Creolisation as Cultural and Poetical Rebirth in ‘Arrival of the Snake-Woman’ by Olive Senior

Senior’s short story “Arrival of the Snake-Woman” (1989) relates the arrival of an Indian indentured woman, called Miss Coolie, in the small rural community in nineteenth-century Jamaica and its impact on the lives and cultures of the inhabitants. This paper will show how the story showcases the deep social and cultural renewals that took place in Jamaica at that time. It will explore how the multiple waves of migration in the Caribbean represented in the story engender a constant cultural creolisation. Creolisation is the meeting of heterogeneous cultural elements, interlocking and fusing to form a new and unpredictable reality. This phenomenon can be traced in Senior’s short story through the narrative of the adaptation of Miss Coolie to her new environment. In exile, she has to renew her cultural habits, to shed her cultural skin of a “Snake-Woman” to fit in a new society. The shedding of the skin can thus be thought as a trope for cultural creolisation. Moreover, the story illustrates the process of creolisation that constantly takes place in the Caribbean islands, as the narrator relates the diverse historical cultural influences (from Europe, Africa and North America) that creolised his community. Miss Coolie – similarly to other Indian migrants at that time – brings some cultural elements that will become deeply integrated in the Caribbean culture, such as plants and spices, or new ideas and thoughts. Through the eyes and the voice of a narrator who is part of the community, the tale also underlines the tensions that these new cultural elements bring. This paper will thus look at the difficulties implied by the permanent rebirth of identities and cultures in Senior’s story. It will also examine the role of the short story in the renewal of oral practices, with a narration in vernacular speech that anchors it deeply in Caribbean oral traditions.

South African Literature and the ‘Strange Seductiveness’ of the Fantastic

In postcolonial literature, magic realism and science fiction are two sub genres that have worked diligently to contest realism as a Western novelistic tradition. In the South African context, the fantastic initiates a process of psychic liberation from Old (White) World narrative domination and its cognitive codes. It recapitulates problems of historical consciousness in (post)apartheid cultures and interrogates inherited notions of imperial history. In this paper, I plan to focus on two fantastic texts from within a single post-colonial culture – South Africa – and attempt to show the ways in which these texts recapitulate, in both their narrative discourse and their thematic content, the “real” social and historical context in which pre and
post-apartheid South African culture existed and thrived. Zakes Mda’s *Ways of Dying* and Lauren Beukes’ *Zoo City* use magic realism and science fiction respectively to re-view and debunk inherited literary modes of colonial discourse and to work towards more authentic yet challenging “codes of recognition”. By so doing, they offer positive and liberating responses to new emerging cultural forms.

CHARMAINE GONZALES GEMA (Doctorante, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris III)


Where are crime narratives in a crime-ridden nation as the Philippines? Against the backdrop of a postcolonial country that experiences virulent crime waves on a day to day basis – with the incumbent President’s war on drugs inflicting an estimated number of 12,000 casualties since 2016 – it may appear incongruent that there are only but a few crime fiction titles published in the archipelago. The belatedness of the crime genre’s emergence (as late as 1999) and its incremental development have been theorized by many as evidence of a linguistic colonialism aftermath, and for others a form of escapism by omission. The anthology *Manila Noir*, a compendium of *noir* short stories edited by acclaimed diasporic author Jessica Hagedorn, thus emerges as a seismic addition to an otherwise scarce literary cache. Gathering distinguished and budding writers who all present their take on the world of urban noir, the collection rigorously conveys a diverse filipino-ness while challenging the standards and limits of the Western noir. In this study, I explore how Filipino authors appropriate the classification of Western noir and crime fiction, in order to then challenge, subvert and extend its essentialist limitations. How is noir renewed in the Manila context in the objective of creating a social critique that is at once germane to the current sociopolitical climate of the nation and to its long history of violence and colonial repression? And how does this renewal transgress white Western, heteronormative discourses characterized by oppressive dichotomies? Through an investigation into the juncture of postmodern aesthetics and postcolonialism, this study illustrates the innovativeness of Filipino authors in fashioning a multivalent postcolonial noir while giving back voice to the often-forgotten underworld that is Philippine literature.

