

- 20/10/2022: **Sandrine Soukaï: “‘Paysan de l’écriture’: Writing the Indo-Guadeloupean Memory of Indenture”**

Following 1848 French the abolition of slavery more than 42,000 Indian indentured were brought to Guadeloupe as plantation labour. Till recently, the island had neglected memorializing its Indian heritage and there has not been any systematic study of its cultural and political manifestations, including its relationship to the prominent memorialization of slavery and to Guadeloupean Creole identity. I intervene within this lacuna by studying the literary corpus of the most prolific francophone and creolophone Indo-Guadeloupean writer, Ernest Moutoussamy. Combining trauma studies, oral history, archival research and close reading, I analyse the oeuvre of this “paysan de l’écriture” (Moutoussamy). By investigating the relationship between Caribbean, French/European, Indian diasporic, and Creole identities, filtered through literary forms and linguistic choices, I present new paradigms for postcolonial studies through the traversal of Francophone, Creolophone, and Anglophone cultural spheres. In so doing, I mobilize literary memorialization to foster cross-cultural ethical engagement and push forward recent developments in memory studies.

Dr Sandrine Soukaï is Lecturer in British and Postcolonial Literatures at Gustave Eiffel University (LISAA). Her research areas include (post-)colonial, memory and trauma studies. She specialises in South Asian literatures, in particular related to Partition, and is the author of a thesis entitled *The Shadows of Partition in Indian and Pakistani novels in English*. Her current work moves away from peninsular India to examine creolised Indianness in Caribbean literatures, histories and memories of indenture and their articulation with slavery across Francophone, Creolophone and Anglophone cultural areas. She has published several articles and book chapters on South Asian literatures and is working as co-editor on a collective volume *Island Indias: Archipelagic Memory* (Brill, forthcoming) which will include part of her latest work on Indo-Guadeloupean literature on indenture.

- 24/11/2022: **Jumana Bayeh: "The Palestinian Rebel in Fiction"**

This paper focuses on the figure of the Palestinian rebel in three texts published since the Second Intifada (2000-2005). The Intifada highlighted to Palestinians that statehood had not only been made more difficult to achieve since the 1993 Oslo Accords, but also that liberation from Israeli occupation must precede state-building. This represents a reversal to what had been widely assumed, and perhaps still erroneously perceived by many, that statehood and liberation are coeval. In *The Parisian* by Isabella Hamad, *A Rebel in Gaza* by Asmaa al-Ghoul and *Mornings in Jenin* by Susan Abulhawa, rebel characters are deployed to emphasise that liberation is central to and a necessary precursor of the achievement of state-based independence.

Jumana Bayeh is Senior Lecturer at Macquarie University, Australia. She is the author of *The Literature of the Lebanese Diaspora: Representations of Place and Transnational Identity* (2015), has co-edited a volume on Arabs in Australia, and has published on Arab diaspora fiction, the relationship between diaspora and world literature and the impact of diaspora on democracy. She is currently working on two projects – one that examines the Arab diaspora novel from Australia, North America and the UK and another collaborative work on rioting and the literary archive. In 2022, is a fellow at the Collegium de Lyon concentrating on the former of these two projects.

09/02/2023: **Ananya Kabir: “Archipelagic Asias, creolising memory: connecting Pondicherry to Saigon”**

The connection between Vietnam and Pondicherry that flourished from the mid- 19th to the mid-20th century is as yet completely unremarked upon within postcolonial studies and memory studies. During this period, people from French India settled in Vietnam to work as bureaucrats, merchants, soldiers, and service-providers. In course of twentieth-century decolonisation processes in Vietnam and French and British India, and subsequent dispersal of these Indo-French residents of Vietnam to various locations in metropolitan France as well as Pondicherry, these links faded from postcolonial public memory. Nevertheless, local Pondicherrian memories of this connection remain strong, as evidenced particularly in memoirs, cookbooks, as well as entrepreneurial attempts to incorporate that history into gastronomy, fashion, and heritage tourism. What kind of memory work can we observe from the gaps and overlaps between the textual and material turns to the historical connection between Pondicherry and Saigon that were facilitated by the French Empire in the Indian Ocean? Why do those invested in this memory work find it urgent or necessary? Using the paradigms of memory studies, creolisation as a theory of cultural encounter, and archipelagic thought, I will use the Pondicherry-Vietnam connection as a case study for memorialising “archipelagic Asias” as an alternative to terracentric cultural nationalisms.

