OF AGEING

Felicity Moffat (KCL)

Menopausal Transformations: Embodying the Change in Contemporary French Fiction

In her memoir *Flash Count Diary* (2019), Darcey Steinke compares her experience of the menopause to the transformations seen in the Incredible Hulk, the Marvel Comics character who transforms into a green-skinned alter ego with limitless physical strength whenever he becomes emotionally stressed, leading to angry, destructive rampages. Steinke's comparison conveys how her uncontrollable hot flushes build on existing frustrations about her menopausal body to transform her into what she perceives as her own enraged alter ego. Steinke's work forms part of an expanding corpus of texts in the global north about menopause, reflecting a growing interest in the subject. France, like the US and the UK, seems to be going through a menopausal 'moment', with the success of non-fictional texts such as Cecile Charlap's *La Fabrique de la ménopause* (2019) and Miriam Stein's *Bouffées de chaleur* (2023, trans. Jenny Busseck) demonstrating a readership keen to understand what menopause involves and how to navigate it. French fiction is following the trend as contemporary women authors seem increasingly willing to address menopause in their writing. This paper explores what two twenty-first century French novels tell us about the transformational impact of menopause on their characters. Although perhaps not as dramatic as the Incredible Hulk, the midlife protagonists in Michèle Sarde's *Constance et la cinquantaine* (2003) and Camille Froidevaux-Metterie's *Pleine et douce* (2023) communicate how menopausal hormonal changes impact their bodies and their sense of self. Yet the somatic is intertwined with the sociocultural, complicating the characters' responses to menopause and our reading of them. These texts nevertheless demonstrate an evolution in the portrayal of menopause in the twenty years between their publication. Indeed, I argue that *Pleine et douce* indicates a post-menopausal futurity which has the capacity to be transformational in its contribution to a broader progressive discourse on women's ageing.

Felicity Moffat is a third year PhD candidate at King's College London where she is supervised by Professor Siobhán McIlvanney and Dr Ros Murray. Funded by the London Arts and Humanities Partnership, her research explores twenty-first century representations of midlife women in French language fiction and is cross-disciplinary in approach, fitting within French and francophone studies, women's studies, cultural studies of age, and cognitive studies. Felicity holds a master's degree in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation and is a qualified lawyer.

E. Nicole Meyer (Augusta)Fractured Desire in Colette's *La Naissance du jour*

This presentation examines a complex web of substitution and occlusion (for instance of her own daughter) in Colette's autofiction that is an ode to creativity and to friendship redefined. The fissures in and of her text open a new reading of Colette's insertion of two fictive characters triangulated in desire and frustration with the narrated Colette. Textual interruptions such as inserted epistles and breaks in the text reveal Colette's need to assert her desirability and to restore control over those who rule her and her life story. This presentation will explore Colette's narrative control of aging body, familial relations as well as the lovers who enter her life. Exploring the relationship between writing and rewriting the past in works such as *La Naissance du jour*, as well as *L'Étoile vespérale* and *Sido* permits us to question the fractures, temporal and formal ruptures, breaks and bridges between and within her writing. These reveal the many transformations of her life writing. *Le Pur et l'impur* is yet another work that confounds generic definitions, as it is, in Jacques Dupont words 'inclassable, mi-réflexif, mi-autographique'. Colette's life writing raises questions about the boundaries between autobiography, memoir, fiction and autofiction (see Suleiman, Bernstein, Quindlen). Through these blurred boundaries and narrative gaps, Colette creates a new understanding of identity and transforms how we understand life writing.

E. Nicole Meyer (Ph.D. University of Pennsylvania) is Professor of French and Women's and Gender Studies at Augusta University (Augusta, GA), Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes académiques and past Vice President of Women in French. She publishes on a wide array of topics from French and Francophone women's autobiography to Flaubert, French for Specific Purposes, Service-Learning, contemporary French cinema and nineteenth-, twentieth- and twenty-first-century French and Francophone literature. She is co-editor of *Rethinking the French Classroom: New Approaches to Teaching Contemporary French and Francophone Women*, (Routledge, 2019) and of *Teaching Diversity and Inclusion: Examples from a French-Speaking Classroom* (Routledge, 2022). Her co-edited special double issue 'Saving English, World Languages and the Humanities: What and Who Should be Included in the Conversation?', *South Atlantic Review*, appears in June 2025. Her current book project is *Fractured Families in Contemporary French and Francophone Women's Autobiographies*.

PANEL 2: TRANSFORMING POSTCOLONIAL ECOLOGIES

ASMCF SPONSORED PANEL

Sadie Berry-Firth (NYU)

Transoceanic Connections: Being Undone and Remade Through Colonial Toxicity

The contemporary moment of global ecological crisis, from rising sea levels to unpredictable weather patterns, calls for a more urgent attunement to the rapid transformations undergone by our environment. Scholars such as Kathryn Yusoff, Christina Sharpe, and Malcolm Ferdinand attest to the ways in which these transformations are intertwined with the afterlives of slavery and colonisation. But what about ecological transformations that are so incremental and gradual that they go unnoticed? How can one attempt to discursively and materially make visible a process of transformation – or what Rob Nixon defines as 'slow violence' (2013) – that is 'too geographically remote, too vast or too minute in scale or played out across a timespan that exceeds the instance of observation'? This paper proposes to explore colonial toxicity, the shipping of toxic waste to the Global South and island nations, as an example of slow violence, and material proof of the ongoing-ness of colonial legacies. The visually imperceptible forces contaminating human bodies – ionising radiation emitted from nuclear testing sites and organochlorines causing cancer formation – reproduce a colonial devaluation of subaltern life, evoking what Sharpe describes as 'the pervasive climate of antiblackness [...] in which the push is always to black death' (2016). Bringing together Polynesian writer, Titaua Peu's novel, *Mutismes* (2003) with the performance *Tropique de Képone* by Marlène Mytil and Myriam Soulages, this paper asks how these artists transform their forced intimacy with toxicity into something other than a violation. Reading these texts through black feminist practices (Saidiya Hartman, Astridia Neimanis, Vanessa Agard-Jones), how might these transformations provide the framework for the remaking of selves and new modes of relationality in the face of extinction? And how might these disparate geographical and cultural contexts allow transoceanic connections to arise, creating unexpected networks between different post-colonial experiences?

Sadie Berry-Firth is currently a PhD candidate in French and French Studies at New York University. Sadie graduated with a BA in Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics (French and Spanish) from the University of Cambridge in 2024. Her research interests include: im/material manifestations of coloniality in human and nonhuman bodies and in our landscapes; postcolonial and decolonial studies; Anthropocene studies; intersectional feminisms; and twentieth and twenty-first century world literature in French.

Alison Clare (Independent)

Remediating the Abject: Haitian Earthquake Novels and the Transformation of Violence

In September 2024, US vice presidential nominee JD Vance posted on X that Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio had stolen and eaten pet cats and dogs. This claim was repeated by Donald Trump during the presidential debate. The claim – categorically proven false – gained enough traction that schools and cultural festivals in Springfield were closed due to bomb threats. This is one cultural moment in a long history of Haiti being associated with brutality, violence, and

non-normative, unacceptably un-Western behaviours. My research asks how we can square this with the representations of Haiti produced by Haitians themselves, when so often violence and Black abjection are represented in visceral detail. This paper explores the ethics and effects of representing violence and abjection, specifically in narratives exploring the 2010 earthquake and its consequences. Interrogating whether to represent violence and abjection is always to repeat it, and especially how this resonates in the current political climate, I aim to explore how authors such as Kettly Mars and Myriam Chancy can transform the dehumanising dominant narratives about Haiti into novels with rich and nuanced subjects. This also involves an examination of the researcher's role and positionality in choosing which texts and stories to study, and how to read them. Is there transformative work available in my practice and privilege as a researcher? Am I forwarding a view of Haiti that is better, richer than what Haitian activists refer to as 'that phrase': the poorest country in the Western hemisphere?

Alison Clare (she/her) is a hairdresser who completed her Masters of Research in French Studies at the University of Liverpool in December 2022, with a dissertation entitled 'Female Perpetrators in 21st-Century Haitian Literature: Gender, Atrocity, and Representation'. She hopes to continue her studies on Haitian literature at the PhD level.

Sophie Feng (Toronto)

Indigenous Wonderworks as Form and Transformation: Reading Marie-André Gill and Natasha Kanapé Fontaine's speculative short fiction

This paper proposes to study two speculative short stories by Indigenous Québécois authors Marie-André Gill and Natasha Kanapé Fontaine, both featured in the speculative anthology *Wapke* (meaning 'Tomorrow' in Innu-Aimun) edited by Innu writer Michel Jean, the first anthology of its kind. Crossing lands, time periods and temporalities, the short stories in the *Wapke* ought to be read as 'Indigenous wonderworks', defined by Daniel Heath Justice as a concept that 'gestures [...] to other ways of being in the world', underscoring the potential of the form as a feminist and decolonial praxis. Gill's 'Dix jours sur écorce de bouleau' features a fictional diary written by an unnamed boy in a post-apocalyptic world, problematizing the disintegration of speech and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge while renewing a relationship with the other-than-human world. In 'Katanabe Ishkueu', set in a near future threatened by climate change and dependent on artificial intelligence, a reorganized world in which Indigenous languages are believed to have completely disappeared, Kanapé Fontaine represents two women's struggles with retaining remnants of Innu-Aimun, leading to their rediscovery of traditional Indigenous stories. Both short stories offer alternative visions of the future and enact epistemological pivots from the extractive politics of settler-colonialism, laying bare the production of political and environmental violence that operate alongside heteropatriarchy, targeting Indigenous language, women, and land. The objective of my study is two-fold: to analyze how these stories redress the settler-colonial imaginary by positioning women as the key figures of the survival of Indigenous language and cultures, and discern the formal strategies both authors deploy within the speculative mode in order to build a feminist and decolonial world through the transformative potential of language. I will rely on transnational Indigenous and feminist conceptualizations of speculative fiction (Grace Dillon, Elaine Showalter) to read Gill and Kanapé Fontaine's literary world-making projects.

Sophie Feng is a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto's Centre for Comparative Literature, where she is completion a dissertation on the diasporic and Indigenous representations of trauma and vulnerability in Anglophone and Francophone women's literatures.

PANEL 3: TRANSFORMING TRANSLATION & TRANSLINGUALISM

Christopher Hogarth (Bristol)

Francophone Feminine Translingualism: A Transformative Proposition?