COURTOIS CEDRIC (Université Paris 1 – Panthéon Sorbonne)

Rebirth(s) in Akwaeke Emezi’s *Freshwater* (2018)

Nigerian writer Akwaeke Emezi’s debut novel, *Freshwater*, recounts the story of Ada, a young girl at the beginning of the novel, who was born in Southern Nigeria and whose parents are Nigerian and Tamil. She was “born with one foot on the other side” and, once she has moved to America as a young adult, she develops separate selves: she is indeed an *ogbanje* (‘traveller’) – or *Abiku* – i.e. a Yoruba spirit that is reborn into a human body, a kind of malevolent trickster. She thus evolves on the border between the spiritual and the real world, but also between the world of the living and that of the dead. In this novel, the emergence, or birth, of several selves – a Western interpretation would identify the condition Ada “suffers
from” as schizophrenia –1 is put forth through a diffuse and multiple narration with, on the one hand, a “we” narrator – who, in chapter 5, talks about a “second birth” and a “third birth” – and, on the other hand, Asughara as narrator – she is a member of the “we” group, which corresponds to the spirits that inhabit Ada’s body and mind. Another narrator is Ada herself, but her voice is not heard much compared to the others’ that clearly take the upper hand. This diffuse narration at stake in the novel attests to a sense of self as multiple and to the destabilization of the neat boundary between form and content, sanity and madness, and body and soul, a boundary which wavers and which is blurred. Freshwater can be considered as a Bildungsroman; as such, it contributes to the renewal of this literary genre, in a post-colonial – or decolonial? – context.

We will try to understand to what extent Emezi is in line with a Nigerian literary heritage in which the figure of the ogbanje or abiku has been central. We will also analyse how Emezi puts to the fore a bridge across realities through the figure of the ogbanje, the traveler, whose territory is the limen. It will be relevant to focus on the various forms of rebirths – on the level of content but also form. As indicated in the title of the novel, water is central in this book. We will analyse the impact of the presence of water in this novel clearly obsessed with rebirth(s).

CURRIE SARAH (Université de Waterloo, Canada)

Listening to the Ghosts: The Hungry Ghosts and Western Empathic Duty

Postcolonial texts in Canada are currently experiencing a renaissance, inciting call backs to classic postcolonial writers (Adichie, Rushdie, Rhys) through new forms, whether they be wholly fictional or partially representative of the colonized/colonizer experience. Shyam Selvadurai, a Canadian immigrant, has published multiple works on the postcolonial experience and uniquely positions the emigrated protagonist in a unique and compassionate position: refusing the past traditions of tragic/fatally flawed poco protagonists, or simple subject-as-hero demarcation, Selvadurai’s protagonists are multidimensional and complex. Forthright in his Hungry Ghosts publication is the movement towards a postcolonial compassion that can be enacted in a Westernized reading audience, which I explore in great detail in this paper, as well as the uniqueness and complexity of the “new postcolonial protagonist” emerging in his works. This paper challenges the poco topoi and asks questions about the immigrant protagonist, and reader responsibility owed to these new texts.

GIRI-LOUSSIER HEMLATA (Professeur d’anglais, Paris)

The Inception of Dalit Writings: An Act of Violation against Indian Nationalism?

The caste system in India has always led Dalits or untouchables to be considered as an inferior section of society that is denied rights and privileges given to higher sections. However, as of
data available in 2011, Dalits make up to almost 25 percent of the population of India\(^1\) and the second largest strata of Indian society. As they represent a large portion of the populace, they have the potential to exercise considerable influence in the making of contemporary Indian society. Most of these Dalits, though, are impoverished and weak as opposed to the higher castes, and thus the notion of Dalit unification is still essential to their dignity and obtaining basic human rights. Unfortunately, their demand for dignity has so far been not paid heed, and even discarded by the political forces as an unnecessary stir for national unity. To bring certain equilibrium to social conjunction, Dalit writers have started to tell the horrid but true stories of Dalit lives through their autobiographies which uncover the social injustice for these classes in India. Two autobiographies Narendra Jadhav”s *Outcaste: A Memoir* (2002) and Omprakash Valmiki’s *Joothan: An Untouchable’s Life* (2003) illustrate the stark realities of Dalit exploitation in India and the awakening of Dalits through their writings. This paper will aim to analyze Dalit literature from the autobiographical point of view that presents the unbiased version of this emerging literary form in India with an inciting undertone.

