**Atelier 05 : SEAC (Société d’Études Anglaises Contemporaines)**

**La Nouvelle de langue anglaise**

**Responsables :**

Vanessa Guignery (ENS de Lyon, Présidente de la SEAC) : vanessa.guignery@ens-lyon.fr

Gérald Preher (Université d’Artois, rédacteur en chef du *Journal of the Short Story in English*) : gerald.preher@univ-artois.fr

Hélène Machinal (Université de Rennes) : helene.machinal@univ-rennes2.fr

Xavier Le Brun (Université d’Angers, rédacteur associé du *Journal of the Short Story in English*) :xavier.lebrun@univ-angers.fr

**Convenors**

**Vanessa Guignery** is Professor of contemporary British and Postcolonial Literature at the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon and the President of the SEAC. Her research interests focus on issues relating to the poetics of voice and silence, hybridity, generic transformations, fragmentation and genetic criticism. She is the author of monographs on Julian Barnes, B.S. Johnson, Ben Okri and Jonathan Coe, and the editor or co-editor of some fifteen collections of essays on contemporary British and postcolonial literature (notably on Ben Okri, Janet Frame, Nadine Gordimer and Caryl Phillips). Her latest monograph is *Julian Barnes from the Margins: Exploring the Writer’s Archives* (Bloomsbury, 2020) and she recently edited a special issue of *Études Anglaises* on contemporary Nigerian literature (2022).

**Xavier Le Brun** is a Lecturer at the University of Angers and a member of the CIRPaLL (Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherche sur les Patrimoines en Lettres et Langues). He specialises in modernist literature, short forms, self and interiority in the modernist period, and the interactions between philosophy and literature. He has published articles about Virginia Woolf and Malcolm Lowry in peer-reviewed journals such as *Études britanniques contemporaines* and *Image [&] Narrative*, and has contributed chapters to *Excavating Modernity: Physical, Temporal and Psychological Strata in Literature, 1900-1930* (Routledge, 2019) and *La littérature et la vie* (Classiques Garnier, 2018).

**Hélène Machinal** is a professor of English Studies at l’Université Rennes 2 and a member of ACE (EA 1796). She specializes in the fantastic in literature, detective novels and speculative fiction from the 19th to the 21st century. She also works on TV series and representations of the posthuman, more particularly the imagination of science in detective, fantastic and SF fiction. Her latest publication include:

- Hélène Machinal, *Posthumains en série, les détectives du futur*, PU François Rabelais, 2020.

- Hélène Machinal, Lucie Bernard et Sylvie Bauer, dirs., *Mutations 3 : posthumain et écran*, *Otrante* n° 51, Paris, Kimé, 2022.

**Gerald Preher** is a Professor of American Literature at the Université d’Artois, where he is a member of the Texts and Cultures research group. He defended a doctoral dissertation on southern literature and has written essays on various 19th and 20th century writers. He co-edited several collections of essays on American literature, is the editor of the *Journal of the Short Story in English* and the general editor of the review *Résonances*. He recently published a study of Carson McCullers’s *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* as part of a book on *Solitude and Community in the Novel* (Atlande), has a forthcoming monograph on Elizabeth Spencer and a volume dedicated to Richard Ford in the Understanding Contemporary American Literature series.

**Delegates**

**Camus, Solène (University of Lyon 2)**

**‘But will I write disgustingly?’ (79): The Shock of Transmission in Martin Amis’s *The Zone of Interest***

The paper will explore the way Martin Amis questioned the process of transmission of the trauma of the Holocaust in his novel, *The Zone of Interest* (2014). Amis chose to adopt the perspective of the perpetrators of Nazi crimes and delivered a polyphonic novel divided between testimonies on the daily life of three male protagonists in the camp. In so doing, Amis joined, once more, a literary tradition that has long been reflecting on the possibility and ethics of writing about the trauma of the Shoah. The study will recontextualize the publication controversy that erupted after Amis’s French and German editors refused to publish the text. It then intends to follow Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer’s injunction to “scrutinize the ‘acts of transfer’” (Hirsch and Spitzer 355) so as to identify the narrative mechanisms used in the novel to transmit the horrors of the Holocaust to its readers. It therefore means to study the generic undecidability of a text that intertwines the socially mundane and the tragedy of the Jewish extermination. If Amis insisted on the satirical aspect of a text that had been defined as a burlesque comedy or a love story, he also mentioned the essayist extent of the paratext (Martin Amis - video). The paper will therefore determine the key role played by the epilogue, Hitler’s picture, and the final dedication, in the circulation of a Holocaust legacy between writer and readership. When asked by Salman Rushdie about his relationship with his readers, Martin Amis answered the following: “it’s a matter of straightforward transmission: I am telling a story”. Ultimately, and in light of Rita Felski’s work on the reader’s attachment to a text, the study intends to analyze how Amis based his transmission process on the establishment of an aesthetic of shock that led his initial French editor to describe his text as a “pornographic vaudeville” (Les Inrockuptibles).