Though the loudest voices propagating African language writing in literature have traditionally belonged to men, the role of women in the continent's Francophone literary tradition has been developing over the last few decades. Yet it would seem that, at two key periods in the history of the literature of this West African nation, men have discovered their desire to abandon the French language as a vehicle for expression at the same time women have found theirs. If Ousmane Sembene and Cheikh Aliou Ndao militated for Wolof-language literature (as well as cinema and theatre) in the late 1970s as a means for extending the voice of protests beyond the elite, and Boubacar Boris Diop and Felwine Sarr advocate avenues for publishing in local languages rather than French in the last decade, this has come just as female writers such as Mariama Bâ and more recently Fatou Diome penned French-language works on the conditions of women that gained them worldwide recognition. One might therefore presume that French is the lingua franca for African feminism; a means of helping propagate messages on women's plight to extended audiences. However, it is noteworthy that among the founders of *Jimsaan*, Senegal's most active African-language publishing house, is a female writer (Nafissatou Dia Diouf), that a female writer worked as a grassroots activist to transform the language/messages of Senegalese literature and that Diome deliberately incorporates African languages into even her most France-based texts in an effort to familiarise readers with African languages. Moreover, Senegalese female writers such as Aminata Sow Fall have long included references to local languages throughout their works, perhaps more than have their male counterparts. This paper examines translingual African language writing as a transformative process and considers the role of women therein.

Christopher Hogarth has been Lecturer of French at the University of Bristol since 2022, before which he spent 23 years undertaking academic work and study in the USA and Australia. He has published especially on works that intersect France, Senegal and Italy, including his 2022 monograph *Afropean Female Selves: Migration and Language in the Life Writing of Fatou Diome and Igiaba Scego*. He has also edited several books and journal issues (ten to date) and has been working on French-Australian life writing over the past few years, which has resulted in several articles and an expected 2025 book (co-written with Natalie Edwards) with Bloomsbury Press entitled *French-Australian Life Writing since the Nineteenth Century*.

Alice Duhan (Stockholm University)

Transforming the Text through Translingual Creativity. Translation and Transmisis in the Works of Nancy Huston

The unique collection of drafts and papers donated by bilingual author and self-translator Nancy Huston to the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) provides fascinating insight into how the passage between languages shapes and transforms the translingual text through various stages of its genesis. Whereas the field of translingual studies has most often examined works by multilingual authors as products (i.e. the published text or book), genetic criticism focuses instead on literary texts or (self-)translations as process (i.e. the creative writing process in its multiple steps – from initial plans, through drafts and annotations, to negotiations with editors, and, finally, the published text). In this paper, I intend to demonstrate how analysis on these two levels may prove complementary. The concrete translational processes underpinning the genesis of the translingual text feed into and transform the fictional universe, and 'transmisis' (Beebe 2012), the fictional representation of translation, becomes part and parcel of mimesis. Huston's parallel self-translated novels *Danse noire* (2013) and *Black Dance* (2014) present a particularly interesting case study due to the fact they both display very different degrees of textual multilingualism and dissimilar 'transmisis' strategies in their published versions. Retracing the transformations of the text as it progresses towards these dual published versions can thus not only prompt us to delve into the theoretical conundrums surrounding the ontological status of the 'bilingual work' as explored by Fitch in his seminal study *Beckett and Babel* (1988), but also to consider more recent approaches to self-translation as bi-discursivity oriented towards different cultural spaces (Hokenson & Munson 2007). Ultimately, although the novel thematically and formally clearly seeks to reinvent itself beyond national and monolingual models of literary belonging, the muted multilingualism of *Black Dance* may illustrate how the orientation of the self-translated text towards a space of reception also acts to transform translingual poetics.

Alice Duhan is a postdoctoral research fellow in French and Comparative Literature at Stockholm University, Sweden. Her research interests include literary multilingualism, self-translation, world literature theory and contemporary French and francophone fiction. She is the author of a doctoral dissertation on translingual poetics in the contemporary French novel, which she is currently rewriting as a book. She is co-editor of the recent volume *Literature and the Work of Universality* (De Gruyter 2024), as well as of a forthcoming anthology on translingual writing in French by Swedish women authors.

Kathy Fan (Oxford)

What stands behind *Le Livre de jade*: a fractured source space and the 'yuefu' tradition

Judith Gautier's *Le Livre de jade*, originally published in 1867, is recognized as the first literary translation of Classical Chinese poetry into any Western language. Most recently, studies of *Livre* have moved past concepts of translation as source-to-text equivalence to celebrate the instances where Gautier deviates from the Chinese texts, for their formal and aesthetic contributions to modern French poetry. In other words, there is a growing acceptance of plural possibilities in the target space represented by *Livre*. However, the assumption that each Classical Chinese source poem of *Livre* is a single, stable, textual object remains unchallenged. My paper proposes that given the nineteenth-century French literary context, *Livre* should be studied as a translation that draws from non-textual, multimodal sources as much as it does from textual ones. Moreover, for a subset of poems in *Livre*, the textual sources themselves should not be regarded as stable originals, but instead as iterations of themes that have been reinvented throughout several centuries of the Classical Chinese 'yuefu' tradition. In fracturing the identity of the source, my work aligns with Karen Emmerich's argument against the source of translation as a stable ideal, on top of which I layer Emily Apter's methodology of evaluating a work of translation whose source text may be unstable with 'performative value' rather than 'truth value.' Additionally, I borrow inspiration from, and extend, existing metaphors for translation multiples. Using recent ideas from the field of translation studies to shed new light onto Gautier's collection, this work views *Livre* in a broader continuum of world literature than previous studies have been able to.

Zi Ying Fan ("Kathy") is a graduate student at the University of Oxford, where she is pursuing a Masters in comparative literature and critical translation. Her interest areas are 19th century French literature, Classical Chinese literature, Chinese/French/English translation, and digital humanities. Prior to academia, she worked as a software engineer at Google, in the Tokyo and Seattle offices. She received her Bachelor's from Princeton University, where she graduated *magna cum laude* in computer science and earned a certificate in French language and culture. She also holds a graduate certificate in artificial intelligence from Stanford University.

SESSION ONE: 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM

PANEL 1: TRANSFORMATIVE /TRANSFORMING ABORTION

Panel Description

'Ce sont quelques histoires d'interruption. [...] Une interruption aussi je l'espère [...] du silence, de la honte et de la colère' (Vizzavona 2021: 10). To interrupt, to stop or prevent continuation, to suspend, implies a temporary state of arrest, to be picked up from the same point. How do we go beyond interruption, a state of suspension, towards eruption, total transformation? This panel seeks to interrogate the transformation and/or transformative potential of abortion representation(s) in contemporary France across visual and textual media, considering abortion as a corporeally, biologically, affectively, literary, and/or visually transformative experience. It also questions the wider, material implications of such a transformation for reproductive health and rights in the francophone world (Daniel, 2021).

Ally Pugh (Oxford)

Abortion, Affect, and Place in Line Papin's *Une vie possible* (2022)

In this paper, I will present part of my current research project on representations of abortion in contemporary French literature and film. This project examines how abortion is put into and regulated through narrative in France in the twenty-first century, asking whose abortion stories get told and what remains unsayable. In 2024, France became the first country to constitutionalise the right to abortion; my project analyses the relationship between reproductive rights and French national identity, interrogating the position of abortion in the French Republican postcolonial imaginary. In this paper, I focus on Line Papin's *Une vie possible* (2022), an autofictional narrative that details two *interruptions de grossesse*. The first is involuntary due to medical complications and is a source of great pain to the narrator; the second is voluntary, an abortion, sought in the context of a failing marriage. In this text, Papin expresses taboo affects, exploring ambiguity, contradiction, and 'ugly feelings' (Ngai 2005) around pregnancy, motherhood, and abortion. In addition, place plays an important role in *Une vie possible*: as it begins, the narrator and her husband decide to leave their Paris apartment and stay in Normandy for the duration of the Covid-19 lockdown. The narrator also makes repeated reference to Vietnam – where Papin was born to a Vietnamese mother and French father – and a chapter is devoted to a southern Vietnamese village in which a Catholic couple run a 'cimetière pour embryons' (p. 180). Papin's text is informed by her experiences of mobility, privilege, and difference, and her representation of abortion takes shape 'between [postcolonial] metropole and [post]colony' (Cooper and Stoler 1997). In *Une vie possible*, then, Papin presents transformations at the level of body, affect, and identity. In this paper, I ask how her work upholds, opens up, or transforms common understandings of abortion.

Alexandra Pugh is Hamilton Junior Research Fellow in French at The Queen's College, Oxford, where she is carrying out a project on representations of abortion in French literature and film since 2000. Between 2020-23, she completed an AHRC-funded PhD at King's College London. With a focus on the contemporary French writer and filmmaker Virginie Despentes, her thesis examined the relationship between feminist and queer, and politics and art, in the twenty-first century. She has an MSt in Women's Studies and a BA in History and French from the University of Oxford.

Tamzin Elliot (Independent)

Transformative Timescapes of Abortion in Sandra Vizzavona and Pauline Harmange

Using the examples of Interruption. *L'avortement par celles qui l'ont vécu* (Vizzavona, 2021) and *Avortée. Une histoire intime de l'IVG* (Harmange, 2022), in this paper I propose to examine the ways in which contemporary French abortion narratives recognise abortion as a transformative act of care through the creation of new timescapes. To begin, I seek to theorise the existence of an 'abortion time' of the progressive present tense which interrupts and transforms the cyclicity of Julia Kristeva's 'women's time' (1981). In place of this cyclicity, we find ourselves in a situated presentness

denoted by a slippage between the narrative and enunciative self, reminiscent of Annie Ernaux's *L'événement* (2000) (Robson, 2024). In occupying a self and time of ambiguity, I argue that Harmange and Vizzavona upend the concept of a quintessentially futural pregnant time as theorised by Browne (2022a; 2023), interrupting fetocentric paradigms and allowing for the emergence of 'feminist accounts of abortion [which] also claim pregnancy as a lived present rather than the pre-emptive "past" of a future "mother-and-child"' (Browne 2022b: n.p.). Furthermore, I suggest that 'abortion time' can be conceived as a plane of time in which multiple aborting selves occupy the here and now; by superposing their lived experiences onto each other, the autobiographical *je* becomes *nous*. The connection between these multiple aborting selves is therefore based on a shared situatedness and presentness, which transcends bodily and temporal boundaries. Abortion time thus becomes a question of waiting with others in the time of care, rather than for others, of distending futurity and caring in the present (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Baraitser and Brook 2021). I conclude by illustrating that the inherent caring with-ness of abortion time allows us to recognise abortion as a collective, interruptive and transformative act of care.

Tamzin Elliott has an MA by Research in French Studies from Durham University, where she completed a thesis on affectively and emotionally complex representations of abortion in French autobiographical narratives of the *extrême contemporain*. She holds an MA (Hons) degree in French from the University of Edinburgh, where she wrote her dissertation on abortion in autobiography by Annie Ernaux and Pauline Harmange. Her work is due to be published in forthcoming issues of the journals *Life Writing* and *French Studies Bulletin*. Outside her research, Tamzin is a helpline volunteer with the Abortion Support Network.

