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Senior Lecturer in French Studies

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About

I first came to Birmingham as a lectrice as part of the on-going exchange with the University of Nancy II, Lorraine (France). I am a specialist in the works of Julien Gracq, one of the foremost French literary figures of the 2nd half of the 20th century, and also of J.M.G. Le Clézio, the 2008 Nobel prize winner. I am now the longest serving member of the **[Department of French Studies \(/schools/lcahm/departments/french/index.aspx\)](/schools/lcahm/departments/french/index.aspx)**.

Biography

I studied for my Licence (Lettres modernes) and a Maîtrise on Imagery in one of Julien Gracq's novels at the University of Nancy II. My PhD thesis, a linguistic and stylistic study of enumeration in 20th century French Literature, was completed at the University of Birmingham under Jo Reed's supervision. Since I became a Lecturer in 1979 and, in 1998, a Senior Lecturer, my interest in literary stylistics and non-literary discourse (press and advertising) has remained alive but has gradually given way to a stronger commitment to literary studies – particularly French narrative literature of the 20th century onwards (especially Gracq, Modiano, Le Clézio, Bauchau) with a focus on forms of narrative, memory and representation of war. I also have an interest in late 19th century/early 20th century urban and regional cultural memory and representation (exhibitions, cultural practice particularly in connection with Lorraine during the Belle Époque).

Teaching

I give a range of lectures and seminars to 1st, 2nd and final year undergraduates within courses on 20th century narrative literature, visual culture and discourse analysis (press and advertising discourses). I also give lectures and language classes as part of the undergraduate practical language programmes in first and final years, programmes which I helped to renew. I have recently developed a new final year option which examines different ways of thinking the City through 20th century French literature and visual culture (film and photography). I have contributed to the MPhil (B) programme on War and Society and supervised an MPhil on Le Clézio.

Postgraduate supervision

I welcome postgraduates wishing to work on 20th-century prose fiction, particularly in the areas of narrative structure, memory, war and its representation, any aspects of Julien Gracq, Patrick Modiano, J.M.G. Le Clézio, Henry Bauchau, and representations of the city in literature.

Research

My current research interests lie in forms of memory as expressed in French Literature of the second half of the 20th century and beyond, with a particular interest in Julien Gracq, Patrick Modiano, J.M.G. Le Clézio and Henry Bauchau. I am working specifically on how a writer's persona, considered via psychoanalytical theory (including transgenerational analysis and Cyrulnik's ethological approach), embodied experience, particularly in the case of difficult or violent events, and the role of memory – both individual and collective/cultural – can together be linked to specific forms of imaginary representation, be it patterns of narrative, imagery or myth. Researching what traces 20th-century wars (1st and 2nd World Wars and Algerian War) have left on the literary forms chosen by specific writers is at the core of the book project I am currently writing. Another secondary project is focused on memory and cultural practice at the turn of the 19th century and during the Belle Époque in Nancy and Lorraine, as reflected in a number of figures (Lucien Wiener, Louis Laffitte) who played key roles within the cultural and economic landscape of the region at that time.

I published a book and several articles on literary stylistics, as well as articles on advertising and on urban discourse. More recently I have published a range of articles and book chapters on the four literary figures I am researching, as well as a monograph on Julien Gracq.

Other activities

I am a member of the **[Centre for War Studies \(/research/activity/warstudies/index.aspx\)](/research/activity/warstudies/index.aspx)**, attached to the **[School of History and Cultures \(/schools/historycultures/index.aspx\)](/schools/historycultures/index.aspx)**, particularly its Vichy subgroup, and of the Security Network. I am also a member of the Memory Group of the College of Arts and Law. I am in close contact with the Lettres Modernes-Minard Gracq series group headed by Patrick Marot (University of Toulouse Le Mirail). I am also a member of the **[Francopoco \(Francophone Postcolonial Studies\) network \(/schools/lcahm/departments/french/research/francopoco.aspx\)](/schools/lcahm/departments/french/research/francopoco.aspx)**.

Publications

Self-authored books

- *'La Forme d'une ville' de Julien Gracq: Lecture d'un lieu dialogique*, coll. 'Archives des Lettres Modernes', Caen-Paris, Lettres modernes Minard, 1998, 95 pp.
- *La Série énumérative, étude linguistique et stylistique s'appuyant sur dix romans français publiés entre 1945 et 1975*, Paris-Genève, Droz, 1989, 370 pp.