**Bio**: Solène Camus holds an agrégation in English and currently teaches English at the University Lumière Lyon 2 as an assistant lecturer (ATER). She is a PhD candidate under the supervision of Pascale Tollance. Her work focuses on the notion of monstrosity in contemporary British and Irish fiction, and more particularly in the work of Martin Amis, John Banville, Ian McEwan and Graham Swift.

**Coste, Marion (Sorbonne Université)**

**Communication and Mediated Transmission: Verbatim Plays about the Iraq War**

In March 2003, the United Kingdom joined the Coalition forces to invade Iraq, claiming that the country was hiding weapons of mass destruction. British media played a crucial part in broadcasting the government’s arguments: the manipulation of facts, in order to justify the war, went largely unchecked and investigative journalism chiefly gave way to 24/7 broadcast and mass communication on the invasion. In keeping with the tradition of representing red-hot issues on stages, British theatre grappled with the political and social issues surrounding the war in Iraq. The theatrical form of verbatim gained popularity, as it enabled playwrights to reflect on what what Blais, Gauchet and Ottavi have termed a “crisis in transmission” (2004): based on the words of real people, taken either from public inquiries or interviews, verbatim theatre questions the overlap between transmission and communication.

This paper will argue that verbatim theatre aims at going back to a purer form of transmission, one that does not involve the process of mediation at play in mass media. By presenting on stage extracts from public inquiries, verbatim plays intend to give the audience direct access to information. Moreover, playwrights may add extracts from interviews they have conducted with victims of the Iraq war, therefore preserving experiences and emphasising the need for testimonial transmission. We will however argue that mediation is never absent from this form of transmission and that verbatim theatre consciously stages modes of mediation in a bid to render the process of transmission as transparent as possible.

**Bio:** Marion Coste is a former student from the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon, where she studied from 2010 to 2015 and passed the Agrégation in English in 2013. A member of the research unit VALE at Sorbonne University, she is defending her PhD thesis, “Immediate history in theatre: Representations of the Iraq war in contemporary British plays”, in December 2022 under the supervision of Elisabeth Angel-Perez. She is also the editor of the website La Clé des langues, co-founded by the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon and the Ministère de l’Éducation nationale.

**Garnier-Tardieu, Claire (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle)**

**Kathleen Raine and Transmission**

The word most frequently associated with Kathleen Raine's work is tradition. Sharing a close Latin etymology (*tradere*) with the word transmission (*transmittere*), tradition is however connoted as referring to the past, whereas the word transmission evokes the passing of the baton from the present to the future. It also implies the notion of inheritance and filiation. What is shared with and transmitted to us readers? In this respect, the 20th-century British poet, autobiographer and literary critic answers: “What is all the art and poetry of the world but the record of remembered Paradise and the lament of our exile?” (Raine, 1973, p. 8). Thus, Raine emphasises that artistic creation is always embedded in this dialectic, offering the possibility of a homecoming. This paper will attempt to show the two sides of Raine's work, as two doors, one might say, to which memory and imagination are the keys. Indeed, Raine can be considered both the heiress to this golden thread of Tradition in reference to the famous Blakeian line: "I give you the end of a golden string\* [. .]", at the source of English romanticism and more generally of all thought that is not purely materialistic, and the one who is entrusted with the mission of transmitting, in turn, the imagination of paradise. In this view, we will see how the poetic, almost mystical, and intellectual heritage received from the poet's parents, from nature itself, and from her mentor William Blake, becomes a poetical as well as an intellectual treasure to be passed on to future generations.

\* William Blake, *Notebook 1808-11, 66 & Jerusalem*, "To the Christians", plate 77.

**Bio:** Claire Garnier-Tardieu is Professor of English didactics at the Monde Anglophone of the Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris. While she teaches and conducts research primarily in this field, she is at the same time pursuing her study of Kathleen Raine's work, which she began in her youth with a doctorate on *Kathleen Raine and the Tradition of Eden in her autobiography and poetic work*. She has also done some translations, an interview, and published articles. She is currently co-editing a book entitled: *Kathleen Raine: A Voice for the 21st Century*.

