

Les actes de colloque

Les économies du passé-future : La redéfinition des espaces de la post-mémoire

11^e colloque annuel de cycles supérieurs du Département d'études anglaises de l'Université de Montréal

13 et 14 mars 2014

Session 1 : Présent perpétuel

Golnar Karimi, Université de Montréal

“Cosmopolitan Guilt: Investigating Sites of Western Engagement in Postcolonial Trauma Narrative”

Postcolonial literature's multifaceted nature allows for a wide variety of genres to display the realities of life before, during and after colonization. Trauma narratives are perhaps one of the most challenging texts due to the visceral impact it engenders for readers. In fact, it is this emotional response that threatens to obscure the legitimacy of some of these testimonials and confuses the storyteller's subjectivity. The intricate relationship between producer and consumer in child trauma narratives displaces the agency of both the reader and the writer. *Song For Night* by Chris Abani and *The Bite of the Mango* by Mariatu Kamara and Susan McClelland provide accounts of civil war through a child's perspective. The intersection between childhood innocence and the brutal dehumanization of war blurs the lines between perpetrator and victim. It becomes nearly impossible to decipher the real wrongdoers and to pinpoint the source of injustice.

This essay will focus on the need for postcolonial trauma narratives to portray the desolation of certain African regions. I will investigate how Western guilt operates as a tool to evoke certain responses from Western readers. In addition, I will investigate the choice of audience as a politically motivated decision and how narratives are shaped around the expectations of the reader. I will also examine how a localized event in postcolonial societies (i.e. civil-war) threatens the Western sense of Cosmopolitanism. I will introduce the notion of cosmopolitan guilt as a concept shifting the perspective of Western readers. Do these novels help the cosmopolitan agenda of feeling more like a 'citizen of the world' by allowing readers to become familiar with the histories of foreign countries, or does it simply fall into a rhetoric of first-world agents claiming to be morally invested in the wellbeing of third-world survivors? Do stories about civil war atrocities attenuate the Western reader's voyeuristic desire to know about the goings-on of African nations? I will attempt to unveil the intentions of authors of postcolonial trauma novels and seek to understand how local experiences are received in global markets.

I am currently in my first year of my M.A. in English at the Université de Montréal and I am interested in postcolonial studies, specifically on African literature. For my thesis, I would like to investigate the relationship between language and culture in postcolonial societies by looking at Wole Soyinka's play *Death and the King's Horseman*. Eventually, I would like to obtain a PhD in English in order to teach at the university level and have an active role in academia. As a member of the university's graduate student society

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(EGSS), I have developed an interest in organizing academic and social activities that benefit student life.

Zahra Zamani Gavnani, Université de Montréal

“Oral Tradition and Collective Memory as a Means of Surveillance on Self- Identity in Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*”

Mama Day signifies the culmination of Naylor's concerns with the loss of identity and heritage as a consequence of the dominant urban life of contemporary America. Naylor illustrates her concern in the course of the story when she reflects that understanding and appreciating black cultural roots is the key element in the success of the black people's quest for self-discovery. Since the novel reflects the complexities of the responsibility of black women in their community, this study focuses on Cocoa as a young Afro-American woman to follow her process of identity formation and self-discovery.

The fictitious island of Naylor's novel, Willow Springs, is portrayed as a land in which its habitants (the black descendents of slaves) preserve their cultural identity and their memories of past "through the repetition of practices which have been inherited to them as their ethnics and traditions". By putting the story of Sapphira in the heart of her novel and applying the communal voice to tell a great portion of her novel, Naylor evokes Southern African American traditions of storytelling to recount the experiences which should be put in the recurring cycle of telling and listening for the aim of retaining and revivifying the black cultural identity. In *Mama Day*, Naylor calls for the black people's consideration of the importance and the interrelatedness of culture to every aspect of life. She affirms that to be saved from the fragmentation of the modern life necessitates a level of understanding of the cultural and traditional ties.

In exploring how the author revisits the past and commemorate the cultural heritage, I will examine the author's narrative strategies (a montage of first-person and communal voice) and analyze cultural motif of quilt in the story which have been aptly employed to create a space to pay tribute to the dead ancestors, to create a healing for the unforgettable pain of the past and eventually to make an interconnection between personal and cultural identity.

Zahra Zamani Gavnani is an M.A. student of English Studies, Department of English Studies, Montreal University. She received a B.A. in English Language and Literature from Isfahan University, Isfahan, Iran and a M.A. in the same field from Tehran Azad

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University, Tehran, Iran. Following her graduation, she started teaching basic English courses at different colleges of Tehran. Prior to her immigration to Canada, she published an English Book for the college students at basic level under the title of *English For Practice* and presented the essay of "Literature, Creativity and Children" for a children studies conference in Tehran, Iran. Her research interests include postcolonialism, travel narrative and women studies.

Jessi MacEachern, Université de Montréal

“Drooling and Burning Over Beautiful Bodies: Traumatic Memory and Inevitable Violence in Ann Petry’s *The Narrows*”

