No *book* is an island

1885
Théodule Ribot
Les Maladies de la personnalité

'[I]l y a en chacun de nous des **tendances** de toute sorte, tous les **contraires** possibles, et entre ces contraires toutes les **nuances** intermédiaires, et entre ces tendances **toutes les combinaisons**.'

(Alcan, p. 77)

My research studies reciprocal, interdisciplinary readings within the *fin-de-siècle*. Proust and d'Annunzio read texts written by the first French psychologists and then encountered each other's novels. These exchanges both popularized psychological theories and made fictional texts more compliant with reality.

1923
Marcel Proust
La Prisonnière

'[C]e n'est pas un **univers**, c'est **des millions**, presque autant qu'il existe de prunelles et d'intelligences humaines, qui s'éveillent tous les matins.'

(ed. by Pierre-Edmond Robert, Gallimard, 2022, p. 260)

July 1893
Gabriele d'Annunzio
L'Intrus

'Il y avait en lui toutes sortes de **tendances**, la possibilité de tous les **contraires**, et, entre ces contraires, une infinité de degrés intermédiaires et, entre ces tendances, une **infinité de combinaisons**. [...] Il était multanime.'

(trans. by Georges Hérelle, Calmann-Lévy, **pp. 30–31**)

August 1893
Marcel Proust
Correspondance

'J'ai lu les **trente** premières pages de l'*Intrus* qui **me ravissent**.'

(ed. by Philip Kolb, 21 vols, 1970, Plon, IV, p. 418)

Anna Paola Manna
She/her
am1935@exeter.ac.uk
University of Exeter
PhD in French
Funded by the
Wolfson Foundation

N
W
E
S

University of Exeter

The Wolfson Foundation

INSULTE   BLESSURE   FRATERNITÉ

'IL Y A PARFOIS QUELQUE CHOSE D'UN PEU MARKETING QUI DANS LA LITTÉRATURE MOI ME TERRORISE, D'UN PEU CAPITALISTE QUE J'AIME PAS DU TOUT, ON SE DIT TOUJOURS QUEL EST LE PROCHAIN LIVRE QUE L'AUTEUR VA ÉCRIRE [...] J'AVAIS L'IMPRESSION DE DEVENIR UNE SORTE DE DANSEUR DE CLAQUETTES POUR LA BOURGEOISIE CULTIVÉE, QU'IL FALLAIT LES SURPRENDRE À CHAQUE FOIS AU PROCHAIN LIVRE'

'THE NARRATIVE READS LIKE AN INVESTIGATIVE DOSSIER, HAVING A FORENSIC QUALITY [...] IT RESEMBLES THE OBSERVATIONS OF A POST-MORTEM'

'LOUIS WRITES A SOLILOQUY DISGUISED AS A DIALOGUE AND ALL BUT EXHUMES HIS BROTHER TO DO SO'

'LOUIS RELIES FAR TOO HEAVILY ON THIS OSCILLATORY READING OF HIS BROTHER TO PROVIDE THE OBJECTIVITY THAT HE DESIRES'

'LA TENTATION EST GRANDE DE NE FAIRE QUE RÉPÉTER CE MÉTADISCOURS PLUTÔT QUE DE LE METTRE EN PERSPECTIVE OU, TOUT AU MOINS, DE NE PAS OSER LE CRITIQUER'

LAÉLIA VÉRON AND KARINE ABIVEN, *TRAHIR ET VENGER* (2024, PP. 34-35)

A CHAPTER BY **MADDISON SUMNER** *(SHE/HER)*

S'EFFONDRER : MÉTHODE

ANALYSING TWO BROTHERS IN PARALLEL

EXPLORING **WHAT IS AT STAKE** FOR ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS *TRANSCLASSE* WRITERS IN CONTEMPORARY FRANCE THROUGH A PARALLEL ANALYSIS OF HIS 2021 NARRATIVE *CHANGER : MÉTHODE* AND THE 2024 PUBLICATION *L'EFFRONDREMENT* • THEMES INCLUDE AN ANALYSIS OF **THE ROOTS OF THEIR PARALLEL TRAJECTORIES** AS EVOKED THROUGH THE CONCEPTS OF *INSULTE* AND *BLESSURE* • **THE FAILURES OF LITERATURE** IN PASSAGES WHICH ATTEMPT TO BE EXPERIMENTAL BUT ARE **JUST VIOLENT AND DISARMING** • **CLASS VIOLENCE** VERSUS THE **DOMINATION OF MASCULINE VIOLENCE** • EXPLORATIONS OF **METADISCOURSES, INTENTIONS, AND OUTPUTS** AND THE EFFECT OF THE MARKETABILITY OF *TRANSCLASSE* LITERATURE ON THE PEOPLE WHO WRITE IT

SOCIETY FOR FRENCH STUDIES
CONFERENCE **30 JUNE - 2 JULY**
2025   MLS69@CAM.AC.UK

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Behind *Le Livre de jade*:
A fractured source space and the *yuefu* tradition

By: Zi Ying (Kathy) Fan
MSt Comp. Lit. & Critical Translation
zyfan@alumni.princeton.edu
Supervisor: Jennifer Yee

My project takes a **translation studies approach** to Judith Gautier's *Le Livre de jade* (1867), a collection of ~70 Classical Chinese poems translated into French. Drawing upon recent theories of translation multiples, I present a **spatio-temporal opening-up** of the way in which we can regard *Livre* as a work of translation and a work of literature.
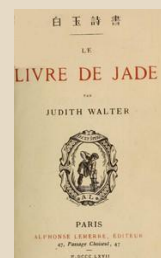
Theorizing translation multiples

'Channel' vs 'prism' metaphors (Reynolds)
Livre has been primarily studied in a 'channel' view (*left*) of translation, with scholars answering questions like: what are Gautier's source texts? How authentic are her translations? By contrast, Reynolds proposes a prismatic model (*right*) that accommodates the plural signifying potential of the source text.

$$S \rightarrow \boxed{} \rightarrow T$$

$$S \rightarrow \triangle \begin{matrix} T1 \\ T2 \\ T3 \\ T4 \end{matrix}$$
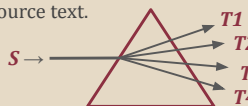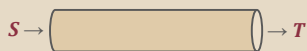
No stable original (Emmerich)
While the prism acknowledges plurality in the target space, it leaves the source unquestioned. Emmerich contends that the source of translation is rarely a stable, singular original: rather, it is iterative and variable.