**Gould, Charlotte (Université Paris Nanterre)**

**The See Red Women’s Workshop, London 1974-1990. The Transmission of Feminist Ideas in Poster Form**

The See Red Women’s Workshop project (SRWW) is led by myself (CREA, Paris Nanterre) and Mathilde Bertrand (CLIMA, Bordeaux Montaigne) in collaboration with archive and museum La Contemporaine in Nanterre. SRWW takes place over the period 2022-2023 and is supported by a grant from the Institut du Genre. It proposes to focus on the museum’s oral archive of interviews with, and collection of posters created in London by the See Red Women’s Workshop in the 1970s and 1980s with the plan of organizing a conference around some of their founding members and eventually devoting a special issue of *Matériaux pour l’histoire* to their work. The political posters the Workshop created collaboratively are of particular interest to art historians and specialists of British studies because they bear witness to a time when young artists and activists felt that the problematic objectification of women in art but also in the media needed to be countered. They set up their printing studio in 1974 in a context when crisis had become a daily condition which had led to both a politicization of art and an aestheticization of politics. The rise in the number of alternative organisations coincided with the end of the grand narratives of progress of the 1960s, which meant many of them became concerned with issues having to do with the domestic and everyday life. The See Red Women created striking, handmade posters denouncing sexist (and racist) oppression and found a platform on the pages of magazines, on flyers and on the walls of the city. On the occasion of the SAES Congress, we would like to delve into their choice of a collaborative approach as a feminist tactic, into the spatialization of art and politics thanks to the use of posters, as well as into the social efficacy of the use of affect and of irony in their graphic productions.

**Bio:** Charlotte Gould is Professor of British studies at Université Paris Nanterre where she is a member of the research group CREA. The focus of her research is contemporary British art, as well as public art commissioning since the nineteen-eighties. Recent publications include *Artangel and Financing British Art. Adapting to Social and Economic Change* (Routledge, 2019) and *British Art and the Environment. Changes, Challenges, and Responses Since the Industrial Revolution* (co-edited with Sophie Mesplède and published by Routledge, 2021). She is a member of SAES, of the Association of Art Historians (AAH), and of the Public Statues and Sculpture Association (PSSA).

**Gouleau, Maxence (Sorbonne Université)**

**‘Those who can’t, teach’: Pregnancy, Professors, and the Anxiety of Transmission in *Waterland* and *Common Ground***

Although it has often been used as a metaphor for writing, pregnancy has long been left out of literature as a diegetic event, along with the material, genetic act of transmission it operates. In a 2018 article for *The Guardian*, British writer Jessie Greengrass regrets that, as a ‘fundamentally female experience’, pregnancy in literature is either confined to autobiographical writing by authors who have gone through it, or to works of fiction where it remains ‘out of shot […] while in the centre of things a man paces a carpet’. As such, accounts of pregnancy have mainly been limited to one gender and one genre.

However, Greengrass’s examples of fiction do not go further than the first half of the twentieth century. Graham Swift’s *Waterland* (1983) and Andrew Cowan’s *Common Ground* (1996) are contemporary novels that focus on male characters whose partners are pregnant. In *Waterland*, Tom witnesses Mary’s abortion and subsequent infertility, while in *Common Ground* Ashley closely follows Jay’s experience of pregnancy, childbirth, and post-partum. What can we learn from these novels of the difficulty of representing pregnancy from a fictional, male perspective?

I show that the authority of male characters is shaken by the diegetic presence of pregnancy, which turns them into inadequately ‘brooding’ (Swift 10) or ‘nesting’ (Cowan 55) men. What these two novels also have in common is that their main male characters are teachers, of history (Tom) and geography (Ashley). Their teaching attempts but fails to replicate pregnancy’s genetic process of transmission. These failures point towards old and new ways of dealing with the anxiety of transmission that pregnancy stirs up, from sublimation and dehumanisation to an acceptance of ‘nonknowledge’ (Agamben 91). Eventually, because of pregnancy’s close relationship with teaching and writing, these two novels offer insight into the ethics of writing another’s experience, or an experience of the other.

**Bio:** Maxence Gouleau is a PhD student in contemporary British literature at Sorbonne Université. Her thesis focuses on the treatment of diegetic pregnancy in the contemporary British novel. She is supervised by Prof. Frédéric Regard. She recently published an article on Ian McEwan’s *Nutshell* in *Polysèmes*. Maxence is currently an ATER at Sorbonne Université.