Catriona Macleod (University of London, Paris)

Transforming Understandings of Abortion through Feminist Graphic Activism

This paper examines the proliferation of *bande dessinée* narratives concerning abortion from 2010 to the present day and considers what the study of this corpus reveals about public understandings of IVG in France and the ways in which *bande dessinée* graphic activism endeavours to challenge these understandings. It begins with an overview of abortion-focused *bande dessinée* narratives published over the last fourteen years, noting the shift in these works from historical fictions scripted in the third person and which often highlight the dangers for women of clandestine abortions in pre-Veil-Law France to more personal, first person narratives which present in visual detail the workings of the IVG process in France today. It then goes on to contrast one example from each end of the time period, *Des Salopes et des anges* (2011) by Florence Cestac and Tonino Benacquista and *Cher Bloplop: Lettre à mon embryon* (2022) by Léa Castor, examining how the visual and narrative strategies employed in these narratives underline and confront differing discourses surrounding abortion. *Des Salopes et des anges* uses its 1970s setting and a series of visual and stylistic juxtapositions to encapsulate the prevalent view that abortion is an issue of women's rights that pivots solely on its legality, while Castor mixes classic *bande dessinée* pages with elements of the literary epistolary tradition in a modern-day setting to highlight issues and inequalities of abortion access in France today despite its long-standing legality. This comparative analysis underlines the way in which *bande dessinée* narratives of abortion have transformed in recent years and concludes by considering the visual and textual means by which contemporary creators of feminist graphic activism are seeking to transform public understandings of abortion from a question of women's rights to one of women's experience.

Catriona Macleod is Senior Lecturer in French Studies at the University of London Institute in Paris. Her research interests concern representations of women in *bandes dessinées* and narratives of trauma and migration in visual forms. She is the author of *Invisible Presence: The Representation of Women in French-Language Comics* (Intellect, 2021) and has published in journals such as *L'Esprit Créateur*, *Contemporary French Civilisation* and *European Comic Art*. Her current research project focuses on contemporary female artists' use of the *bande dessinée* as a form of political and social activism aiming to break entrenched female bodily "taboos".

PANEL 2: EXILES & ADVENTURERS: TRANSFORMATIONAL WOMEN

Annalisa Nicholson (KCL)

A Salon-in-Exile: Translation and Transformation in the Seventeenth Century

The concept of the French salon has often been imbued with a quintessential 'Frenchness'. Although women-led circles existed across early modern Europe, 'no other country ever produced a tradition of such gatherings', as Joan DeJean has noted. But what happened when salon-goers were banished from France and exported the salon to a new national audience? How did visitors of different creeds and nationalities share this new space in a period marked by religious and political conflict? In other words, what happened when the salon model itself went into exile? This paper introduces the Mazarin salon, a community established in London in 1676 by two French exiles, Hortense Mancini and Charles de Saint-Évremond. Bringing together European exiles with the Restoration elite, the salon carved out a space for mixed-gender intellectual exchange and quickly became the most influential Francophone community in late seventeenth-century England. Its activities ranged from conversation and gaming to literary criticism and amateur operatic performance, which helped to bond habitués hailing from different national and religious backgrounds. Through these sociable encounters, the salon served as a hub of support for the exiles, refugees, and minorities that came to its meetings. By presenting the salon's membership and some of its output, the paper will reflect on the translation of the salon model from France to England – and the cosmopolitan facet that the salon acquired during this relocation.

Annalisa Nicholson is British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at King's College London. Her first book, *A Salon-in-Exile: Hortense Mancini and the French Diaspora in Restoration London*, is forthcoming with Bloomsbury History. She has published on neo-epicureanism, on early modern women's satire, and on queer resonances in seventeenth-century writing. She is now beginning a new project on Huguenot women's writings.

Melek Chekili (USC)

Listening to Taos Amrouche's transforming voice: singing as a realization of androgyny in contexts of exile and migration

Taos Amrouche was born in Tunisia in 1913 to a family of Algerian Kabyle Catholic converts who had to escape Algeria because of religious persecution. She grows up in Tunisia and ends up settling down in France for the rest of her life. Through an exploration of Taos Amrouche's interpretations of the songs her mother Fadhma Aït Mansour-Amrouche used to sing while in Tunisia, and an analysis of her own conceptualization of voice in her novel/diary *L'Amant Imaginaire*, I will show how in a context of exile and migration, Taos' listening and subsequent voicing of her mother's songs, not only enabled her to make space for the love for her mother and by extension, for the Kabyle people, but her material singing voice has also been an avenue for her to honor her body and desires and achieve sexual intimacy as a woman, separate from the weights of tradition and community, but also from the shackles of the colonizer – represented by both her French husband and French lover. Through the figure of the androgyne, Taos has carved a way to imagine herself being self-reliant and self-sufficient. This androgyny was not only conceptualized through her writing, but also and especially through a forever elusive and transforming singing voice effortlessly alternating between head and chest voice, and uniting the different vocal styles that characterize her hybridity as she puts it, namely the Cante Jondo, the Gregorian Chant, Kabyle traditional music and Tarab.

Melek Chekili is a sixth year Ph.D. Candidate in Comparative Studies in Literature and Culture (specialized in French and Francophone literature and culture) at the University of Southern California. She holds a master in legal and financial translation and a certificate in literary translation. Her dissertation analyzes Maghrebian women's voices, namely singing, in contexts of political, cultural and sexual resistance, and she posits that resistance can be a diagnosis of the power of voicing.

Gabrielle Parker (Middlesex)

From Montmartre to the China Seas via San Francisco: Fanny Loviot's Amazing Adventures

Fanny Loviot set sail from Le Havre on 30th May 1852 for San Francisco on the aptly named L'Indépendance and returned to Paris via Marseilles on 30th December 1854. She had had an eventful time, from the initial epic journey to her travels in California and life in San Francisco at the time of the Gold Rush, to her being taken hostage by Chinese pirates on her way to Batavia (Jakarta), having decided to explore further. The story of her adventures, *Les pirates chinois, ma captivité dans les mers de la Chine*, which she published on her return, was immediately serialised and translated in several languages; in English as *A Lady's Captivity Among Chinese Pirates* (1858), by Amelia Ann Blanford Edwards, novelist, journalist, Egyptologist and grande voyageuse. She had left a lingère, possibly not entirely voluntarily, and returned famous and celebrated as the hero of her own adventures. Beyond the account of French emigration to California, and of the marauding pirates holding sway in the China seas, the interest of her tale lies in Loviot's perception of the Others encountered, and in her own transformation. Her tale is a self-(re)construction: from linen maid to businesswoman, from outcast to fêted author, and more importantly, from being othered to reclaiming her agency. This paper will examine how Loviot's defiance of the conventions of her time remains a live issue.

Gabrielle Parker's research interrogates the notion of littérature francophone; Asian Francophonie(s); contemporary writers. Publications include 'From "Écrivains coloniaux" to Écrivains de "langue française": Strata of Un/acknowledged Memories' in *France's Colonial Legacies: Memory, Identity and Narrative*, Fiona Barclay ed. (University of Wales Press, 2013); a critical study of Leila Slimani's first novel: "'Madame Bovary X!', or "on a le droit de vouloir être un objet"', *L'Esprit Créateur*, Issue: Sexual/Textual Boundaries: Recent Women's Writing in French 59:3 (2019). Latest: "Transcultural Memories and Transmission: The Case of Ying Chen's *La Lenteur des montagnes*", New to Modern Languages Open: 'Convergences Franco-Chinoises: La Valeur de la Créativité Transculturelle', Rosalind Silvester, ed., 2024. Forthcoming: *Étonnante voyageuse. L'aventure singulière de Fanny Loviot en Chine* (PURH).

PANEL 3: TRANSFORMING NARRATIVES OF GIRL/SELFHOOD

Michèle Schaal (Iowa State)

Transformation as Liberation(?): Virginie Despentes's *Les Jolies choses*

In Virginie Despentes's fourth novel *Les Jolies choses* (1998), protagonist Pauline decides to take on her twin sister Claudine's identity when the latter unexpectedly dies by suicide. However, Pauline's imposture is not as easy an endeavor as initially anticipated. Despentes has her protagonist needing to learn and perform Claudine's sexualized hyperfemininity, a gender-based identity (and sibling) Pauline has had nothing but scorn for. Pauline's transformation in *Les Jolies choses* participates in Despentes's feminist authorial politics seeking to expose gender-based identity as a social construct and (mandatory) performance of paradoxical heteropatriarchal standards. This presentation will examine the aftermath of Pauline's transformation, once she has blended her former self with her sister's. Such a hybrid state has first triggered an epiphany as to how heteropatriarchy has shaped the twins' identities and lived experiences, fostering their dualistic antagonism and rivalry. As Nicole Fayard notes, Pauline's partial transformation into her sister liberates her, literally and allegorically, from the dichotomic Madonna/Whore framework she was trapped in (114–15). While I agree with Fayard, my presentation will also demonstrate how Pauline's new hybrid self mirrors contentious third-wave feminist identity politics, namely parodic performances of conventional femininity blended with displays of anger and verbal or physical violence. While undeniably a path to self-empowerment and liberation, it leaves one question unanswered: does such an individualistic mixture truly challenge and set one free from heteropatriarchy?

Michèle A. Schaal is Professor of French and Women's and Gender Studies at Iowa State University. She specializes in the work of Virginie Despentes, Wendy Delorme, and Claire Legendre, as well as contemporary French feminisms. Dr Schaal is the author of *Une Troisième vague féministe et littéraire* (Brill, 2017) and the co-editor of three journal special issues, including the 2018 *Rocky Mountain Review* dedicated to Despentes. Dr Schaal is currently working on a two-volume monograph on Despentes.

Adrienne Angelo (Auburn)

Transforming Identity: Queer Awakening and Selfhood in Nina Bouraoui's *Tous les hommes désirent naturellement savoir*

Nina Bouraoui's *Tous les hommes désirent naturellement savoir* (2018) presents an autofictional exploration of self-transformation through the lenses of sexuality, memory, and cultural displacement. In this text, Bouraoui chronicles a journey of sexual and cultural awakening as her first-person narrator navigates the liminal spaces between her dual Algerian-French heritage and her emerging queer identity. This text is a meditation on becoming and serves as a testament to the transformative power of writing as a mode of self-exploration and redefinition. By moving between fragmented memories and reflections, Bouraoui blurs the lines between the past and present, self and other, to underscore the continuous, transformative process of identity formation, where identity is not a fixed state but a fluid, evolving process shaped by desire, trauma, and the interplay of social and cultural forces. As the narrator describes the transformative journey of desire as both identity and combat, the text likens sexual awakening and identity formation through the lens of queer desire, as she navigates the tension between her Algerian-French heritage and her emergent same-sex desire. Set against the backdrop of 1980s Paris and the narrator's memories of her childhood in Algeria, this text maps transformation(s), oscillating between cultural exile and self-discovery. The text revisits the narrator's nights in Parisian lesbian clubs as a battleground for her identity, where desire becomes an instrument of both submission and resistance. Her search for love and belonging is marked by violence, shame, and rejection, which Bouraoui links to the trauma of her Algerian upbringing. The narrator's struggle with her sexual identity mirrors her feelings of displacement, as she feels foreign both in her homeland and within her own desires. This presentation explores the ways in which Bouraoui's narrative reflects transformation on multiple levels: the self, through the narrator's explorations with and acceptance of her queer identity; and culturally, through the intersection of the author's own Franco-Algerian heritage. By linking queer theory to transnational identity, this presentation will demonstrate how *Tous les hommes désirent naturellement savoir* enacts the transformative power of desire as both a source of personal struggle and liberation and challenges fixed notions of gender, identity, and belonging.