'Truth value' vs 'performative value' (Apter)
If we move away from the notion of a stable source, then we must also reconsider the metrics by which we evaluate a translation. Apter proposes replacing 'truth value' (the authenticity test) with 'performative value,' a reception-driven concept pertaining to a work's 'translational vivacity' – does the new text come alive?

My methodology draws upon these theories to study *Livre* through the metaphor of an **inverted prism**.

Gautier's **'Le pavillon de porcelaine'** is a literary enigma, for no one has been able to identify a porcelain pavilion in any Chinese poem; note that life-size Chinese pavilions are most often built of wood or brick. Inspired by existing works which suggest the influence of **stock iconography** [1] and the Chinese pavilion at the **1867 Paris World Expo** [2], I identify other personal, visual, and material factors that can be considered as sources for Gautier's translation. References to a 'tour de porcelaine', a real landmark in Nanjing, China, have existed in French texts and **travel sketches** [3] since the 1660s. Théophile Gautier (Judith's father) alludes to this very 'tour de porcelaine fine' in his **poem 'Chinoiserie'** [4]. **Photographs** of Chinese architecture, such as the Porcelain Palace [5], were also circulated. Finally, I consider **miniature porcelain models** [6] – I argue that such *objets d'art* fit into an established rhetoric of East Asian culture as something that can be reduced, contained, and miniaturized and therefore blur the line between the real and the invention. For Gautier, then, porcelain infrastructure exists as a **complex entanglement** of realistic portraits of Chinese landscapes, physical *objets d'art*, and a deeply personal exposure to the French literary imagination. In inventing a 'porcelain pavilion,' she assumes a **fluid interchangeability** (of one form of Chinese architecture for another) that magnifies the way in which seemingly opposite categories are already flexibly woven together. In this manner, **she gives birth to a novel variation that has no stable original**.

[1]

[2]
[4]
[5]
[3]

[6]

Part One thus uncovers the **multiplicity** in *Livre*'s source space. Moreover, a translation drawing from visual and material sources fundamentally resists being measured by textual **truth value**.

PART ONE: The fractured, multimodal sources of *Le Livre de jade*

My work reimagines *Le Livre de jade* in a broader continuum of world literature than previous studies have been able to.
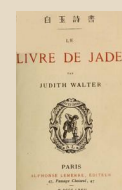
space

Performers
Performance: music
Performance: dance
Other poets' versions

Chinese texts

time

PART TWO: *Le Livre de jade* as a continuation of the *yuefu* tradition

Part Two is inductive in spirit, applying a similar methodology to an earlier interval of time to identify the multiplicity and instability that likewise characterize the Tang dynasty (~8th c.) source texts for Gautier's translations. My research foregrounds the Classical Chinese **yuefu** tradition, which dates back to the Han dynasty (~206BC-220AD). Han *yuefu* poems were anthologized for court performances that combined poetry, music, and dance. Over the next 1000 years, Chinese poets often wrote their own versions of Han *yuefu* poems; *yuefu* thus became an inter-epochal poetic tradition built upon a set of **inherited topoi**. One of these is the **'picking lotus' topos**, versions of which have been composed by Tang poets Li Bai and Wang Changling and translated in *Livre*. I argue that because recitation became the predominant mode of reception for poetry during the Tang dynasty, Li and Wang's poems must **perform from within**. Sounds with **musical qualities** dot their texts, and descriptions of the wind lifting the picking lotus girls' sleeves into the air are reminiscent of poses in Chinese **dance.** Just as we had considered the non-textual sources of 'Le pavillon de porcelaine', **so too do non-textual modes inform these Tang poets' writings**. As the 'picking lotus' topos comes alive to a new Tang audience, **performative value clearly supplants truth value**.

Part Two establishes the **unstable, iterative, and variable** nature of Gautier's Chinese source texts to demonstrate how her translations are continuous with the process of transformation that *yuefu* topoi have undergone **for centuries already,** under the brushes of Chinese poets.

Further reading: *Prismatic Translation* (Matthew Reynolds), *Literary Translation and the Making of Originals* (Karen Emmerich), *The Translation Zone* (Emily Apter)

Humans, Nature and Landscapes Within Thirteenth-Century Arthurian Romance

This study examines Raoul de Houdenc's *La Vengeance Raguidel* as well as the anonymous *L'Âtre Périlleux* and *Claris et Laris* to understand the relationship between humans and forests. While Ecocriticism is a thriving discipline in Medieval French studies, ecocritical approaches to *La Vengeance Raguidel*, *L'Âtre Périlleux* and *Claris et Laris* remain nascent. Previous research into these narratives has predominately centred around the supernatural and their impact on later narratives. Each narrative possesses accounts of the supernatural, including fairies and enchanted ships, to develop the narratives. While *La Vengeance Raguidel*, *L'Âtre Périlleux* and *Claris et Laris* possess supernatural elements, these narratives contain abundant depictions of forests and the varied species of trees within them. For the narratives, forests are presented as powerful forces resulting in profound interactions between the protagonists and the forest. For these thirteenth-century narratives, each narrative constructs images of distant forests which reflect the moral conditions of governance and land management.

The contemporary mind may assume the concepts of land management and forest legislation are an entirely modern creation, but this, nevertheless, is not an accurate reflection of the Middle Ages. From the ninth to the fourteenth century, the management of land, including gardens and forests, was a locus of social and political activity since the land was considered essential to sustaining self-sufficient food production as well as bodily and spiritual nourishment. From the ninth century, the forest was regarded as a productive site of life which offered humans significant economic fulfilment, and thus forest laws were established to protect the king's hunting grounds and encourage the growth of plants and herbs. Charlemagne's *Capitulare de Villis* encourages the management and cataloguing of forest resources. As [Dolly Jørgensen, 2010] states, Charlemagne's *Capitulare de Villis* from the ninth century outlined the need to protect the animals within the forest which led to hunting being banned unless undertaken by the king. However, Charlemagne gave special permission for the church to undertake hunting activity in order to obtain materials for religious texts and books, but the church, although afforded such privileges, had to ensure the overall vigour of the forest. On a fundamental level, these forest laws prevented wider community access to the forest, with exception for select nobility and other social groups who were granted special privileges, designating this natural space as a central reserve for animal and plant life.