JÉGOU CORENTIN (Doctorant, Sorbonne Université)

**Loss, Recovery, and Healing Contradictions in Derek Walcott’s *Omeros***

“But where is your Renaissance?” ask the anonymous voices in Derek Walcott’s “The Sea is History.”\(^2\) In that poem, the Caribbean is viewed as the site of an impossible history, marked merely by the violent imposition of an exogenous order, which looks forward to a time when history might really begin. The lack of a Renaissance, therefore, is counterbalanced by the hope for a rebirth that might come to terms with the traumatic legacy of the past. That trope is ubiquitous in Walcott’s poetic oeuvre, especially in *Omeros*, where the “poetics of affliction” negotiates the post-colonial predicament.\(^3\) In that long poem, the motif of the wound is as pervasive as it is ambivalent, from Philoctete’s festering sore, reminiscent of his ancestors’ bondage, to Major Plunkett’s war injury, and to the various traces of symbolic violence visible on the landscape of the island. Significantly, throughout the poem Maud Plunkett is engaged in stitching a quilt, suggesting the possibility of a healing closure at last. Drawing on the imagery of the wound, I intend to explore the ways in which *Omeros* dramatises the dialectics of loss and regeneration. My contention is that the struggle for recovery is not just an allegory of the postcolonial condition, but a reflection on the poet’s attitude towards language. Thus, I will suggest that *Omeros* elaborates a poetics of healing, which strives to move beyond petrified oppositions, and to release the self-resolving power of contradictions. It will appear that the central locus of such regeneration is the sea, with its “self-healing coral”.\(^4\) But the Atlantic Ocean is also the site of an infinite play of trans-lations, which echoes the Renaissance ideal of a utopian cosmopolitanism, linking Walcott’s St Lucia to Joyce’s Ireland as well as Homer’s Mediterranean.

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1. According to Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, the Scheduled Castes at 16.2% and Scheduled Tribes at 8.2%, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes together make up 25% of India’s population according to the 2011 census.
NAKHAEI BENTOLHODA (Université de Lorraine)

Rebirth of Jami in England: Postcolonialism and/as Translation

The Salāmān and Absāl is one of the poems written by Nūr ad-Dīn ‘Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī, a Persian scholar, during the 15th century. In 1840, Jāmī wrote this poem in the poetic form of masnavi (i.e. rhyming couplets). The poem under discussion was collected with six other poems in a book entitled Haft awrang meaning The Seven Thrones or The Constellation of the Great Bear. This work was introduced for the first time to the West via Edward FitzGerald’s—the Victorian translator—translation. The British translator’s rendition was published posthumously during 20th century, i.e. in 1904. The Victorian literature being regarded as dominant dealt with the Other (i.e. in this case Jāmī’s poem), in a way that corresponded to its domesticating impulses. It saw its own postcolonial approach as the natural way, which is the best way of dealing with Other literatures. As a result, when another foreign literary element entered into their literature, the Victorian translators reshaped, molded, and then naturalized it. By introducing Jāmī’s poem as an example of new literature into English literature, one may wonder how FitzGerald’s translation affected the norms of the Victorian poetry. To what extent did FitzGerald manipulate Jāmī’s poem in order to adapt it with the Victorian conventions? Has the British translator managed to recreate the close correlation which exists between figurative images and the underlying significance of the Salāmān and Absāl in his translation?

This research seeks to analyze the issues raised by the change of ideology and the significance in FitzGerald’s translation of Jāmī’s Salāmān and Absāl according to the theories of scholars such as Susan Bassnett, Friedrich Schleiermacher, André Lefevere, and Antoine Berman. Thus the present study could provide a research field for developing a methodology for literary, linguistic, and translation analysis of the extent of power and manipulation applied by the Victorian translator—as the colonizer—on Jāmī’s translation—as the colonized text.