**Gourdoux, Eva (Université de Toulouse)**

**From the South with a Twist: Flannery O’Connor’s Transmission of the South**

“Of course, I have found that anything that comes out of the South is going to be called grotesque by the Northern reader, unless it is grotesque, in which case it is going to be called realistic.” (Flannery O’Connor, *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1969, 40) In “Some Aspects of the Grotesque in Southern Fiction,” Flannery O’Connor discusses a mode which consists in a paradoxical form of realism that tends to be superimposed onto any piece of Southern fiction. Indeed, according to the writer, the South is viewed as an inherently grotesque region. Because of this tendency, the South is likely to be labeled as ‘grotesque’ as soon as readers consider these texts depict life in the region in a faithful fashion. O’Connor’s so-called ‘freaks’ are supposed to echo the freakishness of this other America, a region Fred Hobson defined as “[…] an alien member of the national family.” (Fred Hobson, *Tell About the South, The Southern Rage to Explain*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983, 9) Although O’Connor denied any realistic endeavor, preaching instead for a ‘realism of distances’ as she called it, her works have ceaselessly been labeled as ‘grotesque’ or ‘Southern Gothic.’ What does this propensity to identify the South with these modes say about the region and its culture and, more to the point, about its legacy?

Short stories such as “A Late Encounter With the Enemy” (*A Good Man is Hard to Find*, 1955) explicitly tackle the topic of legacy and memory through the figure of a fake Confederate General who is used as a prop, a remnant of the Civil War. Correspondingly, “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (*A Good Man is Hard to Find*) and “The Enduring Chill” (*Everything that Rises Must Converge*, 1965) and their ironic references to Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone With the Wind* (1936) mock a fantasized vision of the South that was popular with readers at the time. However, most of O’Connor’s short stories still convey an image of the region which resonates with this nostalgic and fantasized gloss. This paper will thus discuss O’Connor’s transmission of Southern culture and history. This study will notably seek to analyze the way Southern stereotypes work in her texts, and how the cultural context penetrates the words of the writer, transmitting a seemingly everlasting version of the South down the generations.

**Bio:** Eva Gourdoux is an English teacher (*professeur agrégé d’anglais*) and she currently teaches English to aspiring teachers at the INSPE Toulouse Occitanie-Pyrénées. She received her doctorate in American literature from the University of Toulouse in 2023. Her doctoral dissertation focuses on the dynamics of seclusion in the works of William Faulkner, Flannery O’Connor and Eudora Welty. Her research interests include American and Southern literature, Southern studies, stylistics, narratology, the depiction of spaces of confinement and the representation of marginality.

**Laburthe-Tolra, Clémence (Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3)**

**Vita Sackville-West’s Botanical Transmissions in the *Observer*: from Flowery Words of Advice to Rhizomatic Networks**

“You really are a public benefactor”, Vita Sackville-West was told in 1951 by her editor from the *Observer* after he read some of the letters she received following up the weekly horticultural columns she wrote between 1946 and 1961. Drawing on these botanical articles, I wish to highlight how Sackville-West circulated her own “gardening philosophy” through the press, ultimately claiming her “territory” compared to other “gardening correspondents”. Transmitting botanical knowledge stemmed from her own experiments in the gardens of Long Barn and Sissingurst, Kent. Such practicality reveals a humble approach: not only did Sackville-West embrace being an amateur, but she also aimed at reaching out to anyone interested in botany, regardless of their social class. Ultimately, I intend to underline how Sackville-West seeded networks of transmission and knowledge through her chronicles. Not only did she sometimes call for the reader’s advice and open her garden to visitors, but transmission became truly reciprocal as she was sent material by her readers, be it seeds, pieces of advice, or gardening reports. This paper is based on Sackville-West’s chronicles compiled in the collection *In your Garden*, as well as on archival material, letters and notes Sackville-West received throughout her career as a columnist.

**Bio**: Clémence Laburthe-Tolra is a PhD candidate in English Literature at Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3. As an English graduate from the Ecole Normale Supérieure and an alumna of the École Nationale Supérieure de Paysage in Versailles, her research is arched around the encounter between 20th-century British literature, garden design, landscape theory and botanical matters. Her PhD thesis investigates the green sensibilities expressed by Elizabeth von Arnim, Vita Sackville-West, and Rose Macaulay.