In *La Vengeance Raguidel*, *L'Âtre Périlleux* and *Claris et Laris,* the authors are conscious of the importance of trees in sustaining all life forms from deer to birds presented through human-forest interactions. These forests offer spiritual and emotional nourishment to the human protagonists in all the narratives. Previous research into Arthurian romance focusing on forests has revealed the relationship between Arthur's court and the natural world. Recent research by [Fortunata Latella, 2024] explores this link in Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec et Enide* to demonstrate Arthur's development of forests into land with new uses. [Fortunata Latella, 2024] argues Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec et Enide* depicts deforestation as an opportunity to create leisure activity: the space becomes recreated for use as sites for retreats and bases for hunting trips. Although *La Vengeance Raguidel*, *L'Âtre Périlleux* and *Claris et Laris* have been influenced by Chrétien de Troyes, these narratives do not necessarily conform with the ideological conceptions interwoven into Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec et Enide.*

La Vengeance Raguidel, *L'Âtre Périlleux* and *Claris et Laris* create a moral framework in which the destruction and exploitation of the forests are associated with immorality that undermines the sacredness of the landscape. This is reiterated by the introduction of destructive human-forest activity: deforestation and mistreatment. Each author utilises depictions of distant forests to communicate their reflections of morality highlighting the purity of Arthur's court which is then contrasted with unethical behaviour towards the forest. All the narratives generate multifaceted, and at times hostile, depictions of human-forest relationships, and each narrative possesses shared themes to reflect the relationship between humans and forests.

| Alice Denton | University of Bristol | Medieval Studies (PhD) | For feedback: sv24991@bristol.ac.uk |

Amplifying the Voice of Galïor in Maugis d'Aigremont

Cherrelle Dowdie, MA in Literary Translation, UEA, c.dowdie@uea.ac.uk

Why amplify Galïor's voice?

Galïor is named once in one of three surviving manuscripts: (laisse II, line 55, Peterhouse MS 201). Galïor plays a key role in Maugis' trajectory, yet her own story as the kidnapped child of Palermo's Emir who later flees captivity is captivating in itself. What can she tell us about identity and agency in the medieval slave trade?

What frame will I use?

Thick translation "that seeks with its annotations and accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context" (Kwame Anthony Appiah, 1993). I will draw from historical research while engaging in close reading with the aim of walking the text through the gaze of Galïor.

Translation techniques I can employ

Interventionist techniques e.g., naming Galïor where 'l 'esclave' is in the source and exploring counternarratives while using medieval manuscript paratextual apparatus as inspiration.

Translating from the Visual

Loyset Liédet's ilumination from a later 15th century prose version can serve as an additional translation tool while working from an edition of the 13 c. chanson de geste.

Paris, BnF, MS Arsenal 5072 (fol. 6v)

The Writer as Advocate in Contemporary French Literature about Autism

Aims

This project examines a corpus of contemporary memoirs to analyse the role of authors in ongoing debates surrounding the nature of autism, how to care for autistic people, and how government policyand literary production interact in response to the needs of autistic peopole and their families in France. This analysis will read literary texts within political and legal frameworks to chart the influence of disability law since 1975 and autism policy since 2005. The project seeks to analyse the role that authors play in shaping public perception of autism and in influencing France's autism policies.

The project uses a blended framework of methods from the medical humanities, disability studies, neurodiversity studies, and autism studies to achieve its aims.

Corpus

A mix of autistic and allistic (parent) authors, all published in the last 15 years

The Plans Autisme

The autism plans are France's policy agenda relating to autism research, treatment, and accommodation. They are an ongoing initiative: the first plan launched in 2005 and the fifth iteration is currently in effect, lasting until 2027. The early plans were largely concerned with the needs of autistic children and their families/carers, while more recent version of the plans have included considerations for autistic adults in higher education and employment.

STRATÉGIE NATIONALE 2023-2027 POUR LES TROUBLES DU NEURODÉVELOPPEMENT : AUTISME, DYS, TDAH, TDI

Research Questions

- Why has there been an upsurge in publishing about autism in France?
- What linguistic strategies do authors who write about autism use to achieve their aims?
- How does literature influence and challenge political and legal contexts of autism in France?
- What does the political act of writing about autism tell us about the role and identity of authors in France today?

Emily Monroe (she/they), Queen's University Belfast, emonroe02@qub.ac.uk

Visualizing a 'Synergy of Greatness': A Study of the Sublime through Napoleonic Battle Painting, c. 1800-1815

University of Kent

Emily Su (she/her)

PhD in History and Philosophy of Art, University of Kent

hs584@kent.ac.uk

'What I am seeking above all is GRANDEUR: that which is GRAND and always BEAUTIFUL.'

These were the words that Napoleon Bonaparte once said to Dominique-Vivant Denon, the Director of Museums under the regime. Under the meticulous direction and patronage of the Napoleonic government, battle painting quickly became one of the major categories of visual art that captured and propagated what it meant to be 'great' in the early decades of nineteenth-century France; now more than ever, these spectacular displays of military conquest and soldierly splendor became primary vehicles through which men's highest virtues and potentials could be visualized and admired by the whole of the nation.

In my research, I propose that Napoleonic battle painting can be approached through a **'synergy of greatness'**: an interpretive strategy that strives to help the viewer to read a Napoleonic battle painting by considering how the depicted narrative engages with interpretations of the 'sublime' that were common in the Napoleonic era – and, more importantly, by examining how these elements of the sublime compound with one another in a visual dialogue in Napoleonic battle painting to construct an all-encompassing, total narrative of grandeur that transcends the capacity of any individual element on its own.