Adrienne Angelo is professor of French at Auburn University and vice president of Women in French (US). Her research interests focus on contemporary Francophone women's writing and span the fields of life writing, memory and trauma, the ethics of care, and migration and diaspora studies. She has published on the writers Nina Bouraoui, Catherine Breillat, Nathalie Gassel, Camille Laurens, and Marie Nimier, among others. Her work has appeared in *Australian Journal of French Studies*, *French Cultural Studies*, *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, *Irish Journal of French Studies*, *Studies in Twentieth and Twenty-first Century Literatures*, and *Women in French Studies*.

SESSION TWO: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

PANEL 1: TRANSFORMING EDITING & READING PRAXES

Daria Chernysheva (Open)

The Textual Transformations of Cécile Sauvage: a case for the intersection of translation and editing practice

Cécile Sauvage was an early twentieth century French writer (1883–1927) who composed poetry on the subjects of introspection, pregnancy, maternity, sex and death. Although there is plenty of transformation to be read within Sauvage's work – chiefly concerning the physically transformative effects of pregnancy and erotic love – this paper considers the transformational effects of translating Sauvage's poetry into English. It takes a macro approach to translation by looking at the translated output on the level of the poetry collection, which I have myself produced and put together. In this paper, differences between source and target texts are analysed not with respect to vocabulary, poetic form, or meter, but with respect to the order of the translated poems and with an eye to what is omitted and what is included. Here translation intersects with editing practice: editorial scholarship supplies the question of what it means to establish a text, while contemporary theories of translation challenge the existence of originals entirely, and raise the possibility of thinking about editing practice as governed by creativity, preference, and taste. In light of these considerations, this paper offers observations on how the image of Sauvage is transformed, for the English reader, through such translation-cum-editing practice. Moreover, it situates the new anglophone poetry collection within a narrative about how Sauvage has been consistently transformed through editing practice since her lifetime, at first presented as a demure wife and mother and later as a sexually liberated poet, thus making the case for translators and editors as image makers with significant power to manipulate the perception of an author.

Daria Chernysheva is a Lecturer in French and Translation at the Open University. She completed her PhD in Translation Studies at UCL, where she studied on the Creative Critical Writing Programme. She is a practicing translator whose most recent translation, the novel *Fowl Eulogies*, was shortlisted for the PEN Translation Award.

Sandra Daroczi (Bath)

Monique Wittig's Katabatic Transformations: from Manuscript to Galley to Published Text

One of the most recent republications of Monique Wittig's (1935–2003) work is the 2024 edition of her last novel *Virgile, non* (Across the Acheron). Originally published in 1985 with *Les Éditions de Minuit*, it was republished in 2024 as part of their Poche « Double » collection. The lengthy and gruelling katabasis undertaken by Wittig the narrator in *Virgile, non* can be readily compared to the writing, publication, and reception history of the same novel. This paper will focus on the former, using unique materials from the Monique Wittig Papers collection housed at the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University. Having access to two galley versions of the text and four different manuscripts, the paper will trace the transformation of the novel to the version we know today, focusing specifically on additions and deletions. For example, from both galley versions two entire chapters are completely crossed out: *Prison* and *Poème à la mariée pour le jour où elle est flambée*. The former depicts a prison reminiscent of concentration camps, *expositions universelles*, battery farms, and a Panopticon for genetic experimentation (all in approx. 3 pages!). The latter illustrates an immolation scene, reminiscent of the burning of witches, only that this time the 'witch' is a newlywed woman. The paper will offer a complete analysis of these two chapters, linking them to *Virgile, non*, but also to Wittig's short stories, many of them being 'des textes parasites qui "tombent" tout entiers du corps principal sur lequel ils s'étaient greffés' (Paris-la-politique et autres histoires. 1999, P.O.L, 4e de couverture). This writerly transformation of both the main text and its parasites will have significant effects on readerly reception, effects which will be discussed in the paper.

Sandra Daroczi is a Lecturer in French Studies at the University of Bath, having carried out her doctoral research at the University of Exeter with a project analysing the reception of fictional works by contemporary French women writers. She guest coedited a special issue of *L'Esprit créateur* (2018) and has an article on depictions of food in Marie Darrieussecq's work in a special issue of the *Journal of Romance Studies* (2020). She has also contributed to edited collections, with chapters on Darrieussecq, Julia Kristeva, and the MLF. Her most recent article analyses the way contemporary French women writers write about the lives of women artists of the 19th and 20th centuries. She is currently working on a monograph examining the reading dialogues put forward by Monique Wittig's fiction.

Katerína Segešová (Sorbonne & Masaryk)

The Transformation of Resonance in the Works of Marie Noël: Between Poetry, Prose, and Intimate Notes.

Dans ma communication, je propose d'explorer comment les messages de Marie Noël, grande poétesse et écrivaine française, se transforment selon les genres littéraires qu'elle utilise. Son œuvre riche et variée s'étend de la poésie à la prose, en passant par ses célèbres *Notes intimes* (1959). Chaque forme littéraire semble apporter une nuance distincte à son expression, révélant la complexité de son rapport à la foi, à la souffrance et à la quête de sens. Dans ses recueils poétiques, tels que *Les Chansons et les Heures* (1922) et *Les Chants de la Merci* (1930), Noël adopte une tonalité à la fois musicale et spirituelle, où la nature et la foi chrétienne sont omniprésentes. Ses poèmes reflètent une quête mystique, parfois sombre, où la louange divine se mêle à des interrogations existentielles profondes. Les métaphores naturelles, les chants et les saisons rythment son langage poétique et expriment son lien avec la création divine. Ses *Notes intimes*, rédigées pendant des périodes de crises personnelles, sont d'un autre ton. Ici, Noël nous dévoile ses luttes intérieures, ses doutes face à Dieu et sa douleur spirituelle. Ces écrits, à la fois introspectifs et contemplatifs, révèlent un autre aspect de la transformation : celle de l'âme en quête de réconciliation avec la foi. Le texte *L'enfer des trois jours* en est un exemple marquant, où Noël décrit un moment de désespoir spirituel intense. Enfin, sa prose, bien que moins connue, offre une approche plus narrative de son cheminement spirituel. Noël y explore des thèmes de souffrance, de doute, mais aussi d'amour et d'espérance, souvent en lien avec son expérience personnelle de la foi et de la solitude. Cette communication se concentrera sur les processus de transformation dans ces trois formes littéraires et sur la manière dont Noël adapte son message selon le genre, offrant ainsi une richesse de perspectives sur sa quête spirituelle et littéraire.

Katerína Segešová a obtenu un master en Littérature générale et comparée à la Sorbonne Nouvelle, et depuis 2021, elle poursuit des études doctorales à la Faculté des Lettres de Sorbonne Université à Paris et à l'Université Masaryk à Brno, ses études étant liées par la cotutelle. Elle adopte une approche comparative pour sa thèse : *L'importance de la nature chez Bohuslav Reynek, Jakub Deml, Francis Jammes et Marie Noël*. En plus de ses études doctorales, elle a enseigné pendant deux ans à la Sorbonne Université, dans le département des Études centre-européennes, en tant que lectrice de langue et littérature tchèque. Actuellement, elle enseigne la langue et la littérature à l'École tchèque sans frontières de Paris et au Centre tchèque de Paris.

PANEL 2: TRANSFORMING MYTHS & MONSTROSITY

Ciara Gorman (UCD)

Old Stories, New Chapters: Transforming Myth and Archetype in Alice Diop's *Saint Omer*

This paper explores the transformation of myths about female-perpetrated crime and its explanation in the courtroom in Alice Diop's 2022 film *Saint-Omer*. Diop's film is closely based on the case of Fabienne Kabou, who left her infant child to drown on a beach in Normandy in 2013. However, rather than fictionalising Kabou's story as a tragic thriller or investigative drama, Diop foregrounds the legal and narrative reconstructions of the crime as it is played out in the courtroom, dramatising what we might describe as 'the trial Medea never had'. This is a significant extension and transformation of the classical myth of Medea – the addition of a new chapter to an old story, which informs (for better and for worse) the representation of infanticidal women in fact and fiction. This paper will examine the consequences and meanings of this choice in several parts. First, it will examine how Diop transforms the courtroom from a forum for truth and reassurance into a space of uncertainty and ambiguity, and the effect this has on our ability to easily judge (and therefore contain) the infanticidal protagonist in the dock. I will then consider the unsettling effect this has on the Medean archetype against which infanticidal women are measured, and the way Diop's film pushes us into new considerations of the all-important why behind the fictionalised crime of Fabienne Kabou – ones rooted in compassion, humanity and understanding, rather than judgement, hatred and stigma. This paper will conclude with an evaluation of why this repurposing and rewriting of the Medean myth is so vital in contemporary cultural production about infanticidal women, highlighting both the need to continually reassess cultural myths and the kaleidoscopic feminist possibilities that flow from such transformations.

Ciara Gorman is Teaching Fellow in French at UCD. She received her PhD from Queen's University Belfast. Her research interests include contemporary French crime fiction, female criminality on page and screen, and the polar féministe. She is the Web & Media Officer for Women in French UK-Ireland and the PGR/ECR Officer for the International Crime Fiction Association.

