

# A O L A L S

Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

Newsletter

2002

Greetings from Hyderabad. This is the first newsletter from India where the ACLALS executive office will be located till the next international conference in August 2004. At the Canberra Triennial of ACLALS (July 2001) the following were elected as the new executive: Meenakshi Mukherjee (Chair), Harish Trivedi (Vice-Chair), C Vijayasree (Vice-Chair & Secretary) and T Vijay Kumar (Treasurer).

**T**he formal transfer of the ACLALS papers to the new executive was done by Bruce Bennett, the outgoing Vice-Chair, when he came from Canberra to give a plenary lecture at the IACLALS Annual Conference in Visakhapatnam in January 2001. Amidst loud cheers from the audience he handed over a symbolic folder to



*Bruce Bennett speaking after handing over charge of ACLALS international to the new executive*

Meenakshi Mukherjee, the new Chair, warmly welcoming the new executive. The actual papers—some six large cardboard boxes containing numerous files—arrived by surface mail a couple of months later and by April the new office was in order. Due to technical reasons the old website being operated from Canberra could not be transferred to India, hence a new website was set up thanks to the expertise and initiative of A Giridhar Rao who had so far been administering the IACLALS website. Now, Giridhar has been co-opted as the webmaster of the ACLALS website as well. Information will be posted on this website ([www.aclals.org](http://www.aclals.org)) about the next international conference to be held in Hyderabad in August 2004 (see box on page 6 for more details).

This is the second time that the international ACLALS office has come to India. The earlier term was from 1974 to 1977 which culminated in a memorable conference in Delhi in 1977 organized by Professor C D Narasimhaiah who was then the Chair. Many of the older members of ACLALS across the world will remember the liveliness and excitement of that triennial which brought together writers and academics from many countries under the crisp winter sun of Delhi. The informal lunch-time readings were held under the trees in the lawns of what used to be the city campus of Jawaharlal Nehru University. We carry in this issue of the Newsletter the

recollections of a member from SPACLALS who was present on that occasion. My own initiation into ACLALS dates back to that conference when I had the privilege of being asked by the Chair to help him with some minor organizational chores. We do not know if the Hyderabad conference will be able to repeat the magic of that

Delhi event of more than a quarter century ago—for one thing the number of branches of ACLALS and the number of members in each branch has grown considerably since then and we expect a much bigger participation—but we will do our best to keep up the tradition of hospitality for which Hyderabad is famous.

The theme of the 2004 conference is “Nation and Imagination: the Changing Commonwealth”. It was necessary, we thought, to look at the debate on the idea of the nation from the commonwealth perspective and from the point of view of an altered and supposedly globalised economy and culture. Nation is a political and cartographical entity but it is also an imaginative construct, and the current Western critique of the concept seems applicable rather more to the idea of the Western nation in the imperialist nineteenth century than to the anti-imperialist (post)colonial nation of the twentieth century. Nor does the critique always make a nuanced distinction to understand the diversity of historical memories and geographical locations among different peoples in the world. We welcome to the conference not only writers and literary critics but also scholars from other disciplines like history, sociology, film studies, anthropology and folklore to share with us their views on the subject.

We are thankful for the continued support of the Commonwealth Foundation without which ACLALS work would not have been possible. Applications are now being prepared for other institutions and funding bodies in India and abroad for help in holding the 2004 conference. The four universities located in Hyderabad are also being approached for assistance. A special thanks to David Wells, Director FILLM (International Federation for Modern Languages and Literatures) who did us the favour of extending the date of application because our papers from Canberra had arrived late, and subsequently assured us of some financial assistance. And thanks to all the chairs of the regional branches of ACLALS who have co-operated by sending their reports on time.