- 23/03: **Pablo Mukherjee: « Memories of the Future: Post-Colonial Climate Fiction »**

Postcolonial societies are generally, though not exclusively, marked by the « environmentalism of the poor » (Martínez-Alier, J. 2002). While such historical struggles and conflicts around the unequal and uneven appropriation and distribution of the so-called « free gifts of nature » illuminate some fundamental aspects of modern and contemporary forms of colonialism and capitalism, their relationship with the geo-historical processes of climate change is less clear. In this essay, I argue that certain forms of postcolonial fiction register and represent « environmentalism of the poor » in order to extend their enquiry to climate change and climate crises. I compare the work of this fiction to benchmark « official » reports and enquiries such as the IPCC reports to show that such postcolonial fiction can and does go to places where these others cannot, precisely because of its awareness of the inter-related social, historical and aesthetic dimensions of the modern colonial life-world.

- 20/04/2023: **Marianne Hillion: « Slumming it ? L’écriture des marges de la ville dans la littérature indienne anglophone contemporaine »**

L’urbanisation spectaculaire de l’Inde depuis les années 1990 se caractérise, entre autres, par la multiplication des quartiers informels (ou *slums*), symptômes des contradictions du développement économique du pays, et, plus largement, de la planète (si l’on s’en réfère à l’ouvrage de Mike Davis *Planet of Slums*). Cette intervention s’intéressera à la manière dont la littérature indienne anglophone représente ces quartiers et les formes de vie, de lutte et d’occupation de l’espace urbain de leurs habitant.e.s. Étudier ces textes de fiction et de non-fiction (Suketu Mehta, Sampurna Chattarji, Arundhati Roy,...) à la lumière des travaux de Vyjayanthi Rao et d’Ananya Roy sur l’ « urbanisation subalterne » permet d’interroger les ambivalences de ces écritures de la pauvreté urbaine, caractérisées par une oscillation entre l’indignation vis-à-vis de conditions de vie intolérables et la célébration de l’ingéniosité des classes populaires, faisant ainsi écho à la pratique et à l’écriture victorienne du *slumming*.

- 25/05/2023: **Pavan Malreddy: « The Right to Un-belong: Ethics and Aesthetics of Contemporary Migrant literature »**

Conventional debates on the figure of the migrant – in its myriad iterations as the displaced, diasporic subject, exile, refugee – have tended to focus on the process of the movement itself, the political and economic conditions that led to such movement, the egregious conditions aroused by such movement, and the trials and tribulations of the subjects who are subjected to such movement. Accordingly, the debates on migrants and moving subjects in literary studies follow a linear trajectory of the migrant figure arriving from a point of origin (typically in the global periphery) to a destination (typically the Global North). This unreflective imagination of the migrant figure has been the source of xenophobia and other cultural anxieties all over the world. This talk challenges this standardized view of the migrant as ethnocentric, nostalgic, homebound, or obsessed with home culture and customs by arguing that – from a selection of contemporary novels and short fiction – new migrant figures do not seek to arrive from a point of origin to a point of destination. Instead, they reject the very idea of home and enter a world of liminal permeance, proclaiming their right to un-belong both from the homes they have departed from, and the destinations they have arrived at.

(Literature: Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*; William Kentridge's "Shadow Procession"; Warsan Shire's "Home"; Hisham Matar's *The Return*)

Pavan Kumar Malreddy teaches at Goethe University Frankfurt. He has published numerous essays and book chapters on race, postcolonialism, terrorism, and Indigenous politics in journals such as *Third Text*, *Textual Practice*, *CounterText*, *Third World Quarterly*, *Intertexts*, *Postcolonial Studies*, *Postcolonial Text*, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, *Distinktion*, *Intertexts*, *Wasafiri*, *The European Legacy*, and *AlterNative*, among others. He has also co-edited essay collections on Brexit, populism, and the war on terror, and recently completed his second monograph titled *Insurgent Cultures: Narratives of Violence from the Global South*.