# Les mémoires de nos lauréats

*Les trois prix de notre association ont été décernés cette année aux mémoires de M. Mergeai et C. Leroy pour leur « master en traduction », ainsi qu'à C. Gabrielle pour son mémoire de 3$^e$ cycle (une filière désormais disparue). Les lauréates nous présentent ici les lignes de force de leur travail.*

**Cindy Gabrielle : Cannibal Selves, Consuming Identities: A Reading of Janet Frame's "Snowman, Snowman"**

It is perhaps not customary to summarize a dissertation concerned with words (literary analysis) by drawing parallels with images, i.e.: the picture figuring on the cover page of the dissertation (a spiderweb) and the comic strip which I chose as a dedication.

Yet, the similarities between Waterson's comic strip (Calvin and Hobbes) and the novella are striking for, as Janet Frame's snowman is slowly "sinking into the earth," he too invites the reader to contemplate the horror of our own mortality. In Frame's world, however, human beings decline this invitation more often than not and prefer to deceive themselves into believing that they live in a "deathless Eden."

Naturally endowed with great gifts of sight and hearing, the snowman inherits people's tendency to erase the grimmer aspects of reality when he is made into a human shape of snow. In the story, he therefore keeps hovering between the two poles of his being, between an awareness of the imminence of his death and a denial thereof. In my dissertation, I have shown that, up to a certain extent, the perspective of the novella mirrors the main character's geminate nature insofar as the interpretation of many passages differs according to the grid of reading one applies to the text: if one considers things from a human focus or that of a snowman.

If I chose to place the picture of a spiderweb on the cover of my dissertation, it is partly because I felt that it was perfectly fitting to compare spiderwebs – works of art in constant reshaping – with a text in which some themes and images keep being invested with extra layers of significance. Near the onset of the tale, cloth is for instance only one of the snowman's human attributes: his hat. But, as the story unfolds, cloth comes to represent the armour human beings wear as a means of protection against all that is 'other' – whether this refers to death, people or unfamiliar recognitions. Indeed, the self is such a greedy creature that, when the commencement of others 'threatens' its own integrity, it is ruthlessly devoured.

Snow too is a multifaceted image: if it is the principle of life for snowmen, for human beings, it is rather an ingredient of nightmare. Besides, snow is also inimical to recognitions and results in a changed view of the familiar. Indeed, when the world is wrapped in a "never-ending shroud" of snow, all recognition is wounded. In my dissertation, I argue that presenting an "unexpected 'failed' view of the familiar" is in fact what Janet Frame strives to achieve in the novella. In effect, she hybridises the focus, resists the erasure of otherness, alters our habitual way of conceiving identity and destroys the associated language. These textual strategies are by essence violent because they are aimed at piercing the armour people wear to protect their familiar recognitions. Any attempts to dismantle this armour are thus met with incredible antagonism and this also explains why works of art which strive to present a failed view of the familiar often suffer "the humiliation of most projects that fail – projects of light, conscience, time, discovery – and are burned quickly on the fire […] because it might take too much time and energy to prove that they are successes." Hopefully, I proved the author wrong with this dissertation.