**Meenakshi Mukherjee**  
Chair ACLALS



### Remembering ACLALS Triennial, Delhi 1977

January 1977. It was unexpectedly cold in Delhi. My mistake. I had packed in the heat of a Sydney summer, forgetting that it would be winter in Delhi: clear and bright, free of snow, but cold. I was in Delhi for the Triennial Conference of ACLALS. In the animated crowd of people meeting and greeting one another beneath a magnificent, brightly coloured shamiana set up by ACLALS on the lawn outside the Conference hall, was a young woman whom someone identified for me as “Meenakshi Mukherjee”. I decided that she had to be the author of *The Twice Born Fiction*, a ground-breaking book I had read a fortnight previously in Sydney. When I inquired if this were so, she charged me with being the author of *Jane Austen*, and proved in the next few minutes that my book was not just a title to her, but one she knew very well by chapter and sentence. There are few things that bring writers closer together, initially, than appreciation of each other’s work!

But besides the beginning of a friendship that has lasted 25 years were other memorable experiences which studded that week in Delhi—among them a vivid impression of C D Narasimhaiah (then in full flight as India’s elder literary statesman), of a sage-like Raja Rao holding court under a tree with a circle of English/American devotees sitting around him in attitudes of prayer, of Mulk Raj Anand under another tree vigorously describing his writing life in Britain, of G V Desani in one of his rare public appearances ... best of all, the atmosphere of warmth and friendliness that pervaded the Conference from start to finish. The sun smiled down on a colourful collection of people of all nations, among whom the six delegates from my own Australian university were beginning to identify writers they knew on the page.

India at that time was known to me mainly through its English literature (since one can hardly

say that short stops at Bombay en route to Britain constitute a claim to ‘know’ India). This was even more true of my five Australian, American, and British-born colleagues from Macquarie University, who were making their first visit to India, and who had not until then realized, perhaps, that the British and Australian literature they knew well had connections, through a shared colonial experience, with many other parts of the world. They were also discovering some of the things that are unique to India: the delights of the country’s vegetarian cuisine, which they now sampled for the first time, from the glories of masala dosai and mutter paneer to the hot and heavenly cheese pakoras.

The inspiration provided by the 1977 ACLALS Conference may be perceived in the establishment at Macquarie that same year of a Centre for the study of ‘Commonwealth Literature’, and in such later developments as Rosemary Colmer’s emergence, with Gareth Griffiths’s guidance, as one of the leading Africanists of her generation; Peggy Nightingale’s publication of her outstanding study of V S Naipaul, *Journey Through Darkness*; Wendy Blaxland’s work as a children’s author; Mark Macleod’s work as a publisher; and in *Silence, Exile and Cunning*, a book on Ruth Praver Jhabvala’s work I published in 1983.

The forthcoming ACLALS Triennial in 2004 will provide the first occasion since 1977 that ACLALS has been led by an Indian executive committee and Chair. That was a truly memorable year for me: the year of my first ‘real’ visit to India, and the beginning of so much that was new and unique in the experience of my colleagues and friends. It is difficult to accept that it was all of 25 years ago.

**Yasmine Gooneratne**  
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### ACLALS Executive Members



**Meenakshi Mukherjee** (Chair) taught in a number of Indian colleges in Patna, Pune, and Delhi before joining the University of Hyderabad. Her last and longest spell was as Professor of English in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She has been a

Visiting Professor in several universities outside India, including University of Texas at Austin, University of Chicago, University of California at Berkeley, Macquarie University (Sydney), University of Canberra, and Flinders University (Adelaide).

She is the author of *The Twice Born Fiction* (1971, rpt 2001), *Realism and Reality: Novel and Society in India* (1985, paperback 1992), *Re-reading Jane Austen* (1994), and *The Perishable Empire* (2000, paperback 2002). She has edited about half a dozen collections of essays some of which are *Considerations: Twelve Studies of*

*Indian Literature in English* (1977), *Midnight's Children: A Book of Readings* (1999), and *Early Novels in India* (2002). In addition, she has jointly edited a few volumes including *Another India* (with Nissim Ezekiel, 1990). She was the founder-editor of a journal *Vagartha* that published Indian literature in English translation from 1973 to 1979.

Meenakshi Mukherjee has been the IACLALS Chair since 1993.

**Harish Trivedi** (Vice-Chair) is Professor of English at University of Delhi. He was a Commonwealth Scholar at the University of Wales (UK) and has previously taught at St Stephen's College, Delhi. He has been a Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago, and is currently Leverhulme Visiting Professor at the School of Asian and African Studies at University of London.