In the final moments of Ann Petry’s 1953 novel *The Narrows*, three women examine their divergent memories of the recent past and attempt to construct a narrative for the act of racial violence that has stolen the life of 26-year-old Link Williams. Given the yet undying cycle of racist oppression in the Americas, such recalibration in the aftermath of violence is, regrettably, a common experience in black communities. In an examination of documented trauma and communal memory, Henry Giroux examines the iconography of racial catastrophe in the United States in his essay, “Reading Hurricane Katrina: Race, Class, and the Biopolitics of Disposability”: from the open-casket funeral of Emmett Till to the photographs of the neglected, poor, and black bodies of Hurricane Katrina’s victims. *The Narrows*’s final victim bore the racial memory, like Till and Katrina’s victims, of “the burden of the inheritance of slavery and the inhuman pathology that drives its racist imaginary” (Giroux 172). Link’s place in history, a history he wishes to rewrite, is determined by biopolitics, a state defined by Giorgio Agamben, in his reading of Michel Foucault, as “the growing inclusion of man’s natural life in the mechanisms and calculations of power” (119). For the *homo sacer*, the autonomous figure “outside both human and divine law” (Agamben 73), value is attributed according to his or her “death-function” (Giroux 179). The defining feature of the *homo sacer* is that he or she may be killed with impunity. Petry’s cyclical narrative in *The Narrows* reworks the present from a “state of emergency” (Giroux 181) into a looking glass for the racial violence of an ever-returning past in a subversion of the assumed disposability of her protagonist’s black body. From the narrow focus of a biopolitical racism into a wide and self-reflexive ambivalence for naturalism’s ability to penetrate the insidious violence of bare life, Petry explodes the assumed separateness of individual and community in a cinematic prose that doubles back on history itself.

Jessi MacEachern is a PhD student in the English Studies department at the Université de Montréal. She received her MA from Concordia with a creative writing thesis in the

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shape of a poetry collection. Her research examines the nature of feminist collaboration in contemporary Canadian poetry.

Session 2 : Éthique et représentation

Barbara Leung, New York University

“Recalling Female Authors And Poets Through Fashion Photography”

The high turnover and volume in fashion photography creates difficulty in generating a discourse on the subject. Similarly, its editorials find brief life in casual conversation. What generates interest in this genre of photography is not the notion of framing, per se, but rather, the admission that it is all a construct. It is to say that while documentary photography seeks to portray reality, fashion photography creates its own sense of reality, at times basing itself on fragments of memory.

New York-based magazine *VICE* published its 2013 “Fiction Issue” with much controversy. The feature editorial, “Last Words” highlighted celebrated female authors and poets, such as Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath, in re-enacted scenes of moments before their suicides. Reactions and commentary from online websites, such as *The Cut*, *Jezebel*, and *Slate*, created a conversation questioning the choice in artistic direction for the celebration of these writers. Afterwards, *VICE* pulled the editorial from its website, the dialogue quickly subsided.

The questions that arise, however, come from the production of these images and their reconstruction of a memory of a particular instant with extractions of fact and manipulated imaginaries. Thus, we ask the following: in what ways are our memories of these known women challenged; how does the known concept of pure construction manipulate one's connection to the relevant historical moment; and in what ways is temporality suspended or changed with reconstructive imagery?

Barbara Leung is a graduate student at New York University. Her research interests include fashion photography, and alternative uses of social network sites. Barbara has presented numerous institutions, including at University of Toronto, SUNY Stony Brook, and Harvard University. Her work has also been published in the Danish peer-reviewed journal *Otherness*.

Justyna Poray-Wybranowska, Concordia University

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“(Re)collection and Aesthetic Representation: Animal Bodies on Display in ‘The Museum of Final Journeys’”

This essay will explore the interstices between literary representations of collective and individual memory, interrogating the way historical recollections and inherited cultural norms shape the way knowledge is transmitted to and assimilated into individual memory. Anita Desai's recent novella collection *The Artist of Disappearance* deals extensively with the role of aesthetic representation in film, literature, as well as in important institutions of scientific and cultural knowledge like natural science and history museums. Her stories dramatize the ethical implications of communal recollecting and forgetting on human relationships with animal life, drawing attention to the way representations of historical knowledge and memory – such as those found in museum display cases – affect human thinking and distort individual perceptions of experienced events. “The Museum of Final Journeys” in particular interrogates the role of aestheticism in promoting ethically-appropriate human behavior. The text stresses the gaps in knowledge and lapses in memory that have shaped the natural science museum as a space of (re)collected knowledge since its very inception, and sheds light on the ambiguous space animals occupy in literary and cultural memory. The narrative ends ambivalently, resisting closure and “easy consumption”, and suggesting that aestheticism can be used as didactic tool to advocate more ethical thinking about human-nonhuman relationships and more critical approach to negotiating inherited cultural memory (Mukherjee 11-12).

Works Cited

Mukherjee, Upamanyu Pablo. Introduction to *Postcolonial Environments: Nature, Culture and the Contemporary Indian Novel in English*. Basingstoke [England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010].

Justyna Poray-Wybranowska is a graduate student and Composition Instructor at Concordia University. She is in the final year of the Masters of English Literature Program, and her research project takes a postcolonial ecocritical approach to world Anglophone literature in order to investigate the connections between food studies, South Asian diasporic subjectivity, and representations of nonhuman bodies in the literary works of Anita Desai.

Suyin Olguin, Université de Montréal

“Society and their Monsters: The Vampire as Reflection of Human Primordial “evil” in Stephen King's ‘Salem's Lot.’”

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The need to understand the ongoing violence enhanced by progress and technology drives authors like Stephen King to write narratives in which the monster serves as a projection of what Carl Jung defines as the “collective unconscious.” Jung’s theory is derived from Freud’s definition of the unconscious as an individual “state of repressed or forgotten content” (Jung 3) that has “strong influence upon our actions” (Barry 98). The “collective unconscious,” however, rather than being an individual idea it becomes “ideas that people at first find strange but soon come to possess and use as familiar conceptions” (Jung 3). This essay explores how King uses the figure of the vampire as a projection and a literal manifestation of the monstrous embedded in human nature. The first part of the essay briefly addresses the use of the Gothic genre as a way of projecting contemporary preoccupations with violence and perversity within society. The novel highlights the difference between “Evil” as the predatory creature and “evil” as the human unconscious; for instance, the recognition of “evil” as predominant and omnipresent is the focus of this study. Surely, the violence and the perversity present in the Lot are thus considered “primordial” and “universal images that had existed since the remotest times” (Jung 4). This is a manifestation of post-memory. Gothic narratives, therefore, portray society’s “primordial” preoccupations to question the true origins of human’s thoughts and actions. Unlike Dracula in Stoker’s novel, Barlow is attracted to the violence and the insatiable appetites present in the Lot because it truly portrays the evil he pursues. Therefore, the presence of the vampire in King’s novel only accentuates the violence existing in the lot and, inevitably, in all of us.