Articles in refereed journals

- 'Julien Gracq (1910-2007) et La Grande Bretagne', *French Studies Bulletin*, 29, 2008, pp.68-71
- 'Les enjeux de la mémoire dans Onitsha et L'Africain, de J.M.G. Le Clézio', *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 16, 2008, pp.16-32
- 'Au delà de l'auto-fiction: Écriture et lecture de Dora Bruder de Patrick Modiano', *French Forum*, 29, 2004, pp.83-99
- **[The 1909 Nancy International Exhibition: Showcase for a Vibrant Region and Swansong of the École de Nancy](#)**

- 'Remarques sur les manifestations de la subjectivité dans les comparaisons du discours narratif', *Verbum*, 1993, 1-2-3, pp.101-110
- 'La Coordination dans les énumérations littéraires est-elle plus "normale" que l'asyndète?', *Language and Style*, 23, 1993 (1990), pp.85-91
- 'Dream and Reality in Julien Gracq's *Un Balcon en forêt*: Language, Narrative and Reader Participation', *Romance Studies*, 18, 1991, pp.21-32
- 'Réflexions sur le rôle des démarcateurs de coordination dans les énumérations littéraires', *Le Français moderne*, 49, 1981, pp.20-35

Essays in books

- 'Sommeil en Flandre et en Ardenne : précipités de la mémoire de mai-juin 1940' in *Julien Gracq 7 : La Mémoire et le présent : actualité de Julien Gracq*, edited by Patrick Marot et Sylvie Vignes, Caen, Lettres modernes Minard, 2010, pp. 117-132
- 'Sinuosité, tensions et accidents de parcours dans les chemins de *Lettrines*' in *Julien Gracq 6 : Les Tensions de l'écriture, Adieu au romanesque, persistance de la fiction*, edited by Patrick Marot, Caen, Lettres modernes Minard, 2008, pp. 27-49
- 'L'Entre-deux dans *Un Balcon en forêt*' in *Julien Gracq 5 : Les dernières fictions "Un Balcon en forêt" "La Presqu'île"*, edited by Patrick Marot, Caen, Lettres modernes Minard, 2007, pp. 97-114
- 'Secrets, fantômes et troubles de la transmission du passé dans la pratique littéraire de Patrick Modiano' in *Patrick Modiano*, edited by John Flower, Amsterdam, Rodopi, (Faux Titre 305), 2007, pp.109-130
- 'Plaisir, circulation et appropriation : de Gracq lecteur aux lecteurs de Gracq' in *Julien Gracq 4 : Références et présences littéraires*, edited by Patrick Marot, Paris-Caen, Lettres modernes Minard, 2004, pp.93-151
- 'Voices with or without Faces: Address and Reader Participation in Recent French Magazine Advertising' in *Advertising and Identity in Europe: The I of the Beholder*, edited by Jackie Cannon, Robin Warner and Patricia Odber de Baubeta, Bristol and Portland, Or, USA, Intellect, 2000, pp.42-50
- 'French Magazine Advertising: New Forms of Dialogue?', in Sheila Perry and Pamela M Moores (eds.), *Media Developments and Cultural Change*, Working Papers of the Northern Media Research Group (NMRG), University of Northumbria at Newcastle, Newcastle, 1999, pp 47-61
- La ville et la vie: Discours et Dialogue dans La Forme d'une ville de Julien Gracq', in *Aspects de la critique - Colloque des Universités de Birmingham et de Besançon*, Besançon, Centre Jacques Petit - CNRS, 1997, pp.101-116

Encyclopedia entries

- Entries: 'Advertising' 'Linguistic/Discourse Theory', 'Benveniste', 'Genette', 'Gracq' 'Greimas', 'Jakobson' in Alex Hughes and Keith Reader (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Contemporary French Culture*, Routledge, 1998

Forthcoming publications

- 'L'écriture du rivage chez Gracq: rumeur, dramaturgie et fête', in special issue of *L'Esprit créateur* on 'L'Écriture du rivage', edited by Bruno Tritsmans and Luc Rasson (University of Antwerp). To appear in 2011
- 'Henry Bauchau : le récit de guerre comme élucidation et questionnement du présent dans *Le Boulevard périphérique* (2008)'. Due to appear as part of a volume of papers delivered at the Framing Narratives 2009 Leeds conference, edited by Margaret Attack and Christopher Lloyd, in Durham Modern Language Series, Manchester University Press