He is the author of *Colonial Transactions: English Literature and India* (1993, rpt 1995) and has co-edited *Interrogating Postcolonialism* (with Meenakshi Mukherjee, 1996, rpt 2000), *Postcolonial Translations* (with Susan Bassnett, 1999) and *Literature and Nation: Britain and India 1800-1990* (with Richard Allen, 2000). He also translates from Hindi into English.

Harish Trivedi was Secretary IACLALS from 1993 to 1999 and has been Vice-Chair IACLALS since 1999.



**C Vijayasree** (Vice-Chair and Secretary) is Professor of English at Osmania University, Hyderabad. Her books include *The Raj and the Writer* (1998), a study of Mulk Raj Anand's work, and *The Artful Transgressor* (2001) which analyses the work of Suniti

Namjoshi. Currently she is working on a monograph on the critic K R Srinivasa Iyengar to be published by the Sahitya Akademi (The Indian Academy of Letters). She has co-edited a volume of critical essays on Browning (2000) and a collection of essays titled *Nobel Laureates of the Last Decade: 1986-1996* (1998).

She has edited the Telugu section of an anthology of short stories from the four South Indian languages titled *Routes* (2000). Her most recent work is the English translation (jointly with T Vijay Kumar, see below) of the play *Kanyasulkam*, a 19th century Telugu classic.

Vijayasree was elected the Secretary of IACLALS in 1999.

**T Vijay Kumar** (Treasurer) teaches at Osmania University, Hyderabad. His doctoral work done at Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi) was on Postcolonial African Fiction. He has published papers on African and Indian



fiction, issues in postcolonial literature and translation studies, and presented papers in Indian and international conferences including the Oxford Conference at Corpus Christi College (April 2000) and the Triennial of ACLALS at Canberra (July 2001).

Vijay Kumar has been actively involved in producing literary programmes on radio and television. He is the scriptwriter and research co-ordinator for the award-winning television series "Bookfare", and also for "Well Versed: Poets in First Person". He has done long interviews for the electronic and print media—and some of the writers interviewed by him are Salman Rushdie, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Romesh Guneseekara and Shashi Deshpande.

His most recent work is the English translation of a 19th century Telugu play *Kanyasulkam*, done jointly with C Vijayasree.

Vijay Kumar has been Treasurer IACLALS since 1999.



### ACLALS webmaster

**A** Giridhar Rao has a Ph D (1994) from the University of Hyderabad. His dissertation titled "Beyond the Sense of Wonder: Science Fiction as Adventure Fiction" argues that significant science fiction uses tropes from adventure writing in general (travel, conflict, landscapes of difficulty, the figure of the hero, etc) to pose new questions about the human condition.



Giridhar Rao is actively involved in the world Esperanto movement and contributes frequently to publications in the language. Currently he is translating Mahatma Gandhi's *Satya ke Prayog (My Experiments with Truth)* into Esperanto.

He is a consultant editor and web designer. Besides administering the IACLALS and ACLALS websites (and a few others), he also moderates the IACLALS discussion group.

Giridhar Rao has been on the editorial board of IACLALS Newsletter since 1999.



### The Task Before Us: Some Reflections From Canada

**I**n March 2002, I was in London and along with Harish Trivedi (Vice-Chair ACLALS) saw Sharon Robinson at the Commonwealth Foundation at Marlborough House on Pall Mall. We now understand one another's priorities and procedures

better and the restoration of Commonwealth Foundation funding to ACLALS is good news indeed.

At the Commonwealth Foundation we were made aware of the *perception* that many academics lack meaningful social and political engagement, and that we need to play a more significant role in helping to improve the daily lives of citizens of less privileged nations. This complaint resonates with what I hear in Ottawa amongst the bureaucracy, where our discipline is sometimes sneeringly referred to as one of the “text-based disciplines”. Irrelevant. Not connected to “real” life. And, in the materialistic neoLiberal Canadian context, worst of all—not profitable.

