

Atelier 25 : Femmes, sexe, genre (Société d'Études Anglophone sur les Femmes, le Sexe et le Genre, SAGEF)

(Resp.: Alexandrine Guyard-Nedelec, Marc Calvini-Lefebvre)

Florent Da Sylva (Aix-Marseille Université)

Teenage-girl characters in American Young Adult literature: between a rebirth of multiculturalism within the genre and the representation of women's resilience

“There is not enough news to report about multicultural literature ... the most underpublished segment of YA,” reported Michael Cart in his 2016 book *Young Adult Literature: The state of Restless Art* deploring the lack of representation since the now waning success of diverse writers such as Walter Dean Myers. And yet, at the time of writing of this communication in early 2020, *The Poet X*, by Dominican-American author Elizabeth Acevedo, has just been awarded the prestigious Michael L. Printz Award by the American Library Association; five books out of ten featured on the New York Times Young Adult Bestseller list were written by authors from various ethnic backgrounds, two of these books have been on the list for more than a year and a half and were not only written by women, but about women. “I had a lot of different reasons for writing the book but at its core was the desire to write for black teenage girls growing up reading books they were absent from ,” writes Tomi Adeyemi (2018), whose book *Children of Blood and Bone*, has been featured on the list for eighty-eight consecutive weeks.

But how do these women writers—who identify themselves as feminists—represent young female characters within that genre? In a post #MeToo era, how is sex—and sexual harassment or assault—dealt with in those narratives? How does the notion of resilience play against the need for empathy-triggering traits in female characters?

Through a multidisciplinary approach, my communication will delve into selected excerpts from those works of fiction which I perceive, not only as the spearheads of a rebirth of multiculturalism and diversity within the genre, but as the bearers of paradoxes studied through the prisms of narratology, stylistics and women's studies.

Florent Da Sylva is currently enrolled within Aix-Marseille University as a second year Ph.D. student via a doctoral contract with the école doctorale 354 and under the supervision of Dr. Sara Greaves, Senior Lecturer at the Laboratoire d'Études et de Recherche du Monde Anglophone (LERMA). He also teaches literature classes (British and American) as well as creative writing in close collaboration with Sara Greaves. His thesis is entitled “‘Young Adult fiction’, a paradoxical and multicultural genre: stylistics and narrative techniques aimed at immediacy? The cases of Veronica Roth, Sabaa Tahir and Tomi Adeyemi: publishing successes redeployed in creative writing courses” and finds its sources within his own interrogations as a Young Adult Fiction writer.

Margaret Gillespie (Université de Franche-Comté)

Tawdry and transgressive: the notion of rebirth in Jane Bowles' *Two Serious Ladies*

“In order to work out my own little idea of salvation, I really believe it is necessary for me to live in some more tawdry place and particularly in some place where I was not born” says one of the female protagonists in *Two Serious Ladies* (1943), American writer Jane Bowles' only published novel. The work features a duo of bizarrely garbed and titled social misfits, Miss Christina Goering and Mrs Frieda Copperfield who embark on backwards Bildungsroman-quests in search of spiritual rebirth, freed from the shackles of moneyed and marital convention: the latter jettisons her square-but-handsome husband for existential (and other) ecstasy in the arms of Pacifica, a Spanish teenage prostitute, while the former disinherits herself and takes up with a string of dubious male partners. If, as has been argued, such outlandish characterisation and narrative is a way for Bowles, like K. Mansfield, D. Barnes and J. Rhys, of “exploring their own estrangement as authors” (Lorna Sage), it is also means by which indecorous female sexuality, may be reclaimed and championed. And as Bowles narrative transgresses the limits of sexual propriety as a precursor to postmodernism, the birth of a new literary genre.

Margaret Gillespie is a lecturer in English studies at the University of Franche-Comté in Besançon, where, with Nella Arambasin, she coordinates a research axe on sexual identities. She is the author of a PhD on Djuna Barnes and has published articles on Barnes, Zora Neale Hurston, Nella Larsen and Mina Loy among others.

Alexandrine Guyard-Nedelec (Université Paris 1 - Panthéon Sorbonne)

Des Naissances sur ordonnance : les césariennes forcées au Royaume-Uni.