Battle Painting in the Napoleonic Era: A Realm of Transformative Greatness

- Proliferation and monumentalization of contemporary subjects
- Surge in production: state commissions, state-sponsored competitions
- Publicization and circulation: Salon exhibitions, popular prints
- Reward and recognition: financial income, the Legion of Honor

Methodology

- The '**sublime**' as a key concept for understanding Napoleonic greatness
- Data collection: museum visits, archival research, historical and art historical studies

Frequency of the usage of the term 'sublime' in French literature (1750-1815)
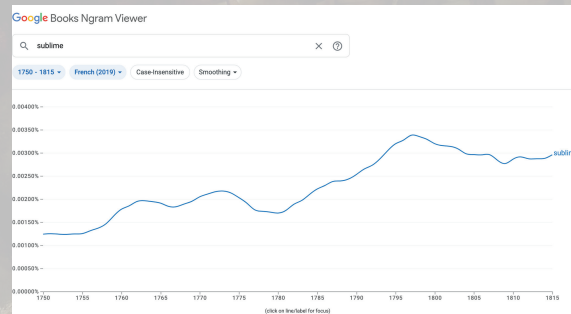
'Le Sublime' in the Napoleonic Era: Key Concepts and Associations

- General interpretation: the sublime as **greatness of human character**
- Longinian and Boileauian perspectives on the 'sublime' were contextualized and reshaped through moral, sociopolitical, and military spheres
- Key synonyms of the 'sublime': *gloire* (glory) and *honneur* (honor) – heavy military implications
- The Napoleonic sublime as a synergy of individual and collective greatness
- Symbols of individual greatness: Bonaparte the hero-savior and extraordinary leader; Napoleon's 'sublime genius' and magnanimity; his fulfillment of his 'sublime destiny'
- Symbols of collective greatness: patriotic and republican themes that were largely contextualized in a military sphere (e.g. the 'sublime courage' and 'sublime virtues' of the French soldiers)

Example Analysis: 'The Battle of the Pyramids' (1810) by Antoine-Jean Gros

- Symbols of the sublime in the painting: leadership (by General Bonaparte); enthusiasm and devotion (of the surrounding soldiers)
- Formal elements that create a 'sublime effect': a strong visual upward drive is created by the soldiers' raised arms in unison (with Bonaparte as the apex), suggesting a sense of elevation
- Main force of interaction between the symbols of the sublime: reciprocity (in gesture and in mind between Bonaparte and the surrounding crowd)
- The viewer's position and relationship to the painting: The viewer is invited to 'step into' the narrative with the help of 'proxies': depicted characters that invite viewer engagement on an intellectual and/or affective level (in this case, the soldiers with their prompting gestures and emotive facial expressions); the absence of visual and intellectual barriers between the viewer and the painting also indicates increased accessibility.
- The type of synergy suggested by the narrative: **centralized** (from a formal perspective) and **participatory** (from a relational perspective)
- Implications: Greatness/the sublime is portrayed as a quality that is concentrated in a distinguished individual (i.e. Bonaparte), which is then distributed beyond his individuality to inspire those around him (i.e. the soldiers and the viewer).

'Synergy of Greatness': An Overview

It is an **interpretive strategy** that ...

- Considers how the depicted narrative engages with interpretations of the 'sublime' that were common in the Napoleonic era (and, to some extent, in French culture at large)
- Examines how elements of the sublime compound with one another in a visual dialogue to construct a total, all-encompassing narrative of grandeur

The four main building blocks of the synergy:

- Symbols of the sublime (e.g. leadership, devotion, enthusiasm, military values, self-sacrifice, and magnanimity)
- Forces of interaction between the symbols (e.g. collaboration and reciprocity)
- Formal/visual elements that contribute to a 'sublime effect' (e.g. horizontal extension and monumental size of the canvas)
- The viewer of the battle painting

The aims of the strategy:

- Identify the symbols of greatness in Napoleonic battle painting and show their connections to interpretations of the 'sublime' in the Napoleonic era (and in French culture)
- Demonstrate how the synergistic interaction between these symbols can be approached through its formal presentation and its relationship to the viewer to yield different readings and evaluations of greatness
- Reflect on how this interpretive strategy contributes to our understanding of the sublime and greatness on a broader level
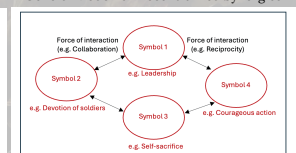
Formal Approach
Examines the *visual presentation* of the synergy
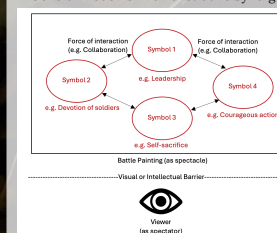

General Model for Centralized Synergies
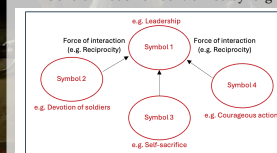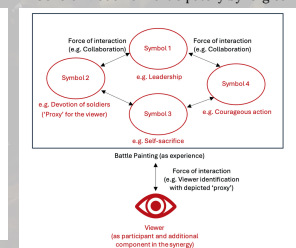
General Model for Decentralized Synergies

Relational Approach
Examines the *relationship* between the depicted synergy and the viewer

General Model for Demonstrative Synergies

General Model for Participatory Synergies

The Role of Military Interpreters in French Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan

University of BRISTOL

Scholar: Kareem Othman
Supervisors: Professor Martin Hurcombe
Dr Ian Foster

Historical Context

Interpreters have historically played an important role in military operations, bridging linguistic and cultural differences between foreign forces and local communities. During France's deployments to Iraq (2003–2011) and Afghanistan (2001–2014), translators played a critical but often overlooked role in achieving mission outcomes. Military interpreters, worked in high-risk situations where linguistic choices could determine tactical decisions, contact with civilian populations , and even survival. Historically, France has relied heavily on local interpreters, particularly in its former colonies. This research places French military interpreters in larger sociolinguistic and geopolitical contexts and looks at how their dual roles as military aides and cultural insiders affected France's post-conflict legacy and operational efficacy. French-language interpreters in conflict areas are still not well-studied, despite the fact that military interpreting has been investigated in other contexts (Baker, 2010; Footitt and Kelly, 2012).

Aims and Objectives

This study aims to critically analyse the role of interpreters in French military operations by answering three key questions:

- How did French military strategies evolve to integrate interpreters into operations?
- What were the main challenges interpreters faced working with the French military in Iraq and Afghanistan, and how did they mitigate them?
- How did interpreters' roles in counterinsurgency operations impact the success of French military missions?

The study seeks to transform conceptions of interpreters from passive tools of language exchange to active players in conflict dynamics, as well as provide actionable recommendations for military policy and interpreter welfare procedures.