Suyin Olguin is completing her Master’s Degree in English at the University of Montreal. Her thesis studies masculine construction in Jane Austen’s works. She co-authored two peer-reviewed articles with Dr. Brooke S. Cameron, one of which has been accepted for publication and the other is under full peer-review. She will apply to PhD programs for the fall 2014 and would like to pursue a doctoral project on consumption in vampire literature.

Marie Pilon

“Mental Labs, Human Factor and Archives: Re-Writing Alternate Futures ub Max Brook’s World War Z”

With the help of Derrida’s *No Apocalypse, Not Now*, my purpose will be to analyze Max Brook’s work on the archive in his well-known novel *World War Z*. The novel was written in 2006, six years before AMC made popular Kirkman’s graphic novel *The Walking Dead* (written in 2003) and before similar television narratives such as *Eric*

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Kripke's Revolution (2012) began to question the meaning of being American. Organized in the fashion of a UN report and presented as such, World War Z picks the world up after a zombie apocalypse has befallen Earth and openly aims to reconstruct global memory. In his introduction, Brooks threads together memory, storytelling and healing in the way of post-colonial narratives and asks if "future generations [will] care as much for chronologies and casualty statistics as they would for the personal accounts of individuals not so different from themselves?" The para-text positions Brooks' post-apocalyptic narrative in direct relationship with today's questions regarding the spread of information technologies, while illustrating what Derrida calls "the historicity of literature." My proposition is that Brooks uses the return on the zombie apocalypse as a device which enables him to shed hindsight on today's international politics and on America's current turmoil. Linking back to Derrida's essay on nuclear criticism is illuminating in that it suggests that the destruction of knowledge is at the heart of humanity's apocalyptic fears. However, World War Z's form allows for the representation of oral memory consignment and the discussion of knowledge and memory transmission both at an interpersonal level and at a national level. Brooks plays with location in such a way that the multiplicity of subjectivities represented can only be understood as a "global" perspective, shedding light on a fictional past that bears a meta-commentary on our present. My purpose will be to discuss the emergence of "post-memory" through the cracks of Brooks' narrative as a representable item, and to argue the relevance of alternate histories as thought experiments or mental labs.

Marie Pilon graduated from Université de Montréal's Masters of English program in 2011 and now teaches college English and literature in Chibougamau, Québec. Her research interests focus on the intersection of popular culture and political activism, both with regards to the articulation of collective concerns and the reconstructions of marginal narratives. She has presented at Université de Montréal ("Juju Heads, Witch Doctors": Super-Hero Morality and Graphic Novel Aesthetics in Colson Whitehead's Intuitionist) and at Concordia University (VLB and Ulysses: Imitator or Pupil?)

Session 3: les Humanités numériques

Angela Du, Queen's University

"Amelia Alderson Opie (1769-1853): The Cromer Notebook and Conceptualizing the Writing Process"

Amelia Opie's works were well-received by her contemporary audiences, and she was

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able to financially support herself through writing after her husband died. Even so, few critical studies of her work exist. Shelley King and John B. Pierce's *The Collected Poems of Amelia Alderson Opie* is the first scholarly anthology of Opie's poems, allowing for a clearer assessment of Opie's responses to cultural and commercial influences throughout her sixty years as a professional poet. King and Pierce draw upon a variety of sources—archival records, published texts, primary and secondary sources—and apply stringent, thoughtful editorial procedures to represent the complexities of Opie's poetic career.

What King and Pierce did not have access to in assembling *The Collected Poems* is Opie's Cromer notebook. Housed in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, this document contains over 300 pages of dense composition and revision, including fair-hand poems, drafts, prose, and sketches. Opie began writing in the notebook during her stay in Cromer and likely kept it from 1791 to 1807. The notebook consists mainly of drafts of poems, many of which were published. These drafts are earlier, if not the earliest, versions of these poems.

How does Opie engage with the Cromer notebook? What are the purposes for which she intends the notebook? I aim to conceptualize Opie's writing methods by analyzing the contents of the notebook. Beyond programs like Word and Excel that facilitate the transcription and detailing of manuscript material, current writing research promotes great innovation in re-imagining the compositional processes of authors. Writing research is a relatively new phenomenon, largely due to the pioneering efforts of John R. Hayes in the 1980s. This type of research is highly interdisciplinary, interweaving psycholinguistics, education, and other domains. In keeping with the conference's theme of (post)memory, the results of this research can help me re-construct cognitive aspects of Opie's writing. Re-construction is creative: uncovering the writer is indistinguishable from creating the writer, and I wish to share one critical investigation of Opie as writer.

I am a fourth-year English major and Concurrent Education student at Queen's University. During the past two summers, I have been working as a research assistant for professors Shelley King and John B. Pierce of the English department at Queen's University. Professor King and I co-presented "Amelia Opie and the Art of Recollection" at the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies in 2012. I am working on an Honours Essay tentatively titled "'A Blighted Existence': Tragic Conceptions of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*," under the supervision of Queen's professor Maggie Berg.