What can those of us at universities in Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand—four of the countries recognized as ‘developed’ out of the fifty four Commonwealth countries—do that would be helpful for our academic counterparts, writers, and ordinary people elsewhere? It is clear that we must redouble our efforts to be “public intellectuals” whose teaching, research and careers are dedicated, not only to solving intellectual or aesthetic or linguistic puzzles, but also, centrally, to making our world, local and global, a more humane and just place. How better can we learn from one another? Can we move beyond the highly specialized discourses, theory-speak and academic gobbledygook? Can we reach a wider audience? Surely, the multidisciplinary, multicultural understanding that we strive for through our comparative studies of literature and culture, our analyses of intersections of imperialism, racism, sexism, power and identity, “self” and “other” —are needed more than ever post 9/11.

In Canada, in an extraordinary speech in the House of Commons last November, Peter Adams, who chairs the post-secondary education caucus committee, rose to pay tribute to humanities and social science researchers across Canada and the HSSFC (Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada) which is our main umbrella organization and lobby group, for playing “a special role in our nation”. How do we take that momentum and do what most of us who have dedicated our lives to the literature of marginal groups and nations have been trying to do all along: to make the world a better, more humane, more equitable and a joyful place?

No doubt, the incremental steps we are taking in changing our own lives and local communities become cumulatively important. If not a truth, this is a fiction that must be believed. Can we do more at an institutional and organization level by re thinking the scope of ACLALS activities?

**Wendy Robbins**  
(Outgoing President, CACLALS)  
*wjr@unb.ca*

*We will be happy to publish similar pieces from members of other regional branches of ACLALS.*

### **Harish Trivedi adds**

**M**y own overriding impression of our cordial and helpful meeting with Ms Sharon Robinson (the person-in-charge of matters relating to the ACLALS at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the UK government in London) is that she was concerned to impress upon us how we could be more relevant and developmental in our activities rather than remain narrowly and exclusively academic.

Some specific suggestions she made were

- a. how we at ACLALS could promote Commonwealth Literature among school children through getting it included in school texts
- b. how we could work directly on developmental projects in our own countries such as undertaken by several NGOs, perhaps in collaboration with such NGOs, and
- c. how we could, rather than organize specialized conferences for fellow academics, work for a greater concern and greater visibility such as the Commonwealth Writers Awards have acquired.



### **Reports from ACLALS Branches**

#### **CACLALS (Canada)**

**H**ere are a few events and milestones that we are pleased to record in the news of our region. ACLALS’ ambassador extraordinaire Bruce Bennett visited several CACLALS members and their institutions on his research trek across Canada, east to west, last December, severe winter and

#### **FILLM Convention**

South Pacific Literatures

Emerging literatures, local interest and global significance: theory, politics, society

**Place** Nouméa, New Caledonia

**Date** 17–24 October 2003

**Duration** One week

**Official languages** French, English

**Chair** Sonia Faessel, Associate Professor in French literature, University of New Caledonia

**E-mail** *soniafaessel@mls.nc*

**Secretary** Michel Pérez, Senior Lecturer in English literature, University of New Caledonia

**E-mail** *perez@canl.nc*

**Organisation** Conferences (about twenty), workshops (meeting with writers), venues: exhibitions, theatrical creation. The acts and minutes of the symposium will be published (co-publication to be determined).

For more details visit FILLM website (<http://vicu.utoronto.ca/staff/kushner/fillm.htm>)

airport security line-ups notwithstanding. Past CACLALS President Uma Parameshwaran (Winnipeg) has published an eye-opening novel *The Sweet Smell of Mother's Milk-Wet Bodice* (2001) about the predicament of a newly arrived, immediately divorced, young and isolated Indian woman in Canada. Diana Bryden, another past CACLALS President has joined the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada as Chair of the Management Board of the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme. We have been working to develop the CACLALS website where you will find back issues of our news journal *CHIMO*, the programme for our last annual conference held in University of Toronto on 24-29 May 2002 on the theme of "Boundaries" held there.