Research Context

The French military's integration of interpreters in Iraq and Afghanistan reflects the growing importance of linguistic and cultural mediation in counterinsurgency (COIN) operations (Jones, 2018). Interpreters played a dual role bridging communication gaps and aiding intelligence gathering but faced challenges like security risks and ethical dilemmas (Rafael, 2007). Despite these issues, their contributions in trust-building and local engagement significantly influenced mission success.

The Book"Afghan Interpreters Through Western Eyes: Foreignness and the Politics of Evacuation" by Hilary Footitt (2023) is published by: Palgrave Macmillan

Methodology

Stage One: The research will begin with a systematic review of history of military interpreting within the French armed forces throughout the twentieth century, with particular focus on the two World Wars and the Algerian War of Independence. This stage aims to delineate the structural and operational roles interpreters assumed within colonial and postcolonial military contexts. Archival sources including military documents, and relevant secondary literature will be systematically examined to trace continuities and discontinuities in interpreter recruitment, deployment, and institutional perceptions.

Stage Two: Qualitative Data Collection
Building on this historical principle, the second stage will involve collecting empirical data from 30–40 semi-structured interviews with former French interpreters who will be chosen to represent a variety of contexts (civilian interaction, combat, and diplomacy) during French operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. To maintain language integrity and cultural nuances, interviews will be conducted in French, Kurdish, or Dari and will be expertly translated. Thematic coding will be used to find recurring themes in interpreters' stories, such as how they handle power struggles, ethical dilemmas, and institutional hierarchy.

Stage Three: Interview data will be linked with current archive materials, including field manuals, post-operational reports, and declassified French military documents. Informed by Fairclough's (2003) paradigm, a combination of critical discourse analysis and thematic coding will be used to examine the relationship between interpreters' lived experiences and institutional narratives. By highlighting concerns of power, representation, and historical continuity, this analytical method will illuminate how colonial-era logics continue to influence military interpretation techniques in the twenty-first century.

Proposed Outline

This project investigates the frequently neglected role of interpreters in French military operations and how their contributions have been recorded or excluded from official accounts. Anticipated chapters will encompass a historical examination of interpreter involvement, institutional treatment, ethical issues, and policy comparisons. The study will advance through a review of existing literature, case studies, and interviews, leading to subsequent phases of analysis and writing. A comprehensive timeline will direct the work through each phase, allowing for the findings to influence the final conclusions.

FREAKING OUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD: READING THE *ZONE PAVILLONAIRE* IN JULIA DECK'S *PROPRIÉTÉ PRIVÉE* (2019)

Pierce Lockett (he/his) // PhD Student, Department of French // University of Virginia (pdf5zu@virginia.edu)

This project examines the mutually implicated categories of **space, architecture, and narrative** throughout Julia Deck's *Propriété privée* (2019). More precisely, this project examines how related notions of privacy and gossip take on particular importance to both the novel's territorial and, I claim, metafictional investments. Three questions animate this study:

1. How does *Propriété privée*'s representation of the *écoquartier* **critique** this distinctly ecological form of the *zone pavillonaire*?

2. To what extent does the **narrative shape** of *Propriété privée* interact with, borrow from, or subvert the architectural elements of *écoquartier* in which the novel unfolds?

3. In what ways might the novel's interest in (and critique of) the built environment invite readers to rethink not only how **fiction engages with architecture**, but also **how architecture conditions fiction** – and, by extension, the disposition of readers themselves?

In the novel, the novel's main characters, Eva and Charles Caradec, move to an *écoquartier* in Greater Paris. Soon after their arrival, the ecological community promised by their new abode soon unravels.

A combination of faulty sustainable infrastructure, marital strife, and sadistic neighbors, Annabelle and Arnaud, make their lives unlivable, with Annabelle aiming to drive them from the neighborhood:

*"J'ai compris que j'avais plus le droit dans notre abri le plus intime, **parce que rien de ce qui se déroulerait ici ne demeurerait caché.** Surtout j'ai compris que j'allais mordre la poussière". (39)*

Eventually, Annabelle goes missing, with Charles soon arrested on suspicion of her disappearance. Neighborly hearsay - seen through open windows of the *zone pavillonaire* - provides rationale for his culpability:

*"Tu avais été dénoncé. **Des voisins t'avaient aperçu,** au début de l'été, traverser l'allée avec la scie électrique des Taupin. Or tu ne bricolais pas. **De notoriété publique,** tu dormais dans un transat ou dans notre chambre à l'étage…" (141)*

After fellow neighbors, fearful of revelations concerning their own personal lives, come forward with information that exonerates Charles, Eva and Charles' home mysteriously explodes. The *écoquartier* as a narrative site (quite literally) goes up in smoke:

*« Je suis certaine que tu te plairas à Gambetta. En revanche, nous ferons un croix sur la propriété privée. **La location, c'est moins de tracas.** » (172)*

Yet should we read *Propriété privée* as only presenting a narrative of decline, giving voice to the "collective worsening of life in the contemporary moment"? (Wampole 2020). The novel's diagnosis of the social dysfunctions it represents is perhaps more attributable to questions about the effects brought about by form - in narrative as in life:

*"A la réflexion, il estimait qu'il y avait une certaine ambiguïté dans le concept [de l'espace incertain]. Certes, l'absence de prédétermination pouvait **concourir à l'émergence de nouvelles sociabilités.** Mais elle dissolvait aussi les responsabilités, de telle sorte que, **si les choses tournaient au pire, personne n'était responsable de rien.** Ou plutôt, **que nous l'étions tous,** a-t-il conclu en me fixant toujours" (151).*

The term "écoquartier" designates a wide range of sustainable housing throughout metropolitan France and its overseas territories. Over 994 requests for écoquartier certification have been opened since 2013, with over 250,000 individual buildings being renovated or constructed (Sustainable Planning Guide 2021). Écoquartiers emphasize energy efficient and recycled materials, sustainable resource grids, and accessible housing.

Écoquartier in Vert-Saint-Denis, Seine-et-Marne. (Architecture Pelegrin BH)

In this sense, *Propriété privée* suggests that readers, too, not only participate in the spatial economy of the text, but are **conditioned by the very limits such literary architectures impose.** Against the "closed" systems of ecological self-sustainability, the text remains porous, relying on readers to co-construct the architectural world it makes. Like neighbors good and bad, readers, too, peer into the windowed world - a world in which privacy may be a fiction like any other.