Gillian Sze, Université de Montréal

"The Archive, Grief, and Translation in *Nox*"

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The remediation of textual culture dislocates our expectation vis-à-vis the material conditions of reading. We have witnessed a digital turn in the humanities that reconfigures the presuppositions that condition our encounter with the materiality of the book form. How, then, do contemporary poets experiment with the phenomenology of reading? Anne Carson's *Nox* deploys an accordion pleat in order to disable the linearity of the text and intensify our haptic orientation toward the book. My paper addresses Carson's visual experiment in *Nox*, considering the intersection of physical form, artistic genre, and affective intensities. Specifically, I will examine the importance of aleatoric adjacency for Carson as she positions, side by side, a variety of cultural products: translation, palimpsests, autobiography, memoir, letters, found art, and photography.

The structure of adjacency that constitutes *Nox* allows Carson to collocate grief, history, translation, and poesis, thereby reformulating her relationship to the brother she has lost and the archive she maintains even as the reader is called upon to reformulate a conceptual framework that can accommodate this strange artefact.

Gillian Sze is a Ph.D. student in the English Studies department at Université de Montréal. Her SSHRC-funded doctoral project examines the classical inheritance in Anne Carson's poetry, with particular interest in the fragment, translation, and the Sapphic "afterlife." She has an M.A. in Creative Writing from Concordia University and is the author of three collections of poetry.

Session 4: Relations familiales

Bilan Hashi, Queen's University

"Post-Memory and Somali Poetics"

This paper looks at 2nd generation diasporic female Somali poetry and post-memory inherited from their mothers' narratives of trauma from the Somali civil war. The poetry with its themes of dislocation, fragmentation, and ruination opens up new possibilities of understanding narrative, especially after trauma, as emancipatory and redemptive. However, I argue, it is not a simple linear progression between the 'speaker' and 'listener', begging the question "Who's story or who's memory is it?"

Extending work that continually remaps unsettled geographies and genealogies, this paper will consider the ways that transmissions of post-memory are complicated in the mother-daughter and speaker-listener dynamic. In particular, it interrogates the

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metadiscourse that narrative is predicated upon and problematizes the location of the subject vis-à-vis the family structure. Looking specifically at Warsan Shire's book of poetry "Teaching My Mother How To Give Birth", the discussion will think about the role reversal of mothers/daughters and speaker/listener and how this contributes to a more nuanced understanding of post-memory. The work of Marianne Hirsch, Dina Georgis and Yael Navaro-Yashin will be undertaken to contextualize Warsan Shire's poetry.

Bilan Hashi holds an Honours Bachelor of Art degree from the University of Toronto in the areas of Anthropology, Linguistics and Women & Gender Studies. Currently, she is an M.A. candidate in Gender Studies at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Her research interests include diasporic subjectivity, Somali poetics, memory, and cultural geographies. Her M.A thesis is addressing the production and articulation of female Somali Diasporic subjectivities in Canada through the textuality and materiality of language.

Mounira Besbes, Université de Montréal

"Unveiling Violent Histories and Exploring Transgenerational Hauntings: A Diasporic Daughter's Journey in Edwidge Danticat's Works"

Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* and *The Dew Breaker* provide a propitious ground when it comes to the exploration of memory and history. In historically bringing back Duvalier's dictatorship in her writings by either storytelling and memory or actual events and history, Danticat seems to demonstrate the impact of Duvalier's dictatorship on familial relationships. In these two works, each of the daughters carries the weight of parental trauma on both a psychological and a physical level. Being the twin Marassas of their parents, Sophie and Ka are haunted by their parents' consciousness and past, a history of violence, oppression but also of resistance. Through education, discipline, storytelling, and sculpturing, Sophie and Ka's bodies are reconnected to their parents' bodies. Therefore, the bodies of both daughters become an extension and the result of their parents' history of dictatorship, since these bodies equally experience the parents' trauma. In *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, I focus on the mother-daughter bond in relation to the ritual practice of virginity testing. My analysis of the mother's power to discipline and monitor her daughter's body and behaviour will be illuminated by Michel Foucault's notion of docile body. Using a psychoanalytic approach, I raise questions about the extent to which the mother's experience of sexual trauma, as undergoing virginity tests and as raped at the age of sixteen, has a hold upon the relationship with her daughter, Sophie. I investigate therefore rape and the sexual and national trauma that result from that experience as affecting the Haitian mother's conceptualization of and actual mothering.

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Accordingly, by examining the bond between Sophie and Martine, I analyze testing as a mode of subjection and a traditional practice that has been transmitted from one generation to the next. In *The Dew Breaker*, I scrutinize the father-daughter relationship that is altered by the father's past identity as a former Tonton Macoutes, one of Duvalier's militiaman. The question raised in this part concerns the father's body as an agent of political violence and his daughter's source of her artistic inspiration. With reference to Marianne Hirsh's theory of postmemory, I analyze the way the father's past and former identity as a Tonton Macoutes alters the father daughter-relationship and the way his daughter, Ka, becomes transgenerationally traumatized. Thus, my paper explores the way the daughters are bound to their parents' bodily trauma and attempt to transcend these psychological and physical boundaries.

I'm a second year PhD Student in English Department in Université de Montréal working with Dr. Caroline Brown. I specialize in Diaspora writing and Diaspora Women Studies, women's studies and African-American with a focus on Caribbean literature. I had been awarded a Prize for the Best Essay written by a Ph.D. Student 2012-2013.