MARTINS PEREIRA (Open University of Lisbon)

“If you were from here, you’d know, ennet.”: Creolization, Community and Postcolonial Renaissance in Guy Gunaratne’s In Our Mad and Furious City

Guy Gunaratne’s In Our Mad and Furious City (2018) is a novel about the rebirth of identity among migrant groups in suburban London. Through the metamorphosis of the English language, a multiplicity of voices echo through the pages, to reveal in Boehmer’s words that “what began in postcolonial writing as the creolization of the English language has become a process of mass literary transplantation, disaggregation, and cross-fertilization,” (226) not only changing English literature, but also redefining postcolonialism in the 21st century. Through second and by now third generation migrant experience, literature in English moves into its renaissance, shedding light on the many ethnic, creole, minority and immigrant groups and the complex task of negotiating identity in the postmodern western society.

The novel explores how territories are delineated out of deterritorialization, how community replaces the historical and how through creolization new modes of interaction come to redefine social and cultural identification. Although it does not neatly fit into the postcolonial
category, it addresses the type of issues that should be represented in postcolonial literature in English today. This narrative deconstructs the traditional representations of centre-periphery, oppressor-oppressed, origin-outcome which dictate the postcolonial literary and cultural aesthetic to give way to a conciliation of meaning through which new social forms emerge.

In this paper, I am going to explore the renaissance of identity and form through migrant communities and their “Creole poetics” (Boehmer) as represented in Gunaratne’s In Our Mad and Furious City. The communities and how these are formed, the creolization of language, the social interactions and the streets are important factors in the construction of a fragile yet vital identity, necessary for survival in the characters with “elsewhere in [their] blood” fighting for meaning against the tension and neglect of northwest London.

PFEIFFER VIRGINIE (Doctorante, Université Jean Moulin - Lyon 3)

Heterolinguism and Orality in Australian Aboriginal Children's Literature

Australian Aboriginal children's literature can be considered as a "new" literature since it has been developing for the last twenty years or so. A good proportion of Australian Aboriginal children's books are either autobiographies or historical fictions that take historical events, such as the Stolen Generations, as a basis for their story. We compiled a corpus of such books that includes: Home to Mother by Doris Pilkington Garimara, Sally’s Story by Sally Morgan, Sister Heart by Sally Morgan, Us Mob Walawuru by Lisa Wilyuka, Alice's Daughter - Lost Mission Child by Rhonda Collard-Spratt, Two Sisters by Ngarta Jinny Bent and Jukuna Mona Chuguna, and Who am I? by Anita Heiss.

One of the common features of those books lies in their use of languages since they are written in English with additions in Aboriginal languages. Words, terms and even whole sentences written in Aboriginal languages are translated and/or explained in different ways (intra-textually, through footnotes, or even a glossary as a peritextual element). We will study the use of such heterolinguism within the books mentioned above and analyse its purpose. Not only do Aboriginal writers tend to retrieve their origins and identity by including words in their mother tongue but also do they include markers of orality. Australian Aboriginal culture is first and foremost an oral culture and writers pay tribute to it in their writings. We will thus study the ambivalence of writing in the colonizer language while including linguistic markers of one's culture and identity. We will also study how Australian Aboriginal children's literature allows the renewal of Aboriginal identity through language use.

ROGEZ MATHILDE (Université de Toulouse)

Shakespearean Hypotexts in Ubu and the Truth Commission: When Old Texts Shed New Light on Contemporary South African Theatre

This paper cannot hope to renew the studies of Shakespeare in Southern Africa, the title of a yearly publication devoted to the productions, reception and possible rewritings of his plays in the southern part of the continent, while the debate around their place in the syllabus of South African schools continues unabated. Rather, it seeks to prolong a reflection offered by
J. Coplen Rose in his article in the recently published anniversary issue of *Shakespeare en devenir* on the “decolonisation” of two of Shakespeare’s plays by South African satirist Pieter Dirk Uys and their “redeployment” to satirise the political crises of his time in South Africa (Rose 2017): when the situation is so beyond satire’s means to amend it that satire itself as a genre is celebrated as artist of the year (at the 2015 National Arts Festival), what can such borrowings from Shakespeare’s plays tell us about the state of contemporary drama in South Africa? What further light does the Renaissance intertext shed on the reception of plays by South African audiences? The focus of our analysis will be another satirical take on *Macbeth, Ubu and the Truth Commission* (Taylor et al. 1997), which, however, borrows from an intermediary hypotext, Jarry’s student farcical jape, although we shall also see how the play is interspersed with a multitude other references to Shakespeare which make its nature more complex to grasp. Twenty odd years before Uys, at the time of the birth of the “new South Africa” and of the (often dramatic) hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, this adaptation and rewriting of Renaissance texts leads us to ponder on the definition of and relation between theatrical genres, as well as on the power of the theatre itself, between iteration and the supposedly singular nature of the theatrical performance, and ultimately on its relation to the confessional mode.