**Lecomte, Héloïse (École Normale Supérieure de Lyon)**

**Chains of Consolation: Ghost-Writing Death’s Tales in Salena Godden’s *Mrs Death Misses Death* (2021)**

In her debut novel *Mrs Death Misses Death* (2021), British poet and performance artist Salena Godden brings the principle of ghost-writing to new symbolic grounds as the story’s protagonist, Wolf Willeford, a young writer, endeavours to turn the memories and diaries of Death herself into memoirs. Part poetical fiction, part song-book, the hybrid work compiles tales of death and mourning together with episodes of Wolf’s existence, thereby mingling fanciful legends with accounts of real-life events (most notably harrowing flashbacks of the Grenfell fire of 2017). The combination of traumatic and magical realism carves a literary language for nested gestures of transmission (from Death to her ghost-writer but also from Godden to her reader and even from reader to reader), in a haunted book whose last section poetically doubles as a “private ritual” space of collective mourning for victims of the Covid-19 pandemic (Godden 302). While Godden’s deeply original elegy questions the very possibility of passing down the personal memory and collective history of traumatic events, it also promotes the literary regeneration and transmission of mourning rituals in a seemingly “deritualised” contemporary British society (the verb was coined by sociologist Gaëlle Clavandier, 2009: 91).

It is no coincidence that Godden should offer a humanising “re-vision”\* of Death by replacing the legendary figure of the Grim Reaper with that of an elderly black beggar woman, a “rubbish collector” who “collect[s] spirits up and carr[ies] all those burdens away” (152). In this unlikely friendship story, ghost-writing is akin to being “the listener, the messenger, the passenger” (74): the book revives the immemorial tradition of oral tales as cornerstones of shared human experience by turning transmission into an act of care. This paper thus aims to investigate the paradoxical ways in which the passing down of Death’s tales is meant to form a chain of consolation for characters and readers alike.

\*For Adrienne Rich, re-vision is “the act of looking back, of entering an old text from a new critical direction” (1979, 35).

**Bio**: Héloïse Lecomte has completed a PhD on contemporary British and Irish fiction at the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon. Her research themes are the narrative and fictional representations of mourning and their dialogue with poetic, musical and visual elegies. Together with Alice Borrego, Dr Gero Guttzeit and Prof. Esther Peeren, she is the co-organiser of the international interdisciplinary seminar ‘Invisible Lives, Silent Voices’.

**Lefebvre, Lise (Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3)**

**Circularity and Circulation in Peter Ackroyd’s Life Narratives: *Chatterton*, *English Music* and *The House of Doctor Dee***

Contemporary author Peter Ackroyd reminds us of the gist of his literary project when he writes: “[o]f course words survive. How else could Chatterton’s forgeries become real poetry?” (*Chatterton* p. 151). Ackroyd plays with the reader’s assumptions about facts and fiction in literature. Instead of addressing these notions as diametrically opposed, Ackroyd intertwines them to present a singular way of writing that may be called ‘faction.’ He rewrites the lives of famous past British writers (or characters) by adding fictional elements while preserving a high level of referential accuracy. Faction thereby implies a form of circularity through its use of transtextuality (past texts are used *again* in the present) and provides a means of circulation in transmitting the British literary canon. In Ackroyd’s life narratives, the past leaves a mark in and on the present that is permanent—as it keeps coming back, it almost becomes circular. This disruption of time is a key characteristic of the mode of the romance in which ghosts keep coming back. The inheritance of the past reveals itself through abstract visions and physical interventions. This re-enactment of the past implies circularity while the mode of the romance calls for circulation (of supernatural events for instance) and enables an old literary mode to be used in modern times. The body as well as houses and monuments work as a time portal and as a window opening on the affects of the characters. Ackroyd only writes about vulnerable people and their vulnerability is often passed on from generation to generation enabling the reader to open to the ethical dimension of the notion. As a matter of fact, vulnerability as well implies circularity through the characters’ going backwards owing to traumatic temporality. It also works as a means of circulation—conveying the characters’ affects and the ethical dimension of the notion. Circularity and circulation are therefore seen as two modalities of transmission.

**Bio**: Lise Lefebvre is a 3rd-year Ph.D. student at the Université Paul Valéry Montpellier III. She is writing a thesis under Jean-Michel Ganteau’s supervision and works as an English teacher for 1st-year and 2nd-year university students. She is a new member of the SEAC and the SAES as well as an active member of her laboratory, EMMA. Her thesis is entitled “Dedans, dehors : faction, romance et éthique dans les récits de vie ackroydiens” and offers an analysis on contemporary British writer Peter Ackroyd’s life narratives. She first started working on the dichotomy between facts and fiction as well as transtextuality and ethics for her master’s degree, for which she spent a whole year at the University of Cambridge (UK), submitting a thesis on the textual relationship between Oscar Wilde and William Shakespeare. She then decided to focus on contemporary literature. In the spring of 2022, she gave a paper on Ackroyd and faction in EMMA’s day conference for doctoral students.