Jessica Hamel-Akré, Université de Montréal

“Breaking with the broken body: remembering working class women with Dorothy Allison”

The figure of the working class woman is at the heart of American author Dorothy Allison's literary work. At the same time, due to the highly autobiographical nature of her writing, the working class woman does not exist for Allison simply in the pages of her novels and short stories. *Hors-texte*, she was her mother, grandmother, aunt, and cousin and their struggles inspired much of Allison's work. Whether it be through the experiences of the girl-child narrator in *Bastard out of Carolina* or the unnamed woman who appears in *Trash*, or perhaps the author herself in her memoir, *Two or Three things I know for sure*, Allison often aims to unveil the repercussions of intergenerational trauma. She consistently depicts the silent plights of the women who came before her and who, living in poverty, are faced with impossible decisions, with an everyday violence so common it becomes normalized and invisible. Caught between their need for food and shelter, for money and the men in their lives, their bodily integrity is often sacrificed for survival.

The cost of this survival beckons the question of what “surviving” really is and for this reason, I wish to explore the figure of the working class woman through a study of the previously mentioned works. I will examine how Allison presents the working class

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woman as a traumatized figure, her body violated by conditions in which she lives, and who becomes a tragic destiny transferred from generation to generation. With the help of intersectional feminist theory, literary theory on autobiography as well as Marianne Hirsch's work on postmemory, I aim to show how Allison reinterprets the stories she is told about her family history and attempts to refuse this same destiny by deviating from the accepted perspectives she grew up with. I will conclude that through her writing, she is able to break with the broken body of her ancestors while simultaneously archiving their trials in a personal and collective memory.

Jessica Hamel-Akré is a doctoral student at l'Université de Montréal in English Studies where she researches late 20th century and contemporary women's literature. She is currently working on intergenerational traumatic memory, migration, identity, and the body. In December 2013, she completed a Master's degree in Literary Studies at l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Her thesis was titled *Les filles exilées: violence, féminité et altérité dans The Bluest Eye de Toni Morrison et Bastard out of Carolina de Dorothy Allison*. She is the editor-in-chief of the literary journal *Postures*, after having previously served as director.

Session 5: Médiation

Denise Marques Leitao, Concordia University

“Depictions of Harmony Based on an Idealized Past in *Sir Orfeo*”

In this essay, I argue that *Sir Orfeo* proposes a pacifist ideal grounded on the cultivation of art and music, instead of violence and military prowess. The poem was written around 1330, almost three centuries after the Norman Conquest. Sir Orfeo's peaceful court shares many similarities to pre conquest England, while the Fairy Kingdom has Norman characteristics. By depicting a harmonious court centered on music with Anglo-Saxon characteristics, the poem creates an idealized depiction of pre conquest England. By valuing music and artistic expression and proposing that it should be at the centre of a civilization and government, *Sir Orfeo* also argues for a peaceful ideal, grounded in a different model of masculinity, based on internal values, rather than violence, physical force and external action.

Sir Orfeo ends referring to itself, how it was created by harpers in Brittany that heard this marvel (597 – 600), and calling itself “swete”(602). By emphasizing the importance of music and art at the centre of a civilization, *Sir Orfeo* cannot fail to mention its own value as part of a uniting and harmonizing force. If the poem is understood as contrasting a peaceful, harmonious

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Anglo-Saxon society, versus the conquering Normans, it is obvious that the poem should argue for the preservation of Anglo-Saxon identity through culture, and that it should mention itself as part its preservation. In this essay, I frame my argument with analysis from literary critics Babich, Battles, and Lerer.

Denise Marques Leitao has a BA in Media Studies from the University of São Paulo, a BA in English Literature from Concordia, and is currently pursuing her Master's degree in English Literature at Concordia.

Joanna Marzec, University of Windsor

“Fanny as Poet in Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park*”

In *Mansfield Park* (1814), Jane Austen’s heroine is sensitive and contemplative, often quoting the poetry of Cowper and Scott to convey her emotions. But is Fanny solely a reader of poetry, or has she, as Lorraine Clark argues, “graduat[ed]” to the rank of “poet” (377)? If Fanny is transforming into a “full-fledged poet” (Clark 377), how would different conceptions of the poet’s role affect her? Through a close reading of *Mansfield Park* (1814), I will test the idea of Fanny as a poet, focusing on the role of the minstrel in Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) and Scott’s *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). Though Fanny acts like an antiquarian, who is interested in poetic heritage and survival, she is also like the ancient minstrel or bard described in antiquarian collections of poetry. Like Scott’s Minstrel, Fanny becomes a mediating figure between different cultures, temporalities, and forms of cultural transmission (oral vs. print). Fanny’s sense of dislocation from leaving her childhood home also aligns her with the minstrel figure. Faced with a new ‘culture,’ Fanny loses her place and function as oldest daughter in the Price household: all of her knowledge and ways of interacting become inadequate. But, like Scott’s minstrel, Fanny regains her former importance. Notonly does Austen’s heroine educate others in lessons of history and sympathy: she also helps instill memory in the Bertram family, collecting forgotten artifacts, and drawing the past into dynamic interaction with the present.

Work Cited

Clark, Lorraine. “Remembering Nature: Soliloquy as Aesthetic Form in *Mansfield Park*.” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 24:2 (Winter 2011-12): 353-379. Web. Oct. 14, 2012.

Joanna Marzec is a second year Graduate student at the University of Windsor, pursuing studies in English Language and Literature. Joanna is a recipient of the Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship (SSHRC) from 2013, and has achieved high

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academic honours. Currently writing a Master's Thesis on the topic of Reading in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park*, Joanna hopes to continue her studies in Austen by pursuing a Doctorate. She also recently helped to create an exhibit on Jane Austen at the University of Windsor's Leddy Library, in honour of *Pride and Prejudice*'s bicentenary.