There were many interesting sessions at the Toronto conference including a talk by the hip-hop musician Sol Guy, a discussion of the Inuit film "Atanarjuat" and a Diaspora panel. A highlight of the conference was a series of lectures by Toni Morrison. Wendy Robbins wrapped up the "WNB Years" by giving a power-point presentation of the initiatives taken by the outgoing executive, including an Aboriginal Roundtable at the annual conference, a NativeLit listserv and moving CACLALS more in the direction of digital communication. The new executive for 2002-2005 was elected by acclamation, with Ranjini Mendis as President and Robert Fleming as Executive Officer, both from Kwantlen University College in British Columbia.

The next annual conference of CACLALS will be held at Dalhousie University, Halifax, in May 2003. The over-arching theme is "Conflict and Cooperation" with three sub-themes: "Intersections of Local, National and Global Issues", "Tensions in Representing Justice", and "Struggles of Wealth and Creativity". CACLALS is also looking into a proposal to set up a fully online, refereed and indexed journal for postcolonial studies with a slate of international editors. The Public Knowledge Project at the University of British Columbia has offered us their Open-Access Journal System (currently in testing) with software and management assistance, free of charge, in support of open access scholarly publishing. This proposal is still at the discussion stage and we welcome your input.

*Prepared with inputs from*

**Wendy Robbins** (*wjr@unb.ca*) and  
**Ranjini Mendis** (*Ranjini.Mendis@Kwantlen.ca*)

## EACLALS (Europe)

**A**fter the 1999 EACLALS Triennial conference at Tuebingen (Theme: "Colonies, Missions, Culture") the next Triennial was held in Copenhagen from 21-27 March 2002 (Theme: "Bodies and Voices"). Meanwhile work has been going on towards publishing selected papers from the Tuebingen conference. Thanks to a discerning and

efficient editorial committee reading and selection of the numerous papers was done in less than a year and the heavy load of processing the scripts, negotiating with the authors about revisions, formatting and proof-reading took another year. Now the first volume (*Colonies, Missions and Cultures*) has come out and the second volume (*Missions of Interdependence: A Literary Directory*) has also gone to the press and is up for subscription.

The 1999-2002 Executive committee met four times and details of our decisions were circulated among EACLALS members in five half-yearly newsletters.

The outgoing Chair participated, both in official and personal capacity, in the ACLALS Triennial conference in Canberra where he succeeded in winning over ACLALS to support the publication of *Kunapipi* directly (in memory of Anna Rutherford) as a journal relevant and dear to all ACLALS members, and no longer dependent on a single branch organization. During the past term of office EACLALS supported *Kunapipi* and *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* by offering subscription services. Moreover *Kunapipi* was endowed with an annual printing subsidy. EACLALS has contributed DM 600 to the printing cost of the last book edited by Jacqueline Bardolph which was posthumously published by Andre Viola (*Telling Stories: Postcolonial Short Fiction in English*, Cross/Cultures 47, 2001). The EACLALS executive committee has organized a number of book gifts to Eastern European institutions. The European ACLALS used to be the strongest branch of ACLALS until Indian ACLALS caught up and exceeded in membership.

Some of the tasks of EACLALS for the immediate future are

- Increasing the number and supporting the status of Eastern European members
- Increasing the number of British members
- Stabilizing the budget in view of the irregular support granted by Commonwealth Foundation
- Updating the EACLALS homepage and economizing on the Newsletter communication among members by an increased use of e-mail facilities.

Activities since March have consisted solely of the Copenhagen Triennial conference. This was hosted by Bruce Clunies Ross and his team at the English Department of the University of Copenhagen and was devoted to the theme "Bodies and Voices". After an excessively difficult time in the run-up to the conference caused largely by cuts in subsidy from the new right-wing Danish government (which not only withdrew subsidy for writers from developing countries, but also abolished the very department which administers such subsidy!), the conference itself proved a great success. It was perhaps a little smaller than usual but it was most convivial and productive. Inspired by the conference topic, a number of imaginative venues for sessions had been chosen, including an 18th century anatomical lecture

theatre at the University. About 130 papers were delivered, which included a moving opening address on the contribution of the late Anna Rutherford to Commonwealth Studies in Denmark and in Europe given by Hena Maes-Jelinek, a life-long friend of Anna's and herself a former chair of EACLALS, as well as an inaugural "Anna Rutherford Lecture" given by fellow Australian, Helen Tiffin. This memorial lecture will feature on the programme of EACLALS conferences in future. It is hoped that the next triennial conference will, for a change, take place in a Commonwealth country—Malta.