**Parey, Armelle (Université de Caen-Normandie)**

**Characters in Search of an Ending in Laura Wade’s adaptation of Jane Austen’s *The Watsons* (2018)**

I propose to consider the notion of transmission in relation to the process of adaptation since adaptations, whatever form they take, bring a text—transmit a text—to a new audience and in doing so, submit the text to a process of transformation and appropriation. Jane Austen’s six novels have all been adapted to the screen, big or small, at least twice—the most recent example to date being another TV adaptation of *Persuasion* by Netflix (2022)—and to the stage on both sides of the Atlantic. Recently, attention has also turned to Austen’s less well-known juvenilia and unfinished texts. Whit Stillman directed an adaptation of Austen’s epistolary novella *Lady Susan* into a lively and mischievous *Love and Friendship* (2016) and ITV broadcast an adaptation of Austen’s unfinished *Sanditon* (2019), created by screenwriter Andrew Davies, author of the 1995 BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* that left its mark on viewers and later adapters of Austen.

English playwright Laura Wade (born in 1977) also goes beyond the corpus of the six novels and turns to *The Watsons*, one of Austen’s fragments, which as Susan Speidel notes of Lady Susan, is “a narrative whose brevity and canonical peripherality invites addition and change”.\* Wade’s stage adaptation is interesting on more than one count: it is an adaptation from one genre to another that combines with a continuation of an unfinished text, to which Wade adds a metaleptic dimension as she inscribes herself, the author, into the plot and brings in echoes of Pirandello’s *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. This paper will examine how Wade transfers Austen’s text to the stage for a 21st century audience, looking at how she tackles the issue of authenticity raised by adaptation and continuation through a flaunted self-conscious approach and a metacommentary on writing, on endings and on Austen’s life and work.

\* Speidel, Susan. “Letters from Page to Screen and Back Again: Jane Austen’s *Lady Susan* and Whit Stillman’s Two Versions of *Love and Friendship*”. *Persuasions on-Line* 40.2 (Spring 2020) [http://jasna.org/publications/persuasions-online/volume-40-no-2/speidel](http://jasna.org/publications/persuasions-online/volume-40-no-2/speidel/)/

**Bio**: Armelle Parey is a senior lecturer at the Université de Caen-Normandie. Her research interests embrace narrative endings, memory and rewritings of the past in contemporary English-speaking fiction, with a special emphasis on the neo-Victorian novel. She has co-edited several collections of essays on the question of narrative closure, prequels, coquels and sequels, as well as on A.S. Byattand Ian McEwan.

**Petit, Maxime (Université de Toulouse)**

**Homosexuality, Transmission, and the Memory of Criminalisation in E.M. Forster’s *The Life to Come***

Transmission, in various forms, is key to the study of Forster’s oeuvre, from the famous motto “only connect” to the central role played by inheritance in his fiction, and his work for the BBC. This paper will address how the themes of transmission and homosexuality intersect in *The Life to Come*, a posthumous collection of short stories written before the Sexual Offences Act 1967.

Drawing on Nussbaum’s analysis of the role of disgust in the criminalization of sexual deviance, this paper will first focus on Forster’s play with the perception of homosexuality as a contagious condition, as evidenced by the moral panics described in “The Classical Annex” and “What does It Matter? A Morality.” However, Forster’s well-documented concern with legacy and inheritance will also lead us to consider the theme of legal transmission. Drawing on Frank’s idea that questions of transmission and inheritance in Edwardian literature increasingly focused on issues of personal identity and self-possession, as well as on the Foucauldian notion that this era also saw the development of a distinctly homosexual identity, we suggest that “Arthur Snatchfold” dramatizes the conflict between the impossibility of publicly addressing homosexuality and the secret project of recording and transmitting expressions of homosexual desire.

At a time when scholars in various fields are still addressing the legacy of criminalisation,\* we suggest that Forster’s stories oscillate between a desire for transmission and a move toward self-isolation, and as such, offer a compelling illustration of the dilemmas faced by pre-gay liberation writers with regard to the transmission of explicitly gay-themed texts.

