

Pour accueillir David Chariandy

You do not often get the chance to meet a Canadian author in the hallways of the University. And it is even rarer to cross the path of a talented *and* approachable Canadian author within the walls of the Alma Mater, so to speak. David Chariandy lives in Vancouver and is a professor at Simon Fraser University. He is the author of the award-winning novel *Soucouyant*, published in 2007, from which the writer read at the ULg on Monday October 13th.



The narrative depicts the life of a mother suffering from dementia, seen through her son's eyes. It is a story about dementia, about forgetting, about family relationships, particularly between a mother and her son. During the reading, the author shared some striking excerpts with his audience and then offered a brief introduction to Black Caribbean and Canadian literatures. He underlined how difficult it was to find a balance between the two trends present in Black Canadian – even Black in general – literature, namely forgetting versus remembering. The temptation to forget and, as he said, have a “clean slate” is huge. Nevertheless, you cannot claim to build anything anew, for there is always a “before”, and starting from scratch means erasing this history, an amnesia difficult to reconcile with the postcolonial perspective. But neither can you remember everything, because, as Chariandy puts it in his novel, “without forgetting it is quite impossible to live at all”, or as he said during the session, “sometimes, remembering hurts too much.”

All present were delighted at meeting a writer so accessible and open to students' questions and opinions. We are looking forward to his next novel *Brother* (forthcoming from McClelland and Stewart), and hope that he will come back to give another reading, maybe in one of the big lecture halls, and have a full house, for he certainly deserves it.

Mathilde Mergeai

Soucouyant a été publié a Vancouver en 2007 par Arsenal Pulp Press. Le titre se réfère au folklore de Trinidad, dont la famille de David Chariandy est originaire.

Selon Wikipedia : The **Soucouyant** or **Soucriant** in Caribbean and specifically Trinidadian folklore is a creature that lives by day as an old woman at the end of the village. By night, however, she strips off her wrinkled skin, puts it in a mortar and flies in the shape of a fireball through the darkness, looking for a victim to suck the life-blood out of. To get rid of her, you must put coarse salt in the mortar containing her skin, then she cannot put it back on and must perish. The Soucouyant practices witchcraft, voodoo, and black magic. Belief in Soucoyants is still preserved to some extent in Trinidad