*Prepared with inputs from*

**Gerhard Stilz** ([gerhard.stilz@uni-tuebingen.de](mailto:gerhard.stilz@uni-tuebingen.de)) and  
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### IACLALS (India)

IACLALS continues to pursue its objectives of promoting interest in literatures and cultures of the Commonwealth and building up a network of scholars interested in the field. The Association has been growing in strength with its membership now exceeding 400. Activities of the IACLALS have now become interdisciplinary in scope and its membership has spread beyond colleges and universities to include other interested people in journalism, publishing and the media.

The IACLALS annual conference (2002) was hosted by Andhra University, Visakhapatnam from 7–9 January. The broad theme of the conference was "Reader, Writer, Text: the Postcolonial Situation". Jayanta Mahapatra, the well-known poet, delivered the keynote address, and the plenary speakers were Bruce Bennett, the novelist Ranga Rao, and Meenakshi Mukherjee. The conference was attended by nearly a hundred participants and the papers covered a range of topics including recent developments in postcolonial writing, newer approaches to reading these literatures, diaspora, pedagogy, politics of translation, film and other cultural productions in postcolonial societies. There were separate sessions on Australian Literature, South Asian Literature and one on the Nobel Laureate V S Naipaul.

One of the most heartening features of the conference was the presence of several young research scholars and teachers of English from various small towns of Andhra Pradesh who profitably used the occasion to interact with writers and senior scholars in the field. To quote from a report on the event published in the IACLALS Newsletter (July 2002): "... there were students who told us what a difference this exposure has made to them ... one of the highest points of this conference was [its ability to function] as a bridge between 'esoteric' research and the 'ground reality' of teaching". It is in building such bridges that IACLALS has been playing a vital role in India.

Another important event associated with the conference was a simple handing-over ceremony in

### ACLALS

#### 13th Triennial Conference 2004

**Theme** "Nation and Imagination: the Changing Commonwealth"

**Dates** 4–9 August 2004

**Venue** Hyderabad, India

More details soon at [www.aclals.org](http://www.aclals.org)

which Bruce Bennett the Vice-Chair of the outgoing ACLALS executive handed over the papers to Meenakshi Mukherjee the Chair of the new ACLALS executive.

IACLALS continues to bring out its bi-annual newsletter regularly facilitating dissemination of information about postcolonial studies to teachers and researchers located in different parts of India as well as carrying news about what is happening in India to our international members.

The website of IACLALS (<http://iaclals.8m.com>) is continually updated and the latest activities of the association, including web versions of the newsletters, are posted there. IACLALS has also started an e-discussion group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/iaclals>) where members can exchange ideas and information. Recently two of the IACLALS executive members C Vijayasree and T Vijay Kumar translated Gurjada Appa Rao's telugu play *Kanyasulkam* (first published in 1897) which was released by the then President of India K R Narayanan on 12 July 2002 in New Delhi. This volume is part of a series called 'Past Continuous' which is making old classics from different Indian languages available in English translation. Meenakshi Mukherjee is the General Editor of the series.

As I am sending out this report, IACLALS is gearing up for its annual conference to be hosted by Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (Local Secretary G J V Prasad) from 23–25 January 2003, and also for the 13th ACLALS Triennial scheduled for August 2004.

**C Vijayasree**  
Secretary IACLALS

### MACLALS (Malaysia)

The activities of MACLALS this year include the launching of the revamped *South Asian Review of English (SARE)* on 27th July at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. Published by MACLALS since 1980, the journal has now been updated to the status of an internationally refereed one, with an advisory Board of six distinguished scholars from various universities worldwide. A MACLALS membership drive was also held during the launch and the committee anticipates greater interaction between the academic fraternity and the writers in English in Malaysia—both established and the aspiring ones.