Wampole, Christy. *Degenerative Realism: Novel and Nation in Twenty-First-Century France.* Columbia University Press, 2020.

Sustainable Planning Guide, Ministère de la transition écologique et de la cohésion des territoires, June 2023.

Perspectives of the Sea in Fabienne Kanor's *Humus*

Introduction: Despite its title, which suggests the organic earthy substance found on the ground, *Humus* (2006), the second novel of Franco-Martinican writer Fabienne Kanor is an oceanic text. Centring the voices of enslaved women and their descendants as they suffered through and resisted the Middle Passage, Kanor illustrates the women's subjective experiences of the sea. Despite the novel's centrepiece being fourteen women jumping into the sea, Kanor avoids homogenising the experiences as each woman has their own perception of the Middle Passage and of the ocean. Below are voices of some of the enslaved women, inscribing different and sometimes conflicting connotations of the sea.

The Sea as an anthropological site: With La Vieille's characterisation of the sea as 'Lamer' it is presented to the reader as a place– like a country. The old woman has come from a land-locked village and has never seen the sea until the Middle Passage. Applying Marc Augé's term 'le lieu anthropologique' (1992), La Vieille voices her perception of the sea. It is no longer just a site in-between two destinations, labelled by Augé as a 'non-lieu'. It is a site that holds the old woman's memories and is the site of her trauma.

La Vieille
Lamer, mille fois, j'avais entendu ce nom. Des nuits entières, j'en avais rêvé. La fin du voyage. Comment aurais- je pu savoir alors qu'après Lamer viendrait la terre?

La Muette
J'ai.
Je.
Nous avons sauté.
Ensemble. Nous avons.
Sauté. Mer. Sautez!
Nous.
L'avons fait

The Sea as a site of resistance: For La Muette, the sea becomes a character that is complicit in the act of resistance. Her enunciation of the act, alternating between the individualistc 'Je' and the collective 'Nous' also includes a command to the sea: 'Sautez'. As the sea jumps with the woman, it facilitates the rebellion, not least by killing some of the women found in its depths and thus freeing them from enslavement.

La Mère
Tu naîtras, sois en sûr et dans la panse de la bête, moi mère, je chanterai.
Rouge plus bleu=, rouge plus bleu=

The Sea as a womb/hold:With the clear link being made between La Mère and la mer in the novel, both are characterised as 'holds' (la cale). It is in the belly of the shark that La Mère procreates with the dying sailor beside her. She is determined to give birth to her child who will born, as Christina Sharpe notes, 'in abjection' (2016) which is illustrated by the absence after the = sign.
But her children survive, as proven by her descendant 'l'héritière', none other than Kanor herself, who from the site of the 'noir-bleu' sea, the site of presumed absence, she will excavate the voices of these women and give birth to her novel that emanates from the sea.

Miriam Gordon, University of Warwick (Miriam.Gordon@warwick.ac.uk)

Breaking the Ageism Cycle in Speculative Fiction

Felicity Moffat: 3rd year PhD candidate, King's College London: felicity.moffat@kcl.ac.uk
Research funded by the London Arts & Humanities Partnership.

THE CONTEXT: AGED BY CULTURE

Margaret Morganroth Gullette (2004) asserts that we are all aged by culture (e.g. representations in fairy tales and films). Internalised ageism is inculcated early in life. As each generation gets older it will, in turn, be part of a seemingly endless cycle, becoming the target of, at best, benevolent tolerance and, at worst, overt discrimination.

THE AGEISM CYCLE

1. Culture teaches us that ageing means decline
2. We fear ageing
3. We all age, so...
4. ...we all have a vested interest in changing cultural values
5. ...but we ignore the 'problem' while we are young
6. Ageism carries on....
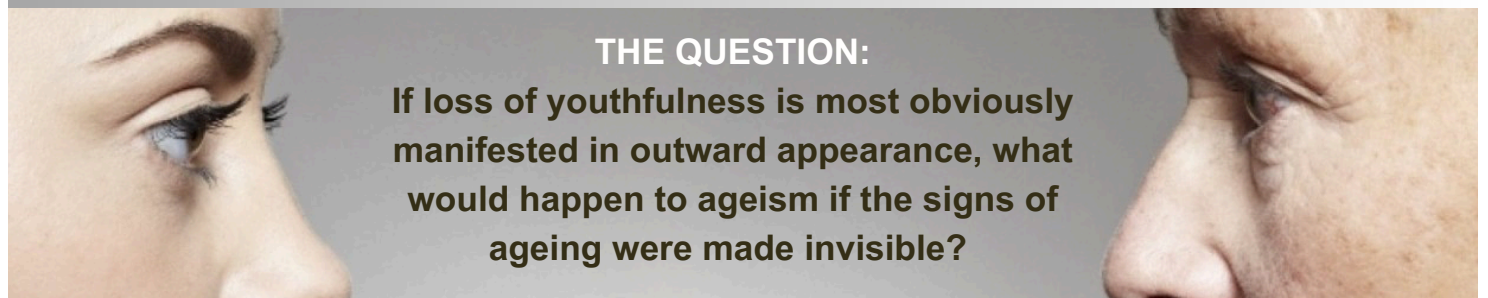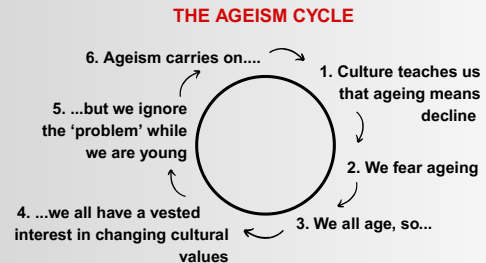
THE QUESTION:

If loss of youthfulness is most obviously manifested in outward appearance, what would happen to ageism if the signs of ageing were made invisible?