**SINGEOT LAURA (I.U.T. Cachan)**

**The Genre of the Novel in Contemporary South Pacific Literature: To the Limits of a Generic Renaissance?**

In South Pacific literature, the Renaissance movement entailed the return to traditional elements in novels written by emerging Indigenous Writers. One remembers for example Witi Ihimaera in New Zealand who was the first Maori writer to initiate a shift from writing short stories to novels in the 70s. As a consequence, such a shift was not only thematical, but also became intertwined with questions of genre as well. This literary transition paved the way for other contemporary indigenous writers, from New Zealand and Australia, to reappropriate the novel as the European genre by excellence. Starting from Ian Watt’s *The Rise of the Novel*, this paper will question that use of codes which developed in 19th century Europe simultaneously with the rise of the individual, while wondering whether it can be easily transposed to the South Pacific since the communities did not follow the same historical and social evolutions. I will consider Mudrooroo’s tetralogy, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming*, and Alan Duff’s trilogy, *Once Were Warriors*, in a comparative approach, and the limits of the generic transposition of the novel will be tested, mostly focusing on the construction of subjectivity.

This paper will first demonstrate how the novels first stage the total destruction of their characters’ subjectivity: instead of building the subject as a unified whole, as Ian Watt advocates in *The Rise of the Novel*, the individual becomes the locus of confrontation and fragmentation, if not utter annihilation. Moreover, the characters are also battling with another of the novel’s attributes, the chronotopes: they are faced with the impossibility to position themselves in a place and time that would enable them to attain the necessary self-awareness for coining their own self-representations, until they seem to become part of the collective.
“Mischievous Becoming: Rebirth, Inversion, and the Postcolonial Caribbean Subject in Jamaica Kincaid’s Lucy”

In Jamaica Kincaid’s Lucy, the protagonist must struggle with the feelings of alienation engendered by her move from her home of Antigua to the United States. But instead of forcing herself to assimilate into US American culture, Lucy chooses to invert expectations of cultural rebirth, providing perspective on a larger Western system. This paper explores two inversions in particular. The first is Kincaid’s use of daffodils and their seasonal implications. In the novel, daffodils connote traditional Western perceptions of spring and rebirth, while simultaneously representing the colonial disconnect and misrecognition caused by the imposition of Western perception onto the Caribbean. Secondly, Lucy, put in conversation with her supposed namesake, Lucifer, encourages us to reframe how we think of rebirth in a postcolonial context where protagonists like Lucy come from cultures that have been classified as demonic. Moving from Sylvia Wynter’s framing of Caribbean women as occupying a kind of “demonic grounds”, how does Lucy’s allegiance with Lucifer twist the idea of rebirth? What are the avenues Lucy is actually given in order to be reborn when she is constantly misrecognized and cast out? I argue that Lucy is performing what Professor Dixa Ramírez refers to as “mischief”, playing with the bildungsroman and forcing readers to think about how “becoming” might manifest for nonwestern/postcolonial subjects who have traditionally been cast as the other.

T(r)opicality of the Harlem Renaissance: West Indian Contributions to Locke’s New Negro Anthology

As recent scholarship has excavated, a sizable number of authors of Caribbean descent have contributed to write the History of the Harlem Renaissance (Nella Larsen, Marcus Garvey, and perhaps most prominently, W.E.B. DuBois). Just as West Indian origins and influences have been foreshadowed by the cultural domination of the "American" model, no less than six authors who have seen their work included in The New Negro (1925) belong to a larger Black Atlantic background which I will examine in this paper. These are: Arthur A. Schomburg, Joel Augustus, Eric Walrond, Claude McKay, James Weldon Johnson, and W.A. Domingo, who mentions the "Gift of the Black Tropics". I suggest that the heretofore minimized, or even silenced, presence of diasporic writers within the movement of the Harlem Renaissance underpins the otherwise paradoxical, or objectionable, "Black" nationalism promoted by some Harlem Renaissance intellectuals.