A workshop for teachers of English Literature is also being planned later this year. It will be organized by MACLALS and will be held in Kuala Lumpur. With the current emphasis on the teaching of English Literature in Malaysian schools and institutions of higher learning, we expect an enthusiastic response from teachers nationwide.

Siti Rohaini Kassim has been elected as the new President of MACLALS.

**Sharifah Aishah**  
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### SAACLALS (South Africa)

**S**AACLALS members have been busy during the past year in individual and joint projects some of which have already resulted in publication while some are in the process of being completed. Leaving aside numerous journal articles, the major completed projects of this year are the following:

- 1 *Deep HiStories: Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa* edited by Wendy Woodward (University of Western Cape) with Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley. This is to be released soon by Rodopi (New York and Amsterdam) as part of their Cross/Cultures series.
- 1 Dr Lindy Stiebel's (University of Durban-Westville) book *Imagining Africa: Landscape in Rider Haggard's African Romances* was published by Greenwood Press in 2001. The book argues that Haggard created in his popular African romances like *King Solomon's Mines*, *She* etc. a formulaic, ideological geography onto which he projected his desires and fears, both personal and political, as well those of his many later Victorian readers. Certain aspects of this formulaic landscape of Africa persist today, lending the book a relevance in current debates on land and identity in South Africa.
- 1 Lindy Steibel is also the convenor of a joint project, with South African and Australian scholars, on "Thomas Baines and the 'Great Map' Route of the Goldfields Exploration Company's Expedition 1869-1872". The result is a CD-ROM which reproduces the large manuscript map in digital form. Three essays accompany the map which situate the map historically (Jane Carruthers, UNISA), cartographically (Vivian Forbes, UWA) and discursively (Lindy Steibel, UD-W). Four of Baines's paintings from this expedition are also included. All place names are hyperlinked for easy access. The publisher is Campbell Collections, University of Natal.
- 1 Michael Chapman (University of Natal, Durban) has published a 500 page anthology in 2002: *The New Century of South African Poetry* which is not an update of his earlier *A Century of South African Poetry* (1981), but a new selection with a new vision. The recent book takes as its vantage point South Africa after apartheid, South Africa after the Cold War. The anthology revisits poetry of this

region from a dual perspective. As South Africa attempts to rejoin the international community, the poetry searches for a post-apartheid identity, or a sense of home.

The school of Language and Literature, University of Durban-Westville held a colloquium on the Durban-born poet and writer Roy Campbell on July 25-26 in which SAACLALS participated. SAACLALS Secretary Judith Coulie was one of the organizers. SAACLALS also funded two post graduate students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds to attend this exciting event in the city of Campbell's birth. The colloquium was attended by scholars from England, Australia, the US, Canada, Germany, and of course, South Africa. After the colloquium the organizers, Professors Wade and Coulie (Secretary SAACLALS) have commissioned a video to be made of one of Campbell's short stories. They also funded performances during the colloquium of a play about Campbell by Antony Ackerman and a performance of some of Campbell's early poetry by students in the Drama Dept of the Durban Institute of Technology. A film of the poetry recital is planned and it will be marketed as a video. Also emerging from the colloquium will be a CD-ROM on Campbell (2003) and a volume of critical essays.

**Margaret Daymond** (DAYMOND@MTB.und.ac.za)  
Chair SAACLALS

**Judith Coulie**  
Secretary SAACLALS

### SPACLALS (South Pacific)

**S**ince 1999, SPACLALS has combined a lot of its work with that of Pacific Writing Forum (PWF). PWF has provided organizational structure to SPACLALS, giving secretarial assistance and publishing SPACLALS' literary journal *Span*, the most recent issue of which is about to be published.

Needless to say, this aspect of PFW's work contributes to the international profile of University of South Pacific and brings PWF's work to a wider attention, thus aiding networking. But this is the last year for PWF to host SPACLALS. It is our responsibility now to negotiate with another institution in the region to take over SPACLALS and organize its next conference.