IMAGINING THE FUTURE OF AGEISM IN TWO RECENT FRENCH NOVELS

Sophie Loubière, *Obsolète* (2024)

- Northern France 2224.
- Few habitable areas remain, resources are scarce and there has been a drop in fertility.
- As women age and become infertile, they are deemed obsolete. They leave their communities at 50 and never return.
- 70% of these women do not survive (triaged for 'voluntary' euthanasia and/or organ harvesting).
- Their husbands marry again in the hope that children can be conceived to save humanity.
- As no older women are ever seen in the communities, ageing becomes a privilege rather than a burden.
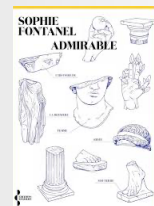
Sophie Fontanel, *Admirable* (2023)

- Greece in 'a' future.
- A drug called Mondoror has been created which removes outward signs of ageing. It is cheap and available to all. Only a few people are left on earth who have not taken the drug. One such person is the enigmatic Admira.
- Admira lives in a remote village and has chosen to cut herself off from modern life.
- Discovered one day by a passing walker, she becomes an object of fascination and envy as others realise that the homogeneity of apparent youthfulness is unnatural and only hides an ageing interior.

HOW SPECULATIVE FICTION HELPS US TO RETHINK THE AGEISM CYCLE

Dystopias 'seek to frighten by accentuating contemporary trends that threaten freedom'
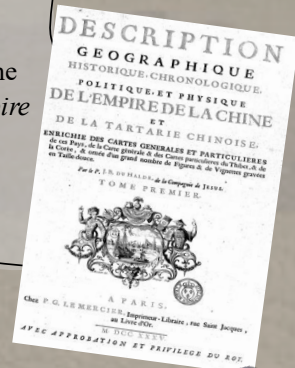
Russell Jacoby (2005)

- The texts actualise and exaggerate how society invisibilises the ageing and aged and point to the absurdity of linking chronological age to obsolescence.
- Their u(s)topian societies suggest that ageism can be eradicated (Margaret Atwood (2011) proposes the term 'ustopia' as a combination of dystopia and utopia).
- By portraying different cultural attitudes to ageing, both *Admirable* and *Obsolète* invite the reader to imagine a world in which the ageing body is admired rather than rejected and in which the primary notions attached to ageing are privilege and respect.

Paradox of Enlightened Despotism:
Tracing the French Monarchy, Voltaire's Politics and his Rewriting of *Le Petit Orphelin de la Maison de Tchao*

Ruoyi Yang, King's College London, ruoyi.yang@kcl.ac.uk

1. A textual encounter across millennia

The earliest versions of the plots were fragmentarily recorded in the *Tradition of Zuo* during the Warring States Period (476-221 BC) in Chinese history. Its first major transmission occurred in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), when the playwright Ji Junxiang was inspired by this highly dramatic account and composed a four-act play titled The *Orphan of Tchao*. Shortly afterwards, the scholars of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) edited the play and added the fifth act. In the early years of the Qing dynasty (1616-1912), Joseph Henri-Marie de Prémare (1666-1736), a Jesuit missionary, translated the drama into French. Later in 1735, this translation was published in the third volume of the *Description géographique, historique, politique et physique de l'empire de la Chine et de la Tartaire chinoise* compiled by the Jesuit Jean-Baptiste du Halde (1674-1743). Inspired by this translation, Voltaire rewrote the play as *L'Orphelin de la Chine*, which was published in 1755.

3. Philosopher king or political idol?

In the original Chinese text, characters are expected to give up private interests entirely for the sake of the public good. Voltaire's version, by contrast, shifts the focus toward weighing private and public interests through the lens of empathy, which suggests a dynamic interplay of negotiation, limitation and mutual compromise between each other. These differences give rise to further questions: what truly defines a philosopher king within Voltaire's vision of enlightened despotism? Can moral consciousness grounded in the ability to share others' feelings lead to the over-personalization of the sovereign authority? And do the methodological framework Voltaire built and his expected outcomes of its practice risk being mutually exclusive?

2. Moral virtue: the path towards an enlightened monarch

Using the story of Genghis Khan as an example, *L'Orphelin de la Chine* outlines a moral trajectory toward an enlightened monarch and introduces the complex tension between private and public interests, raising questions about how those in power can—or should—navigate the moral expectations of loyalty and obedience when confronted with personal emotions such as love and hatred.

4. 'Chinese orphan' as literary fashion

The successful staging of *L'Orphelin de la Chine* launched a 'Chinese orphan' literary pattern: it gave rise to a series of derivative works that took it as their template, for example, *The Orphan of China* by Arthur Murphy, the Irish writer. Viewed through the lens of literary sociology, this phenomenon was likely driven by the expansion of the book market and the increasing demand for rapid literary production, which became part of the broader trend of chinoiserie in eighteenth-century Europe.

From Dragons to Divinators: Muslim Women in the Old French Crusade Cycle

Researcher: Saaleha Iqbal
Email Address: mlsi@leeds.ac.uk

CONTEXT

1. What is the Old French Crusade Cycle?

The central trilogy (*Chanson d'Antioche, Chanson des Chétifs* and *Chanson de Jérusalem*) recounts the First Crusade in fictional form. Additional branches were added to the Cycle throughout the 13th c. relating legendary tales of Godfrey de Bouillon's ancestry and events after the conquest of Jerusalem.

2. The *belle sarrasine* and Medieval Race and Orientalism

Since Edward Said's *Orientalism* and the increased effort to explore the relevance of race and orientalism to the European Middle Ages, there has been a lot of studies on representations of Muslims in medieval European texts. Specifically in relation to Muslim women, however, medievalists have predominantly focused on the figure of the *belle sarrasine*.

This figure is found in 20+ *chansons* and is a Muslim queen/princess/noblewoman who assists the Franks (usually) in conquering their territories. The *belle sarrasine* betrays her father/husband and people, converts to Christianity and typically marries a Christian knight. The Frankish knight thus acquires land and wealth through his marriage to the now-converted Muslim woman.

The *belle sarrasine* permits studies into medieval instances of the exoticisation of Muslim women in European literature, of orientalist discourses and so on. The *belle sarrasine* is often assumed to be the archetypal representation of the female Muslim Other in medieval European literature.

Depiction of Calabre (left, consulting a book and making a prophecy) in *Enfances Godefroi*, Paris BnF fr. 12558 fol. 52r.

Depiction of Sathanas' *mère* (right, abducting John of Alis) in *Chanson des Chétifs*, Paris BnF fr. 786, fol. 227r.

3. My research: revealing more varied depictions of Muslim women in Old French literature

The Old French Crusade Cycle contains a peculiar spectrum of 7+ prominent and complex female Muslim figures, ranging from a prophetess to a serpent-dragon.

