

Voices: A Seminar Series

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Séminaire 2 – Amphi 2
Jeudi 9 décembre, 15h30-17h et Teams

Invitée : **Dr. Virginie BUHL (Paris Sorbonne Nouvelle/ESIT)**

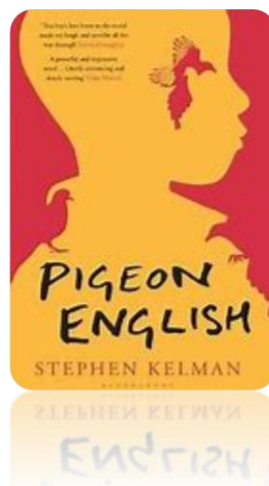
THE PERILS OF TRANSLATING VULNERABLE VOICES INTO FRENCH

The Child Narrators in Emma Donoghue's Room and Stephen Kelman's Pigeon English

Modératrice : **Laurence Roussillon-Constanty (Laboratoire ALTER, UPPA)**

Virginie Buhl's seminar focuses on two child narrators: Emma Donoghue's 5-year-old Jack (*Room*, 2010) and Stephen Kelman's 11-year-old Harrison Opoku (*Pigeon English*, 2011). Jack's voice delivers the tale of a life spent in captivity in a garden shed. His peculiar voice and mind style challenge both the language use and the world view of the adult readers for whom Donoghue wrote *Room*. Harrison's narrative voice is Kelman's recreation of a silenced voice, that of a Ghanaian immigrant child who discovers England. The story takes place in a housing estate rife with gang violence where children get stabbed by others. These youthful voices - at once vulnerable and resilient - unravel their stories with striking linguistic inventiveness. Donoghue and Kelman were both praised for their ability to create the 'authentic' child-like narrative voices of modern-day Tom Sawyers.

What in Jack's and Harrison's voices and highly original narrative style is vulnerable to translation? Rewriting such novels in French is a linguistic and cross-cultural challenge: what pitfalls and lurking dangers can jeopardize the translation process when it comes to recreating a juvenile voice?



Virginie Buhl is an École Normale Supérieure alumna and recently obtained a PhD in translation studies at the École supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs - Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3. She works as a freelance literary translator and teaches English at Paris 2 University. Her PhD thesis is about Defamiliarization across languages: translating the voice of child narrators into French.