Maggie Allison (Bradford)

From bête Noire to Postergirl: Transforming Marine Le Pen

There are contradictions contained in that which we (think) we see; the punctum of the moment versus the trajectory of time, the continuation of experience versus the inner (impermeable?) core of identity, the flow of life set against the perpetual. In other words, the transformation of elements in our life experience, perception of events and of others. As regards the world of politics we are more likely to be spectators than activists, yet carried along by the flow of events and personalities, drawn into the trajectories of key players, their personal convictions, the evolution of their priorities and, inevitably for their career ambitions; the transformation of the politician's persona is crucial in order to keep pace with the evolving world and be 'in tune', 'on message'. Such is the case of Marine Le Pen, whose trajectory from awkward daughter of a bombastic, aggressive, notorious father, Jean Marie Le Pen, to a credible potential candidate for the French Presidency has, indeed, been one of twists of parcours and changes of persona to fit the changing zeitgeist in the French population. Following, wriggling, conniving, changing tack in accordance with the shifting ground of the French mood, while at the same time being focussed on HER goal and rightwing aims, projecting anti-semitism with a cheerful smile. From 'daddy's girl' to protective patronne of Bardella and credible challenge of Macron. Trajectory, transformation, evolution, transcendence? Slips, slitherings, duplicity, ubiquity? – her 'canny' approach to life, politics and the world has enabled her to wriggle her way into a position of power/influence, circumventing, repositioning according to the zeitgeist. This paper will follow the trajectory of MLP and the reshaping, not to say lissage, of her image in accordance with changing times and messages as she vies for the 'top job', 'massaged', and reshaped/positioned as of the results of the 2024 législatives, to become credibly présidentiable following the currently besieged French President, Emmanuel Macron. A professional, potentially life-changing, 'remake' for both Marine Le Pen and the French nation.

Maggie Allison is a Senior Research Fellow in Modern French Studies at the University of Bradford. Her research focuses on gender, representation and media (both audiovisual and print) and women's role in French public life with emphasis on women in French politics and the causes they have championed. Her current research charts French women's fluctuating absence/presence in the French political arena, including the failed presidential attempts of Ségolène Royal and Marine Le Pen and the demise of women 2022 presidential candidates (notably Valérie Pécresse), contrasting with the appointment of Élisabeth Borne as French Première Ministre. Among her coedited volumes are several resulting from Women in French conferences. She is a founding member of Women in French UK.

Emma Flynn (Glasgow)

Vile bodies: Gendering body horror in *Titane* (2021, dir. Julia Ducournau) and *The Substance* (2024, dir. Coralie Fargeat)

The films of Julia Ducournau and Coralie Fargeat have been described as body horror, feminine and feminist to varying degrees. Both directors are French and have directed two features, although Fargeat's second film is completely in English and set in the US. This paper takes as its subjects Ducournau and Fargeat's most recent releases: *Titane* (2021) and *The Substance* (2024). In *Titane*, Alexia (Agathe Roussel) begins the film as a mechanophiliac dancer and ends it presenting as a teenage boy, pregnant with a human/car hybrid. In *The Substance*, Elisabeth Sparkle (Demi Moore) searches for ageless beauty as she 'ages' out of Hollywood; the 'substance' allows her to partially replace herself with a younger model, Sue (Margaret Qualley). The influence of David Cronenberg is palpable in both films: body-freakiness, modification, and subject/object encounters abound. As Cronenberg's oeuvre 'highlights how the body is subjected to – and vulnerable to – various external factors (McCann 2013: 31), so too does the horror of *Titane* and *The Substance* underscore what is at stake in corporeal transformation – especially along gendered lines. *Titane* is concerned with the transformation of the body along multiple axes: through pregnancy, through aging, and through gender transition.

Often, these transformations involve agonising mutilations. Punctures, ingestions, and wounds characterise the gendered transformations within *The Substance*, which explores cosmetic surgery, (in)visibility, and spectacle. This paper argues that, in both, transformation allows for both the concealment and exposure of the self. Body horror often engages contemporary anxieties about our physical and political selves. This paper will argue that, in both films, pain becomes metaphorically coupled with gendered anxiety and, crucially, the performance of gender. However, I will argue that the experience of pain is not necessarily constraining in both. In *Titane*, modification-through-violence may offer liberatory potentials; in *The Substance*, freedom is offered through the painfully grotesque.

Emma Flynn teaches Media, Culture and Society at the University of Glasgow. Her research explores gender, violence and representation in French and English literature, film, and media/s. She is particularly interested in the intercultural and intermedial components of the #MeToo moment. Her PhD was entitled 'Complexity, Complicity and Consent: Sexual violence in contemporary English and French literature and film'. She is a Women in French UK & Ireland committee member.

SESSION THREE: 4:30 AM – 6:00 PM

PANEL 1: TRANSFORMING (GENDERED) ECOLOGIES

Dominique Carlini-Versini (Durham)

'On avait envie de les toucher, d'être touchée par ce feuillage doux et velu et si vert': écriture transformante de la forêt chez Marie Darrieussecq

La crise climatique que nous traversons place la forêt au cœur d'un émoi collectif et nous intime de repenser notre rapport à celle-ci, qu'elle se trouve en Amazonie ou ailleurs. Dans ces moments où il est facile de perdre espoir, se tourner vers des pratiques littéraires qui nous engagent à transformer notre rapport au végétal nous paraît d'une importance primordiale. Cette communication vise à analyser l'évolution de la représentation de la forêt dans quatre récits de Marie Darrieussecq, *Truismes* (1996), *Claire dans la forêt* (2004), *Il faut beaucoup aimer les hommes* (2014) et *Notre vie dans les forêts* (2017). Une certaine attention critique a été portée à l'imaginaire écologique de l'autrice (Posthumus 2017, 2020), et notamment à la place qu'occupent les animaux dans son œuvre (Kemp, Trout 2020). Toutefois, si le rôle primordial de la forêt dans l'œuvre de Darrieussecq a souvent été observé, un vaste champ d'étude sur le sujet reste à défricher. Cette communication se propose de contribuer à pallier cette lacune et d'envisager les différentes formes que prend la forêt dans ces quatre récits, qui se fait tour à tour espace de résistance non-normatif, refuge, écosystème menacé et peut-être même personnage à part entière. Ce cadre renvoie aussi à l'idée d'une transformation psychologique et physique chez les personnages féminins dans les récits, qui traversent des expériences de dissolution de soi, de régression ou de fusion avec le milieu "naturel". La forêt devient alors un lieu où les frontières entre l'humain, l'animal et le végétal se brouillent. À l'aune des préoccupations écologiques contemporaines et des découvertes scientifiques qui ont réévalué l'intelligence végétale ces dernières décennies (Bourlet 2019), l'autrice propose d'ouvrir notre imagination collective des forêts. Nous nous pencherons particulièrement sur la mise en mots des arbres dans les textes. Nous observerons qu'un travail sur le style permet de suggérer un contact nouveau à la forêt, et à l'arbre, qui se fait plus incarné. Ainsi, à travers une étude des stratégies stylistiques mises en place (synesthésie, onomatopées, gros plan ...), nous tracerons les lignes d'une esthétique haptique et végétale chez l'autrice, qui cherche à toucher la forêt et à être touché.e par elle.

Dominique Carlini Versini est Maîtresse de Conférences au département de français de l'Université de Durham et elle se spécialise dans l'étude d'œuvres d'autrices et de réalisatrices françaises à la période contemporaine. Sa première monographie *Figures de l'excès chez Marie Darrieussecq, Virginie Despentes et Marina de Van : Ecrire et filmer le corps-frontière* vient à été publiée chez Brill en 2023, dans la collection « Faux Titre ». Ses travaux sont parus dans des revues telles que *Women in French Studies*, *Dalhousie French Studies*, *L'Esprit Créateur*, *Revue critique de fixxion française contemporaine*, *French Studies* et *Nottingham French Studies*. Elle dirige en ce moment deux numéros spéciaux sur les récits et représentations de l'avortement pour *Modern and Contemporary France* et *L'Esprit Créateur* (en collaboration avec Caroline Verdier).

Michèle Bacholle (Eastern Connecticut State University)

Adaptation, Transformation, Transubstantiation: Genre and Gender Bending with and after Annie Ernaux

Since her 1974 novel *Les Armoires vides* up to her latest publication *Le Jeune homme* (2023), Ernaux has built her œuvre on her own life experiences, i.e., her 'transfugivité', her violent semi-defloration (rape), her abortion, love affairs, and cancer. Simultaneously with writing her life, Ernaux 'wrote life' ('écrire la vie'), her work being transpersonal in nature. This presentation will start by stating this primary transformation – from life experience to text – before examining two lines along which Ernaux's texts have been transformed. We will first look at transformation-as-adaptation. *Passion simple* and *L'Événement* were transformed-adapted into films and *L'Événement* into a painting – their easy access will allow us to identify 'points of tension' between the original and the adaptation. French and international stage adaptations of *L'Événement*, *Les Années*, *Passion simple*, and *Regarde les lumières mon amour*, as well as *Passion simple*'s acro-choreographic adaptation (by L'Éolienne, 2013) will also be addressed here. We will see that these adaptations, no matter how much transformation the original has sustained, remain gender-abiding, i.e., the

protagonist remains a ciswoman. By contrast, realms of possibilities are opened with transformation-as-transubstantiation. Writers such as Édouard Louis, Didier Éribon but also Anthony Passeron, Joseph Ponthus, and Neige Sinno, have 'received' the body of Ernaux, which has infused their own creations – also based on personal life experiences – as it has inspired director Régis Sauder (*J'ai aimé vivre là*, 2020 – with texts by Ernaux on Cergy), photographer Nadège Fagoo (*L'Autre fille*, 2023), photographer-curator Lou Stoppard ('Exteriors', Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, 2024), and visual artist Marie Paccou (*Les Années* as a flip-book). Unlike transformation-as-adaptation, transformation-as-transubstantiation – which will lead me to reevaluate my 2011 statements on Ernaux's 'glorious body' – has already proven itself more genre and gender-bending.

Michèle Bacholle is a Professor in French Studies at Eastern Connecticut State University (USA). Her research primarily focuses on contemporary women writers, most notably Annie Ernaux (*Annie Ernaux de la perte au corps glorieux*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011, besides a book chapter and more than 30 articles) and Linda Lê (*Linda Lê, l'écriture du manque*, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006). She is currently working on a book, *Portraits of Rebellious French Women in Contemporary Life Writing* (under contract with Bloomsbury), with the chapter on slut-shaming solely devoted to Ernaux (*Mémoire de fille*) and other chapters (on female ageing, desire, and sexual attractiveness) featuring other Ernalian texts.