4. Examples of Muslim Women in the Cycle:

CALABRE	Expansion of Kerbogha's mother in chronicles of the First Crusade. Appears in 5 branches, has a prominent role in predicting Crusade. Frequently enacts divinatory practices to foretell future events. e.g. she studies animal entrails, casts sorts, consults scripture etc.
DATIEN'S WIFE	Challenges her husband upon discovering that Datien has secretly conspired with the Christians to assist the latter in conquering Antioch. She is ruthlessly killed.
SATHANAS' MÈRE	Mother of the dragon Sathanas. Appears in a 958-line digression found in only 2 (out of 10) manuscripts of the *Chanson des Chétifs*. Attacks Muslim and Christian armies to avenge the killing of her son and theft of her treasure.
BEDOUIN WOMAN	Defends Jerusalem from the besieging crusaders, lands a crushing blow on Thomas of Marle's helmet with a mace after he has infiltrated the city.
LUDIE	Offered as a prize by her father to the Batard as a part of peace terms. Batard betrays oath to the Saracen king; takes Ludie who is forcibly baptised and raped by the Batard. Ludie flees, conspires with her Saracen lover but is found out and burned at the stake.
SINAMONDE	Seduces her desired lover and bears his child without marrying him. THERE ARE MORE MUSLIM WOMEN MENTIONED TOO!

5. KEY FINDINGS SO FAR:

- Muslim women appear at critical moments and induce crisis, provoke characters to question their actions. They also undermine, and thereby expose the operation of, the ideological project of the Cycle –the attempt to glorify the Franks/First Crusaders as epic heroes
- They complicate an audience's perception of the Muslim Other. They are ambivalent figures who are shown to grieve and experience suffering; who are perceptive and outspoken, confronting their enemies head-on; they are dedicated maternal figures; equipped with impressive, monstrous bodies or powerful magical abilities.

OPACITY, RELATIONALITY, AND DETOURS: ASIAN PRESENCE IN FRANCOPHONE AND ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN LITERATURE

Weibing NI   PhD in French, Cambridge

ÉDOUARD GLISSANT

L'opacité n'est pas l'enfermement dans une autarcie impénétrable, mais la subsistance dans une singularité non réductible.

Dans la créolisation, les éléments qui sont créolisés ne se perdent pas.

ELENA IGARTUBURU GARCÍA

Cultural texts create spaces for hope as they release the past as a definitive narrative, allow these pasts to be reconstructed through the lens of the present, and project communities into the future.

→ Asian Caribbean histories and cultures feature an irreducible opacity, an "irreducible kernel of identity that maintains what is diverse, what is culturally specific" (Crowley, 2006).
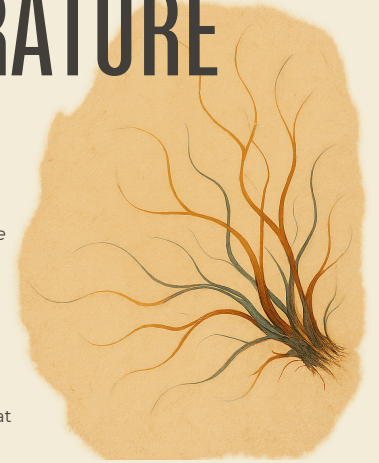
AIMS AND RESEARCH PUZZLE

Dominant narratives of the Caribbean history marginalise the experiences of the Asian Caribbean diaspora. My PhD project explores how Asian diasporic subjects find alternative lives by **taking detours** from the path regulated by hetero-patriarchal racialised hierarchies. The texts create a **relational poetics of opacity** where histories are being woven together in different ways.

Fictional rememories make up an alternative archive.

The Caribbean is an **entangled place** where detours or getting lost are not 'failures' (Halberstam, 2011) but show that opacity is about relationality.

1. ERRANTRY

Starting point: critique of the essentialist discourse of identity in Créolité in Eloge de la Créolité (1989)
-> no possibility for <u>multiplicity or fluidity</u>

vs.

Rhizomatic thinking in Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la Mangrove* and *La Migration des cœurs*, which enables the construction of an inclusive community and respect for the opacity of others, including Asian Caribbeans. Errantry, in Glissant's terms, fosters **rhizomatic networks of relation**.

2.MARRONAGE

Enabling counter-memories by **stretching the concept of marronage** - historically linked to enslaved people - to include Chinese and Indian indentured workers.

Comparison of Raphaël Confiant's *Case à Chine* and David Dabydeen's *The Counting House* under the idea of **genealogical investigations** (Michel Foucault, 1976).

Marronage becomes a trans-racial tactic of resistance within the plantation matrix.

Inspired by Foucault's genealogy, these texts construct a counter-history of anti-colonial struggle that transcends ethnicity → taking detours from the mainstream archives.

3. WAYWARDNESS

Waywardness is a "social poesis that sustains the dispossessed" (Hartman, 2019). The act of straying from expected or imposed paths is a creative, life-affirming form of **survival** for people who have been excluded or oppressed.

Indo-Caribbean women draw on Hindu cultural heritage to forge alternative paths of living. Through waywardness, they:

- carve personal identities
- live freely within constraints
- bond with other women

4.QUEERNESS

Focus: Kerry Young's *Pao*, and Patrica Powell's *Pagoda* **queer the racial logic** that positions Chinese diasporans as "middleman minorities" separated from other population in the Jamaican society.

→ queer aspect of **opacity**: Powell's cross-dressed protagonist fosters queer Afro-Asian intimacies and disrupts the colonial logics of separation.

5. METISSAGE

Métisse women in *Show Me a Mountain* and *La métisse caribéenne* confront the limits of fixed racial categories. Their multi-ethnic identities queer racial norms and disrupt binary thinking around race and belonging.

The narrative moves from exclusion and prejudice to **empowerment** through hybridity. Métissage emerges as a fluid, resistant identity. It enrichens Caribbean cultural and racial imaginaries.

CONCLUSION

Glissantian readings of concepts like marronage, waywardness, queerness, and métissage reflect rhizomatic journeys beyond colonial and hetero-patriarchal constraints.

As identities are reshaped during these acts of deviation, the work challenges essentialist understandings of identity, belonging, and community.

The thesis makes visible the Caribbean as a site of creative historical practice, where storytelling and imagination are not separate from history, but are history in motion.

EMAIL: WN235@CAM.AC.UK