



SUMMARY:

This research project explores the different inscriptions of postcolonial identities in an extensive corpus of Mauritian novels written in French and English between 1990 and 2010.

Over these last few decades, aesthetic, thematic and poetic innovation can be observed in a young generation of Francophone Mauritian writers, whereas such tendencies are rare among their Anglophone counterparts. While the former can be characterized by their subversive, demystifying and anti-exoticising postures, as well as their complex ways of interrogating issues of identity, the latter rather seem artistically stagnant. The Mauritian literary field clearly reveals itself as unequal as far as quantity and quality are concerned.

A postcolonial 'cross-reading-against-the-grain' of these different texts, which focuses on *leitmotifs* of violence and interculturality, allows us to interrogate critically a certain number of literary tendencies currently found in Mauritius. How do the novels negotiate the island's topographies and temporalities? Which ethnocultural logics and ideological dynamics can be found underlying these contemporary texts? How do the novels represent complex factors such as ethnicity, class, gender? In other words, how do the Mauritian writers reflect on – or refuse to do so – the complexity of their multicultural nation?

This comparative endeavour aims at understanding the dominant characteristics of a very heterogeneous literary field and seeks to analyze to what extent the new aesthetic tendencies offer original perspectives on contemporary issues of identity in Mauritian society as well as its literary production.

KEYWORDS: 20th and 21st century Francophone and Anglophone literatures, postcolonial identity, Indian Ocean, Mauritius, violence, interculturality, hybridity, gender.