Velia Ferracini (Friborg)

Les Printemps Sauvages de Douna Loup: transformer le monde et la langue en repensant les rapports au vivant et leur inscription dans le texte

Dans *Les Printemps Sauvages*, édité chez Zoé en 2021, l'autrice franco-suisse Douna Loup propose une double réflexion sur la transformation, en abordant cette thématique par le biais du fond et de la forme. Dans ce roman, la narratrice part, en compagnie de sa mère, sur les traces de son frère disparu. Durant ce voyage, elle fait la découverte de son corps, qui se transforme peu à peu, mais également d'une nouvelle manière de vivre, en harmonie avec la nature. Ainsi, le personnage propose un renouvellement sociétal axé sur une réappropriation du lien au vivant. La transformation est donc un enjeu fondamental du roman, mais celle-ci se perçoit également dans la langue que Douna Loup renouvelle : en effet, la narratrice tombe amoureuse de Barnabé, humain-e à l'identité de genre fluide, qui mène également sa vision du monde à grandir et à la découverte de sa sexualité. Dans sa construction formelle, l'autrice propose une transformation de la langue, recréée dans une oscillation entre les pronoms « il » et « elle ». Malgré la rigidité du français, Douna Loup parvient donc à une balance nouvelle, symbolique de l'identité non binaire du personnage. Ainsi, la transformation est aussi bien un enjeu sémantique que stylistique et il me semble que c'est précisément dans l'union de ces deux dimensions que se joue la révolution du texte. L'autrice, par cette double transformation, veut bousculer le monde, dépasser les formes, les recréer, tant bien littérairement que sociétalement. Cette œuvre fait partie de la littérature suisse ultracontemporaine qui, souvent délaissée des études littéraires, mérite à mon sens d'être analysée, pour la dimension novatrice qu'elle propose. Travailler sur la littérature, c'est également questionner le monde actuel, qui est en permanente mutation, et c'est précisément ce que propose Douna Loup et, il me semble, représente l'ambition de votre colloque.

Velia Ferracini réalise actuellement une thèse à l'Université de Fribourg auprès de Thomas Hunkeler, en cotutelle avec Tania Collani de l'Université de Haute-Alsace. Travaillant sur la Collection ch, une institution soutenant annuellement la traduction d'ouvrages d'auteurices suisses dans les langues nationales, cette thèse vise à saisir la nouvelle image de la littérature suisse que la collection cherche à établir, en intégrant la diversité culturelle du pays et sa situation plurilingue. Velia Ferracini gère aussi le Choix Goncourt de la Suisse pour son université, le blog littéraire « L'Année du Livre Suisse », ainsi que le podcast « En voix croisées » coproduit avec Thomas Hunkeler et Alma Decaix-Massiani.

PANEL 2: TRANSFORMING / TRANSFORMATIVE ARTISTIC ENCOUNTERS

Marie-Claire Barnet (Durham)

Transferts et Death Wishes : de la transmission et autres transactions artistiques et légales de Sophie Calle (2024)

Et si l'on faisait confiance au pouvoir créatif et réactif de l'art pour changer tout (pour paraphraser Breton), renverser tradition, topographie et généalogie pour aller de l'avant ? Sophie Calle semble (s/nous) assurer un avenir posthume, dûment préparé avec un autre 'souci' moins egocentrique qu'égalitariste, pour redéconstruire et réanimer les objets apparemment statiques ou les concepts obsolètes d'héritages et de noms (propres). Pour qui, pourquoi déballer encore sa vie en/au public, ou encore, où précisément, sous la houlette de quel pouvoir, ses interventions ponctuelles et rituelles sont-elles orchestrées ? Mon étude soulignera le pouvoir transformatif des œuvres de Sophie Calle, et l'ambition transhistorique, forme et force transnationales de leur renouvellement dans le cadre de deux rétrospectives clefs de 2024 : Paris, musée Picasso, *À toi de faire ma mignonne* ; Arles, Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie, *Finir en beauté*. *Overshare* annonce aussi la première rétrospective nord-américaine, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2024-2025 : est-ce un reproche ou une invitation à d'autres transactions artistiques entre créatrice et public interactif ? Si l'œuvre de l'artiste s'inscrit dans le partage exhibitionniste, développant une performance de longue haleine, c'est son attention soutenue à la mort qui mérite une reconsideration pour l'envergure foncièrement féministe, alternative et transformative en profondeur des institutions et de l'histoire de l'art. L'ancienne fugueuse s'attaque de plein pied dans les institutions aux codes et cadrages, et dans la foulée, aux questions épineuses et insistantes de visibilité et légitimité (genres, auteur.e, art). Figure quasi institutionnalisée par maints critiques et sa sélection aux expositions d'envergure internationale (Pavillon français, *Biennale de Venise*, 2007), sa signature est sans doute reconnue pour des projets en série, restant ironiquement incernables et imprévisibles. Œuvres notoirement atypiques et multi médiatiques, en digne héritière (non avouée) du 'hasard objectif' surréaliste. Ses jeux d'ombres malicieuses ou mortifères ont résolument pris un autre ton ludique et un tournant législatif, des plus sérieux, quand Calle remet en scène ses propres collections dans deux hauts lieux artistiques symboliques – en pleine prise de conscience de la crise du COVID, ou des destructions accélérées par les humeurs climatiques. L'urgence semble resonner dans la transmission d'autres Histoires transnationales et les enjeux de reconfigurer l'auteur.e dans sa fluidité postmoderne. Dans toute la visée collective de sa vision intimiste, revoyons la teneur et l'ampleur des révisions incessantes de Calle. Eclaterait l'envie irrésistible, non de simplement défier la mort/disparition, mais de convoquer les formes et le formalisme des collections, et autres formatages des 'histoires' consacrées, provoquant des questions identitaires, éthiques, esthétiques et législatives salutaires. Et si l'on voulait manipuler et transformer ses dits (douteux) souvenirs intimes, en une venue à la reconnaissance d'un archivage autre possible ? Remettre en jeux les concepts de (senti)mental et matériel renouvelée un échange et changement des questions transhistoriques et pluridisciplinaires de transferts de pouvoir chez Calle. Son œuvre en oscillation se réinscrirait ainsi globalement et fermement au féminin et au pluriel, entre vœux et planification de permanence et recadrage de *memento mori*. Tout un opus en cours, ou (au) final, patiemment patiné et dégradé, modulé par l'âge, devenant transformateur et open-ended, s'il est consciemment et politiquement rouvert à plus de compassion et collaboration.

Marie-Claire Barnet est Associate Professor à Durham University. Elle a un champ d'étude pluridisciplinaire et éclectique, avec un fort penchant féministe, sûrement un effet de son PhD de UC Davis consacré au surréalisme au féminin, et aux études de poésie avec Sandra Gilbert. Elle a notamment travaillé sur Lacan (Sybille), Duras, Sarraute, Ndiaye, Nothomb, Cixous, ou encore Louise Bourgeois, Agnès Varda, et n'a cessé de visiter avec obsession tout ce que peut exposer Annette Messager. Elle a dirigé des numéros spéciaux d'*Esprit créateur* consacrés à Women's Spaces (visual arts & littérature, avec Shirley Jordan) et à Marie Darrieussecq, ainsi qu'un volume mettant l'accent sur l'œuvre pluridisciplinaire d'Agnès Varda. Elle prépare des articles sur la marche et l'engagement, et une révision du cinéma 'vardien' indépendant. Son livre sur Derrida, arts et archives, revient en esquisse à finir, après avoir fait un long détour par les installations d'art des autrices, et la photographie (Diane Arbus, *subject to change* and publication). Elle préfère encore la poésie à la philosophie, et achève un autre ouvrage alternatif.

Alice Blackhurst (Edinburgh)

'The ça is her Achilles Heel': Louise Bourgeois reads Marguerite Duras

Louise Bourgeois and Marguerite Duras were born only four years apart (1911 and 1914) and became pioneering figures in the French twentieth and twenty-first century cultural imaginaries. Both women investigated, via multiple artistic media, closely overlapping themes such as desire, memory, affect and self-testimony and revolutionised their respective forms and the period's generic codes. Comparatively little work has been produced on the intersection of their lives and work, yet several materials available to consult within Bourgeois's archives, held at the Easton Foundation in Manhattan, New York City, attest to Bourgeois's keen, simultaneously rivalrous and deferential interest in Duras's oeuvre, which, in her diaries, loose papers and personal collection of the latter's publications, she both praised and fiercely criticised. Significantly understudied tributes in the form of two separate sculpture and drawing installations Bourgeois devoted to Duras's work in 1995 are of particular interest – 'Dessins pour Duras' and 'Hommage à Duras,' exhibited in Paris (Musée du Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier) and Berlin (Galerie Karsten Greve) respectively – which interpreted Duras's works in a different register and combined abstract and allusive shapes with Bourgeois's signature stark textual insertions. If other scholars and practitioners (Marie-Laure Bernadec, Moyra Davey) have seen the bond between Duras and Bourgeois as determined largely by psychoanalytic concepts of presence-absence and obsessiveness with the lost object, this paper argues that the more outwards-facing medium of the visual arts exhibition can trace intermedial and transnational crosspollinations between both artists' works and stake a mutual interest in the rich, at times ambivalent relationship between the word and image, to enable new, transformative interpretations of both artists' works.

Alice Blackhurst is the author of *Luxury, Sensation and the Moving Image*, in 2023 short-listed for the R. Gapper Book Prize, and the forthcoming *The Lover Reread* (Columbia University Press). She is currently a Teaching Fellow in French at the University of Edinburgh.

Maureen Ramsden (Hull)

The Transformations of Gender in Relation to Proust's *La Recherche*, between Life and Art, and the Respective Male and Female Roles in the Novel.

Although Proust disagreed with the critic Sainte-Beuve that a reader needs to know the biography of a writer to understand his works, such a study can be illuminating. In terms of volumes of the novel, *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, *Le Côté de Guermantes*, *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, *La Prisonnière* and *La Fugitive*, especially, deal with men and women's roles in society and sexual relationships. The gender of the narrator in the novel is not clear at the beginning. However, given the name of the author and the later two references to 'Marcel,' it is usually assumed to be masculine, though not necessarily the author of the book. However, the women with whom the narrative falls in love, Gilberte and especially Albertine, are often seen by critics to be transformations of the men Proust, the homosexual, fell in love, in his life, with his chauffeur and secretary, Alfred Agostinelli. The hero of the novel admires the beauty of these women as 'works of art'. Albertine, however, masters the life in the salons. In addition, the elusive Albertine, possessed and desired as a mistress by the hero, may admire women more than the hero, who wants a patriarchal relationship. Who is more powerful here, as Albertine remains an 'être de fuite' and does finally elude her captor? In so doing she releases him as a potential artist and has provided material for his novel. On another level, the aristocratic hostesses, of the 'Belle Époque', whom the young Proust admires, in life, from afar and later, through friends, gains entry to their salons, can be seen to have their models in Proust's work. For example, Elisabeth Comtesse Greffulhe. She engaged in 'le shopping poétique' and declared 'I believe there is no ecstasy in the world that can compare to the ecstasy of a woman who feels she is the object of every gaze, and draws nourishment and joy from the crowd.' The arrival of Mme Swann in the park, who is also the subject of every gaze can, be seen as a parallel of the three women in Proust's life, who are largely transposed in the novel and subsumed into the character of the Duchesse de Guermantes. The hero romanticises the duchess because of her aristocratic lineage, even though she is not a beauty. However, in the novel, the hero is seeking both social advancement, and also, less obviously, experiences to be translated into art, whereas the society women of this era often sought nothing more than to have a successful salon and to be the object of adoration. What of feminism?