De la même façon que les juges de common law peuvent être sollicités par des médecins pour contraindre un·e patient·e à prendre un traitement médical, ces juges peuvent être amenés à contraindre une femme à subir une césarienne, si elle refuse de s'y soumettre alors que le corps médical estime que cette intervention chirurgicale réduirait les risques pour la vie de la mère et/ou celle de l'enfant à naître. Une telle ordonnance peut se voir délivrée y compris lorsque la parturiente a exprimé son non-consentement par écrit (*St George's Healthcare NHS Trust v S; R v Collins and others, ex parte S* [1998] 3 All ER 673). Cette pratique constitue un cas limite du contrôle du corps des femmes ; en particulier du contrôle des grossesses et, à travers ces dernières, de la maternité. L'Etat, en ordonnant l'intervention chirurgicale visant à extraire le fœtus de l'utérus de la mère contre sa volonté, par le truchement du juge, contrevient au principe d'autodétermination de la patiente. Quels sont les enjeux que révèle cette pratique ? Que cache l'apparent conflit qui semble exister entre les droits de la mère, bafoués, et ceux du fœtus, ici mis en exergue ? Cette intervention vise à proposer un état des lieux de la césarienne forcée sur ordonnance du tribunal, qui sera mis en perspective par son inscription dans le cadre plus vaste des violences intersectionnelles, dont les femmes sont victimes à de multiples échelles.

Alexandrine Guyard-Nedelec, ancienne élève de l'ENS de Cachan agrégée d'anglais, est Maîtresse de conférence à l'université Paris 1 – Panthéon Sorbonne, où elle enseigne l'anglais juridique. Ses recherches, à la croisée de la civilisation britannique contemporaine, de la sociologie du droit, et des gender studies, s'inscrivent dans une approche intersectionnelle. Elle a récemment co-dirigé avec Laurence Brunet l'ouvrage « Mon corps mes droits ! ». Panorama socio-juridique de l'avortement. France, Europe, Etats-Unis, Paris, Mare & Martin (Coll. De l'ISJPS, Axe Genre).

Auréliane Narvaez (Université Paris 1 - Panthéon Sorbonne)

“Grandes prostituées de l'Apocalypse”, “Iulus naturae” et “prêtresses de Belzebuth”: repenser l'infidélité religieuse au féminin et son incrimination: appropriation, métamorphoses et recompositions de la libre pensée déiste par les militantes féministes aux États-Unis (1820-1900).

Cette communication se propose d'étudier les processus d'appropriation, de métamorphose et de recomposition de la libre pensée déiste par les militantes féministes aux États-Unis entre 1820 et 1900. Il s'agira plus particulièrement d'interroger l'indissociabilité présumée de la féminité et de la religion en recouvrant les mécanismes biopolitiques sous-jacents qui conduisent à l'affirmation presque injonctive d'une nature féminine prédisposée à la foi et au respect de la morale chrétienne. Nous reviendrons sur la biopolitique protestante qui s'enracine au cours des années 1790 à 1830 et construit l'idée d'une équation entre « féminité véritable » et « religion véritable », laquelle s'appuie sur un contrôle du corps des femmes et sur une propagande associant infidélité religieuse et infidélité sexuelle. Nous nous pencherons surtout sur les parcours de plusieurs militantes féministes et libre penseuses telles Frances Wright, Ernestine Rose, Maria Loomis, Marena Randall ou Juliet Stillman Severance afin de réfléchir aux manières dont la pensée féministe ou protoféministe s'appuie sur un discours critique des religions positives pour promouvoir une vision alternative du républicanisme et de la citoyenneté à rebours de l'idéal post-révolutionnaire de la « Republican motherhood » qui fait des femmes – dans leur fonction d'épouses et de mères – les relais d'une forme de vertu républicaine. Nous tâcherons ainsi de montrer comment la libre pensée déiste du tournant des XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles se voit métabolisée et reconfigurée par un militantisme féministe qui, tout au long du XIX^e siècle, y imprime sa marque en infléchissant son discours vers des problématiques non seulement théologiques mais aussi politiques, sociales, médicales et sexuelles.