Erika Schultes, The College of New Jersey

"The Person Who is Always in Between:" Ruth Behar's Longing for Memory in Evocative Autoethnography

Ruth Behar's *An Island Called Home* encompasses multiple generations of experience by combining an anthropological perspective with a personal one, and by blending literature and photography to express personal and collective memory. While Behar constructs an autoethnographic work, she does not fully occupy the space of a native writing her native culture. Born in Cuba but raised in the United States, Behar returns to Cuba as an adult anthropologist in search of personal memory and identity. She uses her unique position as a subject on the margin between insider and outsider in order to maintain the legitimacy of both her research method and her portrayal of the Jewish Cubans she encounters. A transmission of postmemory influences this position. In lieu of her own, Behar inherits the memories of the often traumatic experiences of her parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents in Cuba, Poland, and Turkey. Postmemory permits the infusion of emotion at the intersection of her family narrative and the account of the remaining Jewish community in Cuba, thus Behar's book successfully becomes an evocative ethnography. In this form, Behar is able to write herself while maintaining a focus on the people she interviews because the community gives her the voice and medium through which to portray her own identity. This allows her to reclaim and reconstruct her lost childhood memories through the memories of the Jewish Cubans she meets. By writing the self through others, Behar creates a unique identity for herself that exists in the liminal spaces of Jewish, Cuban, and American identifications, to embrace and become "the person who is always in between" (Behar, *An Island Called Home* 33). I examine James Buzard's argument against autoethnography and the privileging of the participant perspective in comparison to Carolyn Ellis's theory on evocative ethnography and the importance of allowing emotion and personal experience into academic work. I also draw on Anne Goldman's theory on the connection between autobiography and cultural context. My sources support my claims about how interdependence, distance, and proximity both construct and complicate the memory work of the returning Cuban Jew.

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Erika Schultes is a graduate student in the English Department at The College of New Jersey. She is interested in Postmemory, Holocaust Studies, and Central and Eastern European Literature, especially from the transitional era between World War II and the Cold War. More specifically, her work examines the relationship between historical turmoil, geographic place, and trans-generational experience, and its effect on both individual and collective identity as expressed through literature.

Session 6: Form et contenu

Benjamin Taylor, Université de Montréal

“Narrating Trauma and Seeking Forgiveness in Sam Kieth’s *The Maxx*”

This paper examines the manipulation of and experimentation with narrative form and visual representation in the work of comic book artist and writer Sam Kieth. To be more specific, Kieth’s breakthrough series *The Maxx*, which ran from 1993 to 1998, engages concepts of trauma and forgiveness through narrative discontinuity, lack of closure, elements of fantasy, and an erratic artistic style. With *The Maxx*, space—both what Pascal Lefèvre discusses as the “diegetic space” and “extradiegetic space” of comics—complicates the binaries of victim and victimized, forgiver and forgiven, self and other. Kieth, thus, manages to construct a form and narrative in which the traumatic experiences and interior psychic worlds of a cast of characters collide in an effort to uncover lost or repressed memories and negotiate the intricacies of a past littered with mystery and misunderstanding.

While *The Maxx* inherits many of the conventions associated with the American comic book genre (e.g. the hero versus the villain and the noir-influenced city landscape), Kieth’s style enacts a parody—in Linda Hutcheon’s sense of the term—of the superhero narrative. From the beginning, readers are left questioning the hero status of the Maxx—the protagonist of the series—who is portrayed as a homeless, possibly schizophrenic vigilante. Additionally, Kieth denies his readers a sense of narrative continuity and closure, which allows him to consider more freely questions of memory, the narration of trauma, and psychological escape. Indeed, it is its enigmatic plot intertwined with a unique and disjointed artistic style that enables *The Maxx* to treat instances of homelessness, mental illness, assault, murder, and rape in such a way that avoids the literary commodification and exploitation of these experiences. Instead, as this paper attempts to highlight through a formal analysis of the textual and artistic elements of Kieth’s work, *The Maxx* presents trauma and forgiveness as inseparable components of a

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modern collective memory tempered by an interplay of terror, vulnerability, and hope.

Ben Taylor is a master's student in Université de Montréal's Département d'études anglaises. This is his first year at the university, having obtained a Bachelor of Arts in comparative literature from the University of Oregon in winter of 2010. For the completion of his undergrad studies, Ben wrote a thesis on the works of author Nicole Brossard titled "Vertiginous Spaces: Reading and Conceptualizing Space in(to) the Texts of Québécoise Author Nicole Brossard." Ben plans to continue working on Brossard's writing in his master's thesis, focusing particularly on issues of translation and gender. His other intellectual interests include literature of the American South, feminist literature and theory, gender studies, translation theory, and narrative forms.

Megan Cunniff, University of Massachusetts

"AS CLOSE AS WE COULD GET": Elegiac Correspondence in Anne Carson's *Nox*

The study of book arts and poetics often draw attention to the same process: how form complicates content. This paper will focus on an analysis of the visual representation of text in Anne Carson's *Nox*, a mixed-media collage book that pairs a translation process for Catullus 101 (a famous fraternal elegy) with musings on Carson's own deceased brother and the broader familial dynamics behind their estrangement. In particular, I focus on the moments where Carson renders communication between her brother, her mother, and herself, including salvaged remnants of handwritten letters. The visual representations of these communications become uncanny in their specific placements and usages, since the book is meant to reproduce an actual journal; certain areas of it would be "impossible" or self-negating except for the very particular conditions of its technical production. If every kind of representation and memory is distorted – in varying ways, to varying degrees – by the perspective of its author, the media form of *Nox* draws sharp attention to the physicality of the process by representing, repeating, and altering moments of communication in a visual form. *Nox* questions the concept of translatability itself the text claims that Catullus 101 is "untranslatable," but so too are the familial connections and communications that Carson displays. No language exists in *Nox* without drawing attention to its own alterations; in this way, the text shines a melancholic and uncertain light on its own elegiac process, allowing for pockets of conflict and resistance to traditional consolations.