Maureen Ramsden, following a BA Joint Honours from London, obtained an MA (First Class) at British Columbia, Vancouver. With a scholarship, she did her PhD at Harvard, in French. She was a lecturer at St Andrews and King's College, London, before taking a .5 lecturer post at Hull, after a sudden bereavement. As Modern Languages at Hull closed down, she plans to get a short-term post, teaching language and the C19th and C20th novel, while completing her research for the next REF. This includes her third monograph, with Legenda, on the internal structure of Proust's *La Recherche*, based on fragments and repetition, in the tradition of the oral storytellers. An example would be the motif of the kaleidoscope, which shows repetition and the fragmented text. Her articles will include 'Disputed Authorship in Proust's 2 Novels', a paper given at Warwick in 2022, 'How Proust shows the reader the way to negotiate his novel' and 'Why Languages are perceived as difficult and what can be done about it?'

SESSION ONE: 9:00 PM – 10:30 PM

PANEL 1: VIOLENTLY EVER AFTER: GENDER AND METAMORPHOSES IN FAIRY TALES

Panel Description

Le procès des viols de Mazan montre combien la culture du viol imprègne nos sociétés et relance les débats sur le consentement. Habités de figures masculines animales et dangereuses, de princesses inconscientes, de violences conjugales ou d'incestes, les contes constituent des objets de culture populaire privilégiés pour penser les violences sexistes et sexuelles. Dans le prolongement des questionnements féministes contemporains, ce panel explore comment les dénonciations des abus transforment l'imaginaire collectif des contes. La métamorphose, en tant que motif littéraire et démarche artistique, guidera notre analyse de ce corpus pluriséculaire afin d'en étudier les variation(s), réécriture(s) et reconfiguration(s).

Nathalie Grande (Nantes)

Se transformer pour échapper ? Le viol au pays des conteuses du XVIIe siècle

Les contes, longtemps considérés comme une littérature enfantine, donnent aujourd'hui lieu à des réécritures qui mettent en évidence la violence de leur contenu latent. Ainsi quand on considère les liens entre métamorphoses et violences sexuelles, la figure récurrente du fiancé-animal s'impose. Qu'il soit 'Serpentin vert' ou 'Prince Marcassin' (chez Mme d'Aulnoy) ou tout simplement 'la Bête' (chez Mme de Villeneuve et Mme Leprince de Beaumont), la peur qu'il suscite incarne l'angoisse féminine devant une sexualité masculine violente. La peur du viol est encore explicite dans des scénarios d'agression mettant en scène des jeunes femmes assaillies par un groupe d'hommes (Abricotine dans 'Le Prince Lutin' de Mme d'Aulnoy) ou pendant leur sommeil ('Le dauphin' de Mme d'Aulnoy, 'Le Turbot' de Mme de Murat). Mais, à l'abri du ludisme et de la fantaisie qui caractérisent l'invention du genre du conte de fées à la fin du XVIIe siècle, les conteuses expérimentent aussi des scénarios moins stéréotypés: la fantaisie narrative du conte permet en effet d'imaginer échapper au viol par les métamorphoses qu'autorise le merveilleux. Notre proposition veut donc examiner comment la métamorphose merveilleuse répond au désir féminin de fuir le destin assigné par la culture du viol. Deux cas de figure se présentent alors. D'une part la métamorphose peut prendre la forme du travestissement, le changement de sexe permettant d'échapper à 'la loi du genre', comme c'est le cas dans 'Le Sauvage' de Mme de Murat. D'autre part, la métamorphose peut s'accomplir magiquement, comme c'est le cas dans 'Peau d'ours' de Mlle de Lubert, sorte de réécriture inversée du 'Peau d'âne' de Perrault. Poser la question de la représentation du viol et du non-viol dans les contes de fées de conteuses contribue ainsi à enrichir le débat actuel sur les violences sexuelles et sexistes en manifestant la continuité d'un combat historique.

Nathalie Grande, professeure à Nantes Université, travaille sur la place des femmes dans le champ littéraire du XVIIe siècle (*Stratégies de romancières*, Champion, 1999), en particulier à travers l'étude du phénomène galant (*Le Rire galant*, Champion, 2011). Elle a édité plusieurs romans du XVIIe siècle (Madeleine de Scudéry, *Mathilde*, 2002 ; Mme de Villedieu, *Le Portefeuille*, 2011, et *Les Amours des Grands Hommes*, 2016) et a organisé plus d'une dizaine de colloques, en particulier dans le cadre de la Société Internationale d'Etude des Femmes de l'Ancien Régime. Elle vient de publier *Sexe, genre et contes de fées, une anthologie de contes de conteuses de la fin du XVIIe siècle* (PU Saint Etienne, 2024).

Tiffany Premand (Yale)

(Re)conter l'inceste : le cas de Peau d'âne de Christine Angot

Dans *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté*, Lévi-Strauss théorise la prohibition de l'inceste comme la seule règle sociale universelle présente dans toutes les cultures. Plus qu'une injonction sociale ou biologique, elle constitue le mécanisme par lequel la culture émerge, dépassant l'état de nature. Presque sacré, le tabou de l'inceste devient ainsi le signe distinctif de l'humanité. Le rapport de 2023 de la Commission Indépendante sur l'Inceste et les Violences

Sexuelles faites aux Enfants (CIVISE) révèle cependant une autre réalité anthropologique: 160'000 enfants sont victimes de violences sexuelles chaque année en France. L'inceste, loin d'être une exception, est d'une effroyable banalité. Grâce aux mouvements #MeToo et #MeToolinceste, les voix des victimes/survivant.e.s ont gagné en visibilité et entamé un processus de transformation de ce tabou. La littérature jeunesse, et les contes de fées en particulier, font l'objet d'une profonde mutation. Ce réservoir narratif collectif et trans-séculaire est relu et réécrit du point de vue des enfants. À partir du cas de la nouvelle *Peau d'âne* de Christine Angot, cette communication explore comment les réécritures féministes des contes de fées abolissent le mythe du tabou de l'inceste pour révéler la puissance de la culture de l'inceste. Dans la lignée des travaux de Dorothée Dussy, Iris Brey et Juliet Drouar, elle étudie la façon dont Angot 'fait la peau' au conte de Perrault pour en proposer une version désenchantée, aux antipodes du célèbre film de Jacques Demy. Privilégiant le motif de la métamorphose en âne à celui de revêtir une peau animale, Angot transforme le rôle de la peau d'âne qui, de moyen de protection contre l'inceste, devient la marque du vécu incestueux. Ainsi réécrit, le conte de Perrault se détache des discours sur la prohibition universelle de l'inceste pour dénoncer le déni social de l'inceste.

Tiffany Premand, doctorante en cinquième année dans le Département de Français de l'Université de Yale, écrit une thèse sur les réécritures contemporaines des classiques littéraires français prémodernes dans le cadre du mouvement #MeToo et de la *cancel culture*. Influencée par les théories féministes, postcoloniales et queer ainsi que par l'histoire du genre et de la sexualité, elle étudie la réécriture comme outil littéraire contestataire et explore comment cette pratique interroge les normes sociales de genre et de sexualité, les dynamiques de pouvoir ainsi que la définition de notions comme le consentement, le harcèlement sexuel, le viol ou l'inceste.

Sandrine F. Rajaonarivony (UPenn)

Re-configurations iconographiques des contes: sexe et violence au pays de Disney

À la mort de Walt Disney, l'artiste américain Paul Krassner déclare à propos de sa série de dessins irrévérencieux intitulée *The Disneyland Memorial Orgy* (1967) et publiée dans le magazine satirique *The Realist*: 'le créateur étant mort, les princesses peuvent enfin se livrer à leurs inhibitions refoulées'. Face à une réalité moderne jugée sombre, les contes de fées apparaissent souvent comme des récits idéalisés et enfantins. Pourtant, avant que Disney ne les transforme, les versions originales regorgeaient de violence, de sexualité et d'éléments subversifs que le temps et la censure ont effacés. Aujourd'hui, de nombreux.euses artistes contemporain.e.s cherchent à redécouvrir ces aspects originaux, en mettant en scène les personnages féminins de notre enfance. Parmi eux/elles, la photographe canadienne Dina Goldstein, avec sa série *Fallen Princesses* (2007–2009) et le photographe français Thomas Czarnecki, avec *From Enchantment to Down* (2009–2011). Tandis que Goldstein transporte les princesses dans les années 2000 (Blanche-Neige devient une femme au foyer déprimée, Cendrillon une alcoolique solitaire et Belle une accro à la chirurgie esthétique), Czarnecki les photographie dans des lieux glauques et les met en scène dans des positions suggestives évoquant le viol et l'agression sexuelle. En 2014, l'artiste mexicain José Rodolfo Loaiza Ontiveros pousse la transgression encore plus loin avec sa série de peintures *Profanity Pop*, exposée à Los Angeles, en introduisant des scènes sexuelles explicites qui brisent l'image édulcorée des princesses. Cette communication propose de (ré)explorer les contes à travers ces transformations artistiques contemporaines qui nous invitent à mettre le genre au centre du récit. Consentement, violences conjugales, viol, sexism au sein du couple: le happy end disneyen est décortiqué par l'œil adulte féministe, qui peut enfin voir la véritable portée des histoires de notre enfance, si tant est qu'on accepte d'abandonner notre innocence au pas de la porte.

Sandrine F. Rajaonarivony, doctorante en troisième année à l'Université de Pennsylvanie, s'intéresse aux questions de féminisme intersectionnel, de racisme ordinaire et de postcolonialisme en France et dans le monde francophone. Née à Madagascar mais élevée en France, ses recherches explorent à la fois les expériences d'immigrant.e.s de la diaspora africaine, ainsi qu'à la littérature et à l'art de Madagascar. Son mémoire de Littérature française et comparée soutenu à l'Université de Nantes en 2019 traite des reconfigurations iconographiques, réécritures et variantes internationales des contes de fées classiques autour de questions de genre, de sexualité et de violence.

PANEL 2: WOMEN & WAR

Panel Description

In *Women and the War Story*, feminist critic Myriam Cooke writes that the male-gendered war story reinforces mythic wartime roles, reviving outworn clichés of men's aggressiveness and women's passivity. She calls for women's testimonial narratives that bear witness to experiences such as war that have been transformational and empowering. Focusing on the individual—Algerian freedom fighter, Zohra Drif, Martinican writer, Suzanne Césaire—and the collective, the French women's magazine, *La Femme Chez Elle*, these three papers study the transformation of women's roles and identities during World War I (McCullough), World War II (Hiddleston), Algeria's War of Liberation, 1954-1962 (Mortimer).