Ancienne élève de l'École Normale Supérieure de Lyon, **Auréliane Narvaez** est professeure agrégée d'anglais à l'Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne (PRAG). Elle travaille actuellement à la publication de sa thèse de doctorat soutenue en novembre 2018 et intitulée « Rémanences et métamorphoses de la pensée déiste : mesmérisme, communautés utopiques et spiritualisme aux États-Unis (1794-1887) ». Ses thématiques de recherche portent sur l'histoire des religions et des mouvements spirituels hétérodoxes aux États-Unis ainsi que sur les formes que revêtent l'incroyance et le scepticisme religieux au XIX^e siècle.

Apolline Weibel (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3)

Twice Upon a Time: Maternity, Subversion and (Re)birth in Contemporary Fairy Tale Retellings

Are stepmothers the enemy of feminist literature? As contemporary revisions of classic fairy tales often strive to empower and emancipate its heroines from the patriarchal canon, villainous

(step)mothers find themselves consistently alienated from this narrative trend. Not only are they relegated to antagonistic roles, they remain systematically posited as inferior, wicked counterparts to biological mothers. Forbidden from ever reclaiming successful maternity, stepmothers are left with no choice but to rewrite themselves and, most importantly, their narratives. This paper thereby looks at how contemporary fairy-tale writers counter the prototypical hierarchy of maternal experiences by turning wicked stepmothers into literary genetrices and (re)tellers of subversive and empowering stories. In a first section, I discuss Shuli Barzilai's claim that maternal violence is triggered by the unnatural mother's attempts to mimic and artificially emulate motherhood by (re)absorbing—and thus unbirthing—their stepdaughters through cannibalistic consumption. I then suggest that the recent interest in turning wicked stepmothers into fairy-tale narrators illustrates the importance and urgency of reframing novercaphobic narratives: thus, the current diversification of motherhood within Western societies calls for a similar paradigm shift in their literary alter-egos. This is achieved, as Veronica Schanoes argues, by writers such as Margaret Atwood, Gregory Maguire and Danielle Teller reclaiming imperfect and ambivalent maternal voices as part of a renewed fairy tale canon. Finally, I turn to the works of Robert Coover, Emma Donoghue and Tanith Lee to posit that the gynocentric and matriarchal counternarratives birthed by these new literary (step)mothers also encourage us to rethink—and rewrite—the traditional “mother/daughter plot” as one of eventual reunion and reconciliation on both textual and metatextual levels.

Holder of an agrégation in English literature, **Apolline Weibel** completed a Master's course in Comparative Literature at University College London (UCL) in 2015, before beginning a funded PhD in English and American literature at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3, under the supervision of Professor Isabelle Alfandary. Her research focuses on the representation of maternity and motherhood in contemporary anglophone fairy-tale retellings. She is particularly interested in the archetype of the wicked stepmother, and her role within the mother/daughter narrative. She also teaches literature, theatre, and methodology to undergraduate students at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3.

Amy Wells (Université de Caen Normandie)

Gender Renaissance: DIY approaches to non-binary gender expressions

As trans* people evolve from one gender identity to another, they experience a renaissance of their person. Yet sometimes, they do not have the means to obtain the accessories they need to completely fulfill their new gender identity. Some social media groups are responding to this need by providing inspiration, patterns, and emotional support for making your own packers and binders, in addition to adapting patterns for dresses and lingerie to a variety of body types. Many parents are dealing with the question of how to create gender fluid clothing for their children—especially children wanting to wear or sew outfits that do not conform to society's set binary idea of how a girl or boy should dress. Regardless of the age of the person, birth announcements are shared when they declare their new gender, emphasizing the point of transition in their life. And, perhaps the strongest way in which these groups are an ally to the transitioning population is that they make it possible to create needed accessories using what people already have on hand or what can be easily procured in a mainstream store. The sense of community created in these groups enables the gender renaissance of trans* people, making access easier to clothing and accessories through DIY projects.

Amy D. Wells holds a double Ph.D. in American Literature from Texas Tech University and the Université de Limoges. Associate Professor at the Université de Caen Normandie since 2012, she teaches American Literature, Civilization, and English for Digital Humanities. Her research interests are Women's Studies, Geocriticism, Modernism, and Craftivism. Recent publications include "Liberté, Francophonie, Sexualité: Cinq écrivaines américaines en Normandie dans l'entre-deux guerres" (Éditions La Gronde, 2019). She is president of the Association Nationale des Langues Etrangères Appliquées (ANLEA), and treasurer of the Société des anglicistes sur les femmes, le sexe et le genre (SAGEF).