\* Cameron Giles, “Pardons for historic homosexual offences are welcome – but we still need to address the legacy of criminalisation” *The Conversation*, January 6, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/pardons-for-historic-homosexual-offences-are-welcome-but-we-still-need-to-address-the-legacy-of-criminalisation-174371>. Accessed February 15th 2022.

**Bio:** Maxime Petit is a Ph.D. student working under the supervision of Prof. Laurent Mellet at Université Toulouse 2 Jean Jaurès. His research focuses on narratives of the criminalisation of male homosexuality in British literature and film. He is also Professeur Agrégé at Université Toulouse 1 Capitole where he teaches English for Specific Purposes.

**Petsota, Myrto (Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3)**

**Alasdair Gray’s Rabelaisian legacy: Genealogy and Creation in *Poor Things***

As Gray’s previous work was labeled postmodern (at least in form), when considering *Poor Things*, attention has been drawn to aspects of historiographic metafiction. The novel has been read as a national allegory, while early political and feminist readings have been followed by comments on the narrative’s posthuman dimension. Still, one could consider that this is hardly news as self-reflexivity, intertextuality, and historical and political themes have characterised the novel since Rabelais.

Gray was locally tied to Scottish tradition and heritage, yet his work was open to the cosmos, both learned and steeped in popular culture. Like the father of the modern novel, Gray had grown wary of “scholars”, as opposed to “FOLK WHO READ, for pleasure”. Academic work had created, he thought, an imbalance between theoretical abstraction and enjoyment. Yet, in critical work, his objection to our scholarly practice is often only mentioned as an anecdote.

We suggest his challenge deserves proper critical appraisal if we are to assess his legacy. Gray’s anti-hermeneutical stance (in the sense made popular by Susan Sontag) has a Kunderian significance and is of Rabelaisian descent. Following the French master, Gray seems to suggest that the novel imposes its own genealogy and aesthetic regime, where filiation is embedded in a complex creative process, and in which sensorial experience and pleasure play a central role. Our aim will be to show how the reading experience of *Poor Things* (which formally includes both textual and pictorial bodies) outlines its own view of the art of the novel. Legacy itself (historical, intellectual, artistic) is in fact central to Gray’s novelistic concerns. Through his characters, the author asks: what do we do with it, do we look at it anew, what should we hand down? In the novel, ideology collapses into confusion, grand narratives cave into embarrassment, and yet, there is still room for paying homage to ancestors and passing on knowledge through art.

**Bio:** Myrto Petsota has taught languages, literature, and translation in secondary and higher education for over a decade. She completed a Ph.D. on Italo Calvino at the University of Edinburgh in 2012. In 2022 she obtained a doctoral contract for a second Ph.D. at Paul Valéry University Montpellier 3. The core hypothesis of her current research is that built on the ruined landscape of progress, the novelistic knowledge of contemporary British fiction probes the anthropological deadlock of humankind in the age of neoliberalism and outlines a new humanist project through new satirical forms, which go against the theoretical claims of posthumanism.

**Pompié, Constance (Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3)**

**The Transmission of the Pastoral Mode in Sarah Hall’s *Haweswater* (2002)**

“The Lake District, for many, has become a retail experience with an attractive backdrop of lakes and fells” (Whyte 247) writes Ian Whyte about tourism in the Lake District, known for being the cradle of British Romanticism. Perceiving and depicting nature as a backdrop whose role is to enhance human experiences used to be a cornerstone of the pastoral mode. Raymond Williams explains that the idealisation of rural spaces and the politics endorsed by the pastoral mode are the main reasons why it became obsolete (Williams 105). The pastoral mode therefore seems to be at odds with current environmental concerns and ecocriticism. However, literary scholars have argued that the return of the pastoral mode in contemporary literature is sparked by the environmental crisis (Lilley 29). Such a return is a testament to the adaptability and reflexivity of this literary tradition whose modalities of transmission are explored by a spate of contemporary British novelists.

I argue that Sarah Hall transforms and reconfigures the pastoral mode so as to transfer it to the present and adapt it to contemporary environmental concerns. *Haweswater* presents the reader with a pastoral setting that is far from idyllic as the narrative depicts the flooding of a Lake District valley to enable the construction of a dam designed to provide the city of Manchester with water. Far from the escapism and idealisation pastoral has long been accused of (Sales 17), this novel offers a powerful and complex representation of how the pastoral tradition and contemporary concerns for the destruction of the environment intersect. Hall borrows some characteristics of Terry Gifford’s “post-pastoral” (Gifford 3), and Ken Hiltner’s ecocritical reading of the pastoral in order to put into perspective the social, political and environmental consequences of exploiting nature and the non-human entities that inhabit it.