Megan Cunniff is a first-year MA student in English at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. She received her BA in English Literature and Creative Writing from Wellesley College with a focus on poetry and poetics. Her current research interests include the

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contemporary elegy, landscape in modern/contemporary American poetry, and queer representation in speculative fiction.

Charlotte Werbe, Princeton University

“Fluid Spaces: Water in Michael Haneke’s *Caché*”

This presentation addresses the act of “framing”—the construction, manipulation and destruction of boundaries—in Michael Haneke’s *Caché* (2005). It examines the film’s privileging of what I call “fluid” space. Through directorial manipulation and manifest ambiguity, Haneke suspends any conclusive interpretation of the film, demanding an audience that is self-aware, active and engaged. I situate the film’s handling of frames within the fields of trauma theory and memory studies in order to investigate the fields’ underlying assumptions about memory: how is memory inflected by the construction of frameworks? How is memory manufactured by society?

I argue that water—an element that is inorganically contained, perpetually displaced, and inherently mutable—is an image used in *Caché* to suggest the instability and boundlessness of memory. By examining one overlooked scene, Pierrot’s swimming practice, I demonstrate that the film’s omnipresent frames index various types of control. In particular, the French government’s effort to suppress and direct memories of the Algerian War, as well as the writing of Franco-Algerian history, is operative in this scene. Beyond the significant link between key themes in *Caché* and the Algerian War, this scene sheds light on the constructed nature of memory overall—on memory as a social practice.

Caché continually problematizes frames by signaling their artificiality and their propensity for replacement. Through the manipulation of frames, Haneke prompts questions regarding form rather than content. Allowing the dynamic and elusive nature of memory to surface, *Caché* restores flexibility and openness to trauma and memory studies, a field long dominated by the commonplace of the “unspeakable” traumatic event. While valuable, the research conducted during this time engendered a static field that argued for the “unspeakability” of the traumatic event as a conclusive frame for interpreting trauma—essentially asserting that the traumatized victim had no recollection of the traumatic event, which in turn muted the field rather than foster active and engaged scholarship. *Caché*’s multiplicity of frames emphasizes the duplicitous and unstable nature of boundaries and reflect the linguistic permutations of memory.

Charlotte F. Werbe is currently a second year PhD student in the department of French

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and Italian studies at Princeton University. She received her MA from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in 2012 and her BA from Mount Holyoke College in 2010. Charlotte is currently conducting research in the field of post-Holocaust French literature and is particularly interested in examining the works of Charlotte Delbo and Sarah Kofman. Her article, “Traumatic Memory and its Inscription on the Body in Georges Perec’s *W ou le souvenir d’enfance* and Philippe Grimbert’s *Un secret*,” will be published in the third issue of the *Journal of Literature and Trauma Studies*.

Session 7: Le passé perpetual

Alexandra Grenier, Université de Montréal

“Memory as Immaterial Inheritance in *Ormond*”

In this paper, I will explore how memory treated as a material object shapes the social and personal world of the orphan Ormond in Edgworth’s novel and how it relates to the political state of Ireland at the turn of the 19th Century. Confronted by a multitude of possible social worlds, the young protagonist needs to find an anchor to resist the disorganization and dissolution ahead. He finds solace in his childhood memories, spent in the Black Isles at the margins of the Irish society. Edgworth uses these idyllic moments to ponder and comment on the state of the political world in Ireland as she compares the “retrograde” Black Isles clan system to the “progressive” parliament. Both political systems are embodied by Ormond’s guardians, role models, and spiritual father figures, the former by Cornelius “King Corny” O’Shane and the latter by Sir Ulick of Castle Hermitage. Their values and lessons become tools for Ormond to face his problems and finally become a man. Their death offers a vantage point to compare the repercussions of both systems on a larger scale: as leaders for their community, many people depended on them and their death change the social landscape of the Black Isles and of Castle Hermitage. As their spiritual son, Ormond inherits the memories and lessons from their deception, kindness, drunkenness, and thirst for power and affluence and use them to rebuild his life around as a better man than they could be, for his community, but also ultimately, as a better leader figure for Ireland.

Alexandra Grenier is a PhD candidate at Université de Montréal. She is working on her dissertation on the Bildungsroman during the Romantic period.

Hanen Touhiri, Université de Montréal

“Trauma, Postmemory, and the signs of hope in *The Dew Breaker*”

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This paper is a reading of Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker* from the perspective of trauma theory. It is a reading sensitive to the historical period that the book deals with, which is the Duvaliers' era. My aim is to trace how trauma is represented in the book. I also intend to show that there are different modes of transmission of trauma and traumatic experience, and to outline how trauma is represented in the book, how it is transmitted from one character to the other, and how it is conveyed to the reader. Therefore, I rely on Marianne Hirsh's concept of Postmemory to discuss how trauma is transmitted to the second generation. While Hirsh's focus was on the importance of photography in documenting and transmitting the history and trauma of the holocaust to the second generation, I adopt her concept of postmemory to argue that in *The Dew Breaker* there are other ways of transmission of trauma. In addition, I study how the book functions on two different levels. First, I focus on the way the book is constructed and how the different parts are interwoven to form a cohesive and coherent unit despite its apparent fragmented form. Second, I draw attention to the way this book works as a whole, and raise the question whether or not it is or can be considered as a witness to trauma. I argue that despite the poignant violence and trauma in the book we can depict lurking signs of hope in it.