Mary McCullough (Samford)

Crafting French Womanhood during World War I in the Women's Magazine 'La femme chez elle'

This paper examines the World War I-era issues of the little-known and rarely studied French women's magazine, *La femme chez elle* (published from 1900 to 1939), exploring how it constructs womanhood. Aimed at middle- and lower-middle-class women, the magazine's images, articles, and homemaking tips promote the ideal of a thrifty housewife. This analysis will consider the magazine in tandem with other women's writings of the period (other magazines, diaries, novels, journals), focusing on how women's roles and identities during the Great War were portrayed. The study will emphasize both domestic activities (knitting, sewing, cooking, managing the household, caring for children) and the additional responsibilities women assumed in men's absence (running businesses, working in factories, plowing fields). These roles combined traditional expectations with new societal demands, creating what can be described as a "quiet trauma," in contrast to the more widely recognized shellshock (PTSD) suffered by male soldiers (Branach-Kallas, 2016). As women took on men's duties in the home and workplace, they were still expected to fulfill their traditional gendered roles: as loyal wives to their absent husbands, as prospective wives of wounded soldiers, as good mothers to biological or adopted war orphans, and as competent housekeepers. Although other literary genres focused on different aspects of the war, they nonetheless reflect how women's roles were constructed, how the trauma of WWI affected French society, and how post-war gender expectations were reshaped. These narratives invite further study of how gender and domesticity intersect with discourses on war and nationalism, and how these representations were both produced and consumed. What do these multiple identities mean for the future of women's and gender studies on World War I?

Mary McCullough is Professor of French and French Program Director at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama where she has worked since 2001. She teaches all levels of French and Core Texts. Her research includes articles and conference presentations on literature and film by francophone women. She has recently turned her interests to literature written by women during World War I and World War II, and to women's magazines published during the first half of the 20th century. She is working on an article on the representation of knitting in French texts.

Jane Hiddleston (Oxford)

Suzanne Césaire: Ecopoetics as Wartime Critique

Suzanne Césaire has tended to be eclipsed by her husband, Aimé Césaire, but her wartime essays testify to her extraordinary critical and creative imagination. She published seven essays in the Martinican journal *Tropiques*, which ran from 1941 to 1945. This was the period during which Martinique was governed by Admiral Robert, a Vichy sympathiser, and during which the island suffered from economic difficulties and heightened racial tension. The writers of *Tropiques* challenged this regime as well as the history of colonialism, though their critique was often expressed covertly as a celebration of regional ecology, articulated most astutely and creatively by Suzanne Césaire. The journal was nevertheless censored during 1943, and it was Suzanne Césaire who penned the vitriolic letter to the censors defending the journal's antiracism. This paper first demonstrates Suzanne Césaire's key role in *Tropiques*, communicating with the authorities and sourcing paper for printing. Secondly, I will read her essays as covert but

incisive critiques of the drive for conquest and mastery on which both colonialism and Nazism were based. Césaire's essays denounce the Western impetus to categorise and the competition for power that fuelled the colonial project and the ideology of Vichy. Resistance for Suzanne Césaire, moreover, comprises not simply the pursuit of equality between humans, but a more far-reaching reconfiguration of the human and our relationship with the land. Her 'homme-plante' can be read as a vision of the mutual dependence between human and ecosystem and as a mode of integrated living that rejects hierarchy and that privileges humility and binding with the land. Although she only writes fleetingly about gender, Césaire also vilifies stereotypes about Caribbean women and uses the figure of the female dancer Bergilde to personify this ethical, sensory rhythm that defies the drive for conquest and possession.

Jane Hiddleston is Professor of Literatures in French at the University of Oxford. She has published widely on francophone postcolonial literature and thought. Most recently she has published books on Frantz Fanon (2022) and Aimé Césaire (2025), and is currently working on the idea of anticolonial ecopoetics.

Mimi Mortimer (University of Colorado, Boulder)

Inside the Battle of Algiers: Zohra Drif Reflects on her War Experience

This paper examines Zohra Drif's memoir of her participation in Algeria's war against the French colonizer, (1954-1962), analyzing the text, *Mémoires d'une combattante de l'ALN: Zone autonome d'Alger*, as a written representation of resistance, one that confirms that Algerian women were active participants in an anticolonial war and that their war experience was transformative. Drif's courage and resiliency tested, she emerges empowered. Yet, her narrative attests to the trauma endured and raises a moral issue, the taking of innocent lives in a political struggle. In this paper, I suggest that by offering her readers a testimonial narrative that acknowledges war in its complexity – the triumphs, the losses, the difficult choices and decisions – Drif embodies the feminist resistor. As an individual embedded in her society, she is a combatant who acknowledges her vulnerabilities, accepts the ambiguities of her actions, and is transformed by her war experience. Drif adopts a format common to many memoirs. She begins by explaining why she wrote the text, then recounts her early life in colonial Algeria, tells readers how and why she joined the liberation movement, depicts key incidents, and reflects upon what participation in the struggle has meant for her and her people. Her detailed memoir, more than 500 pages in length, provides historical details of the political activities of the ZAA (Zone Autonome d'Alger), during the Battle of Algiers, 1956-1957. It can also be read for its psychological and sociological dimensions, as the story of a young colonial subject's journey to maturity within the context of colonialism and then an anticolonial war. A feminist work, it emphasizes women's contribution to the nationalist struggle. Finally, it poses a moral issue, the taking of innocent lives in a political struggle. I examine the memoir as both a historical artifact and as a woman's personal journey to empowerment.

Mildred ('Mimi') Mortimer is Professor Emerita of Francophone Literature, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA. Her book publications focus on francophone literature of the Maghreb, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean: *Women Fight, Women Write: Texts on the Algerian War; Writing from the Hearth: Public, Domestic and Imaginative Space in Francophone Women's Fiction of Africa and the Caribbean; Maghrebian Mosaic: A Literature in Transition; Journeys through the French African Novel; Journeys Through the African Novel*. She has translated two novels of Franco-Algerian writer, Leïla Sebbar, *The Seine was red / La Seine était rouge*, (2008) and *Silence on the Shores /Le Silence des Rives* (2000). Her current project is a translation of Sebbar's *Lettre à mon père* (2021).

PANEL 3: TRANSFORMING NARRATIVES OF DISABILITY & ILLNESS

Meggie Boyle (Cambridge)

Transforming Conceptions of Aliveness: The Disabled Child in Clara Dupont-Munod's *S'Adapter* (2021)

This paper looks to challenge, and indeed transform, how we recognise life and aliveness and offer alternative models of kinship/care to those normalised by the cis-hetero-ableist imaginary; what we glean from disabled relationships where, on the outside, we are told there is no value. I will centre my argument on Clara Dupont-Munod's *S'Adapter* (2021), a semi-autobiographical novel which follows three non-disabled siblings and their relationship to their disabled brother – known as *l'enfant* – who cannot see, speak or move and passes away aged ten. *L'enfant* radically upends his family's life, drawing them from the centre to the margins. Existing on the margins grants us '[a] radical perspective from which to create and see, to imagine alternatives, new worlds' (hooks 1989). *L'enfant* opens up the world for his loved ones, redefining ways of being in relation to one another and the world, proving that it is not us who are lacking, incomplete, and burdensome; it is society. I will also discuss the importance of nature to *l'enfant* and its ability to provide a sanctuary from the modern world and its maligning of disability which renders our existence abject, thus inviting a reconsideration of kinship restricted to human community. To be a disabled bodymind in this world necessitates endless flexibility, resilience and strength. In shifting the dominant narrative we not only transform but transgress boundaries. We create discomfort in the non-disabled consciousness as we refute notions of compulsory able-bodiedness, normativity and wholeness. This work, though vital, though defiant, is exhausting; in dismantling hegemonic scripts we truly are, as the call for papers identifies, 'undone and remade'. Thus, I will draw upon affect theory and J. Logan Smilges's notion of crip negativity to explore how affectively demanding this radical labour is.

Meggie Boyle is a PhD student in French at the University of Cambridge. Her thesis focuses on the life cycle of the disabled woman, drawing upon contemporary literature and film in the Francosphere and beyond. Papers written during her MPhil in European, Latin American and Comparative Literatures and Cultures at Cambridge University covered cultural representations of disability, the queer/crip archive, disability and the family, and the disabled body and dance. She is a fierce defender of the rights of disabled people and created Cambridge's first research seminar on Disability Studies, entitled 'Who Gives A Crip?'.

Caroline Verdier (Strathclyde)

Vivre avec 'elle': Transformation in Parkinson's disease accounts

This paper explores the transformations experienced by individuals living with Parkinson's disease, drawing on the patient perspectives in Catherine Laborde's *Trembler* (2018) and Sonia Rykiel's *N'oubliez pas que je joue* (2012), alongside the carer perspectives in Colline Hoarau's *Notre vie à trois* (2015) and Dalila Raposo's *Putain de Parkinson* (2020). Laborde's deeply personal account blends reflections on her public identity with the disorientation and progressive changes brought by Parkinson's. Similarly, Rykiel's narrative chronicles the challenges of navigating life with Parkinson's as a celebrated designer, offering insights into the vulnerability and resilience required to adapt to the disease. In contrast, Hoarau's work illustrates the impact of Parkinson's on a couple's dynamic, emphasizing how the illness reshapes physical and emotional landscapes, transforming both partners' roles and revealing the complexities of caregiving. Raposo's testimony presents a bold and unfiltered perspective as a carer, capturing the frustrations and resilience involved in supporting a loved one through an illness that progressively transforms them. By examining the interplay between these patient and carer narratives, this paper highlights the progressive ways Parkinson's reshapes identities, relationships, and daily life. Grounded in the field of Medical Humanities, our analysis draws on frameworks such as Arthur Frank's illness narratives, Ruwen Ogien's ethics of suffering, Rita Charon's narrative medicine, and Havi Carel's phenomenology of illness to explore how these authors articulate the transformative dynamics of living with and caring for someone affected by Parkinson's disease.

Caroline Verdier is Senior Lecturer in French and Gender Studies at the University of Strathclyde (Glasgow). She is a specialist in French and Francophone Studies with expertise in 20th and 21st Century literature, Gender Studies and Medical Humanities.

SUNDAY 1 JUNE

KEYNOTE SESSION 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

KEYNOTE: FATIMA OUASSAK

KINDLY SUPPORTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS, IN MEMORY OF MARGARET ATACK

Fatima Ouassak is an essayist, environmental, feminist and anti-racist activist, and public policy consultant. She is co-founder of the *Front de mères*, a parents' union in championing for children's rights working-class neighbourhoods. She is one of the founders of *Verdragon*, the first *Maison de l'Ecologie Populaire in France*. The project is a collaboration between Alternatiba Paris and the *Front de mères*. She is the author of *La Puissance des mères* (La Découverte, 2020; Points, 2023) and *Pour une écologie pirate* (La Découverte, 2023), *Rue du Passage* (JC Lattès, 2024) *Comme Ali* (Au diable vauvert, 2025). She also chairs the Classe/Genre/Race network, which fights discrimination against women from post-colonial immigrant backgrounds.

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