Hall’s subversion of the pastoral allows literature to investigate, question and reflect on the current crises the world is undergoing and our position as human beings embedded in a natural environment (Barad 393). Hailing from a secular heritage, the pastoral thus continues to be a political mode of writing whose conventions can be revisited in order to offer an ethical representation of the environment and question our responsibilities as human beings.

**Bio**: Constance Pompié holds a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree in English studies. She passed the agrégation in 2019 with honours, and obtained a degree in teaching. She is currently a fully funded PhD student in the EMMA (EA741) research unit at the University Paul Valéry Montpellier 3 where she teaches and conducts her research under the supervision of Professor Jean-Michel Ganteau. Drawing on ecocriticism, neo materialism, posthumanism and ethics, her PhD investigates Sarah Hall’s use of the pastoral mode as a response to the environmental crisis in her novels and short stories.

**Roblin, Isabelle (Université du Littoral-Côte d’Opale)**

**Transmission as Fabrication in Graham Swift’s *Shuttlecock* (1981) and *Wish You Were Here* (2011)**

For Graham Swift, as for many authors of the immediate post-World War II generation, transmitting memories and stories of the past, and especially of the two world wars (but also more recently, the Iraq war) to the next generations, especially as those who lived them are passing out living memory, is part of a writer’s duty of remembrance (“devoir de mémoire”). Thus most of his novels are about or at least include ex-servicemen whose lives have been obliquely or directly shaped by their wartime experiences and/or ordinary people who have been traumatized one way or another by the war. However, as he said in an interview with Marc Porée,\* it is also up to the novelists to debunk some of the “glorious myths” transmitted by family members or by the army, for example, when facts or events are deliberately or unwittingly falsified. I shall examine here a few examples of these faulty transmissions that the novelist deals with in his novels, and the damage they do, focusing more specifically on *Shuttlecock* (1981) and *Wish You Were Here* (2011).

\* Marc Porée, « Entretien avec Graham Swift », *La Quinzaine Littéraire* 621 (1993): 10-11.

**Bio:** Isabelle Roblin is a retired emeritus assistant professor at the Université du Littoral-Côte d’Opale (France), specializing in contemporary British literature, and has published many academic papers on Graham Swift, Kazuo Ishiguro, C. S. Forester, Salman Rushdie, John Fowles, Ian McEwan among others. Recently, she has been focusing on neo-Victorian novels and working at the same time on the literary and filmic adaptations of novels. In 2011 she published a critical study of all of Harold Pinter's screenplays entitled *Harold Pinter : la liberté artistique et ses limites*.

**Vatanpour, Sina (Université de Lille)**

**The Body as the Medium of Transmutation of Cultural Heritage in Tennessee Williams’ ‘Desire and the Black Masseur’**

Tennessee Williams’ fiction has received less attention than his monumental plays, yet his short stories are just as controversial and provocative. “Desire and the Black masseur,” contains many of the contentious themes that appear in his plays such as violence, race, homosexuality, sadomasochism, and cannibalism. The author may be qualified as an openly autobiographical writer whose work reflects his personality and life experiences. He transfigures real life events and people to fiction and imaginary characters, thus much of his work becomes the expression of his multifaceted personality. In “Desire and the Black Masseur”, the tortured and dismembered body of Anthony Burns, devoured at the end by the unnamed black masseur, becomes the medium of transmuting the historical racial conflict in the south in association with homoeroticism and cannibalism. The body, metaphorically and physically, becomes the place where the dissimulated and often rejected shadowy components of the private self intertwine with the dark Southern historical heritage. The final ingestion of the white frail body of Anthony Burns by the Black masseur suggests the different interpretations of anthropophagy. It evokes the consumption of the historical enemy in order to take in his force, and simultaneously it suggests the integration of the loved one within the same sex sadomasochistic relation.

**Bio:** Sina Vatanpour is associate professor in American studies at the Applied Languages Department of university of Lille in France. His research and publications have focused on American cinema and the representation of money as sign and symbol in American literature and films. His latest publications include,“Money: The Token of Cultural Memory and American Ethics in Frank Capra’s Film Making Philosophy,” “Money Narratives in Postmodern Fictions of Paul Auster and Martin Amis,” and “Lineage, Legacy and Debt in Paul Auster’s Selected Novels.”