I graduated from the Higher Institute of the Human Sciences of Jendouba (Tunisia) (B.A in English Language and Literature) in 2010. The same year, I was granted "La Bourse d'Excellence des études Supérieures" from the Tunisian government to carry on my studies at the University of Montreal. I am currently a PhD student in the English Department at the University of Montreal where I also completed my M.A degree in December 2012. My research interests lie in the area of Renaissance literature with a focus on Shakespeare. I worked as a Teacher Assistant for professor Sorel Friedman, and I am currently working as a research assistant for professor Joyce Boro.

Mohammed Ali Tourki, Université de Montréal

"Nostalgia and Modern Disenchantment"

My paper focuses on Max Weber's notion of disenchantment in relation to modern times and nostalgia. Modernity creates a state of 'existential malaise' that is frequently portrayed in the early 20th century literature. The attitude of disenchantment following this existential malaise took place fundamentally at the historical moment when modernity drained existence of meaning more than it brought into it. It is at that specific moment in history, when modernity made that metaphysics are so persistently shunned under the gaze of the scientific, materialist and capitalist culture. In order to escape the

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tragicity of the First World War and the subsequent pessimism, the disenchanted modern figure nostalgically looks back to better –and more serene– times. The feeling of being ‘de trop’ (Sartre) and the modern “ennui” (Baudelaire) indeed urge the disenchanted to look back to times where life is thought to have been more interesting and exciting.

My paper explores this nostalgic yearning for the past using Svetlana Boym’s theory on nostalgia. I stress the existential dimension of nostalgia when arguing that nostalgia shall not be understood as a form of yearning for motherland only (as Boym states), but also as a human –maybe too human- feeling of disarray when met with unfathomable ontological matters. Ontological concerns along with spirituality tend to be wiped out under the scientific and materialist aspect of modern culture. This spiritual “vacuum”, as I show in my paper, adds to the disenchantment of the modern human being thus making their nostalgic look to the past accompanied by a longing for a true form of connection with the sacred. My paper also explores the positives aspects as well as the limits of nostalgia in the modern context of disenchantment. Nostalgia can allow the disenchanted person to escape the harshness of modern times but also pathologically enhances the state of alienation.

I recently graduated from the Université de Montréal and now pursuing a PhD program in English Studies at the same university. Following my interest in Greek tragedy and Renaissance theatre, I wrote my M.A. thesis on Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* in comparison to plays by Greek tragedians. My PhD dissertation also revolves around Shakespeare’s plays but mostly in relation to radical feminism and queer theory. My other interests include medieval and early modern poetry, early 20th century poetry, and studies in gender and sexuality. I am also a published writer and currently working on a novel about Arab revolutions, queer revelations.

Session 8: Création

Greg Sullivan, Rutgers University-Camden

“Issues of Distance, Identity, and Memory in Place-Based Fiction” (creative submission)

The presenter will read the first story of his short story collection-in-progress. That story, “Homeland,” aligns readers with a first-person narrator who, along with his female companion, is struggling with starvation, exhaustion, and trying futilely to find his bearings while stranded on a barge in a place he believes might actually be the lake in the Deep South around which he grew up. The narrator must compare the landscape before

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him with the Georgia of his memory, along the many other places he recalls from before whatever mysterious trauma lands him in this predicament. Due to a military conflict, he and his companion are unable to leave the barge for the shore quite yet. The story represents the author's own trouble of capturing the South of his childhood and adolescent experience in his work against the region's rapidly-changing landscape. The presenter will be prepared to read an additional piece from the collection, if time permits. Other short works in the collection feature worlds of displaced Native American mascots, new species of giant whales living within an Army Corps of Engineers man-made lake, and mastodons living in plain sight on the Mississippi.

Greg Sullivan is a fiction writer and essayist currently completing an MFA in Creative Writing at Rutgers University-Camden. His recent literary work has been published or is forthcoming in *Drunken Boat*, *Saw Palm*, and *Writing on the Edge*. He's presented previously at conferences at Northeastern University, Rutgers, and St. Bonaventure University. Also, he is founding editor of his MFA program's new online literary journal *Cooper Street*. Prior to his recent academic work, he worked as professional journalist in his native southern US. His journalism has appeared in the *Toronto Star*, *USA Today*, the *Denver Post*, and dozens of other places.

Denise Marques Leitao, Concordia University (creative writing)

“Missing Places and Times in the Past”

It's been 20 years since I last lived in my hometown, and many years since I last stepped on it – as a visitor: a stranger in a strange land. Why then hometown, if it is no longer home? But the childhood memories, they still linger there, and how can it be, if “there” is no longer there? Yes, I can Google street view the street where I grew up, but it is just not the same. Funny thing technology: Google did not even exist when I was a child, in fact, not even the internet – as we know it. Lots of things did not exist as we know them. And why then should my hometown still exist as I last knew it? Why does it ache to see a cherished place changed? Should it remain a museum, for me to taste the tastes and see the sights of the past? To either remind me of a time long gone, or surprise me, because they don't look or taste the same? Are memories tied to time, place, or both? Aren't they inside us? In the end perhaps the memories of my childhood have nothing to do with time or place, they are an emotional point: a note my heart reaches, if it ever sings, a note located anywhere in place or time.

This is a short summary of a creative / personal essay on the experience of moving away from home, losing ties to the past, and immigration, questioning the nature of being

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“homesick” for a city or country that is no longer home, and the ever changing nature of people and things.

Denise Marques Leitão was born and raised in Brazil, where she completed a BA in Media Studies at the University of São Paulo. Living in Montreal since 2005, she has a BA in English Literature from Concordia University and is pursuing an MA in English Literature at the same university. She also writes prose and poetry.