One of the most important activities has been the writer-in-residence programme. The writer's immediate responsibility is to his/her own work-in-progress but writers have always reciprocated by talking to younger writers and students, by giving one or two readings and participating in seminars. The period of attachment has varied from one month to three months.

During April 2002 we had two visiting writers: Raymond Pillai who had earlier taught in the University of South Pacific and now lives in Auckland and Anjum Malik, a Pakistan-born poet who now lives in Manchester, UK. During his stay with us

Raymond Pillai completed four short stories, one of which will appear in the forthcoming issue of *Span*. Anjum Malik had come here to do research on food, but during her stay read her poetry to literature students and participated in a poetry reading session organized by PWF and SPACLALS.

These poetry reading sessions are organized from time to time, but in April 2002 we decided to do something less conventional by inviting senior administrators and academics from the university and prominent members the community in Suva to read a poem that held special meaning for them. We were gratified by the response and it turned out to be a colourful evening.

Among the other events this year were the launch of Sudesh Mishra's fourth collection of poems *Diaspora and the Difficult Art of Dying* and the publication of Larry Thomas's collection *To let You Know and Other Plays*. Larry Thomas is in the Literature and Language faculty of the University of South Pacific, and he, along with Subramani carries most of the burden of work for PWF and SPACLALS.

The activities planned for the remaining part of 2002 are organizing writing workshops in Labasa and Lautoka, publication of a collection of poems and drawing by Francis Vakauta, and a book of essays on human rights.

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#### USACLALS (United States of America)

**A**t the ACLALS Triennial Conference in Canberra (July 2001) USACLALS was formally admitted as a branch of ACLALS. The major activity of this newly chartered chapter since then has been organizing its second international conference which took place in Santa Clara University, California 26-28 April 2002. The theme of the conference was "Rethinking Commonwealth / Postcolonial Literatures: Cartographies and Topographies Past and Present".

Among the plenary speakers were Bill Ashcroft, Trinh T Minh-ha, Shirley Lim, Opal Adisa, Joel Tan, Makarand Paranjape and writers like Ginu Kamani and Chitra Divakaruni. Special mention must be made of Abdul JanMohamed's plenary on race and social construct and Pal Ahluwalia's talk on the relation between poststructuralism and postcolonialism.

A forum presided over by Amritjit Singh, Chair USACLALS, included presentations by Sangeeta Ray and Bieden Jeyfio. Paper reading sessions covered topics ranging from narratives of the Americas, Arabic postcolonialism, Indian Englishes, pedagogy, politics of representation, South African Literature to individual authors like Salman Rushdie, V S Naipaul and Amitav Ghosh.

The conference was sponsored by Santa Clara University and supported by grants from San Jose State University, University of California at Berkeley, University of California at Santa Cruz, California State University at Fresno, Stanford University and the University of San Francisco.

With 120 participants coming from throughout the United States and from overseas (including creative writers from Singapore and young scholars from India) the conference helped establish our chapter and set a standard which will surely be repeated when Harveen Mann hosts the next conference at Loyola University in Chicago next year. Meanwhile our Newsletter editor Rajini Srikanth (*Rajini.Srikanth@umb.edu*) welcomes any item that you would like to have posted in our USACLALS Newsletter which is published twice every year.

*Prepared with inputs from*

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#### WIACLALS (West Indies)

**W**e are a small branch with a steady membership hovering at just over 50. Our main activity is the publication of the *Journal of West Indian Literature (JWIL)* and I am happy to report that we have published Vol 9, Nos 1&2 and Vol 10, Nos 1&2 dedicated to the work of Sylvia Wynter.

In addition we have sponsored several public talks over the course of the year. Speakers included: Professor Helen Tiffin (University of Queensland), Professor Gerhard Stilz (University of Tuebingen, Germany), Professor Lucia Cordell Getsi (Illinois State University), Dr John Gilmore (Centre for Caribbean Studies, University of Warwick), Dr Joseph Clarke (University of Pennsylvania) and the Barbadian / Canadian writer Austin Clarke.

**Victor Chang**  
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