

Cambridge French Graduate Conference “Retards/Delays”

The Cambridge French Graduate conference on the theme of “Retards/Delays” took place on the 25th and 26th of April 2019. The bilingual conference was held at University of Cambridge’s Corpus Christi, in the McCrum Lecture theatre, with additional sessions taking place at in the Harley Mason room and The Winstanley Hall, Trinity College. The conference garnered interested from PhD candidates and ECRs from Leeds, UCL, Nottingham Trent, KCL, nationally and internationally from University of Virginia, New York University, Sorbonne University, Université de Liège, Masaryk University and Université de Dijon. The keynote speakers were Dr Adeline Desbois-Ientile (Sorbonne University), whose paper “Le français à la Renaissance, une langue en retard?” which drew attention to the instability of the French language, and Dr Claire White (University of Cambridge) whose paper “The Affair before the Affair: Zola and the Lourdes Scandal” was very engaging. The audience participated fully and there were a number of questions asked during the discussion sessions at the end of each panel. The panels were made up of themes and time periods which were relevant to them. For instance, one panel comprised medievalists and Francophone studies as the speakers were using either Postcolonial theory to better understand medieval texts or looking at ways in which postcolonial texts return to medieval poetry for inspiration. Each panel developed the theme of the conference in different ways, for instance, the notion of delay as stills, in films, or the evolution of time on a planetary scale. There were eight panels in all over the two days and at the end of the first day there was also a poetry performance by Suzanne Doppelt. Select papers from the Graduate French conference are normally published through Peter Lang, although we are exploring other options potentially this year. This conference has been made possible through the generous contributions of The Society for French Studies, The Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France, the French section of the MML faculty at the University of Cambridge and Professor Emma Wilson. (Organisers: Ashwiny O. Kistnareddy, Alice Roullière, University of Cambridge)