

A LALS

Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies Newsletter 2004

A New Postcolonial

Whenever and wherever Postcolonial scholars gather in numbers, as over 250 of us are going to do at the 13th Triennial Conference of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies in Hyderabad from 4 to 9 August 2004, some of us tend to remark, with a knowing smile or a rueful sigh, that the Postcolonial is dead. True to tradition, we have a panel in our forthcoming conference, with three eminent colleagues participating, titled “End of Postcolonialism,” in which the question is asked, “What was Postcolonialism?” and then a “Requiem” offered for it. This is all as it should be and always-already has been, except that it would not surprise the rest of us if this latest report of the demise, too, turns out to be both exaggerated and premature.

The Postcolonial can be seen to have had a notably longer run than some other disciplinary fields or approaches or buzz-words in this age of rapid academic turnover, especially when we consider that in comparison, Deconstruction has for some time been under erasure, the Postmodern seems to have wandered off into a wilderness somewhere between the centre and the margin, and New Historicism looks nearly as new now as say New College Oxford. If the Postcolonial goes on and is still with us, it is primarily because it has shown a voracious tendency to encroach on and annex other much older fields such as even the Classics. Everyone now wants a slice of the Postcolonial cake including those who were never colonized. The danger may be not that the Postcolonial would one day lie down and die but that it would burst at the seams.

This is not to deny the many self-imposed and disabling limitations of Postcolonial studies. In one view, a major impulse behind the origin and spread of Postcolonial studies was the increasing need felt by many Western societies to try and understand, and cope with, the post-imperial waves of Third World migration, i.e., with the

enforced “multiculturalism” in their own backyards. Such a need has over the years not gone away but only intensified. This may explain why the leading location of Postcolonial studies has remained the Western academy; as currently constituted, it is yet another academic perspective and practice which arose not from below but from the top. In the process, the post-colony still does not speak for itself, while the newly liberated nations seem to have been born too late, in an age when all theory is against them even though the hard geopolitical facts may still affirm their value, whether as a cosmopolitan nuisance or as a focus of local resistance. The tacit assumption that Postcolonial literature and theory exist only in English, the language of the colonizer, is yet another marker of what some of us may regard as the neocolonial cultural hegemony of Postcolonial studies.

And yet, there are some welcome signs of the Postcolonial seeking to renew and reinvigorate itself from within. Our upcoming conference, titled “Nation and Imagination,” predictably reiterates the notion of the nation, and not always negatively. Because of its location in India, there is a preponderance of participants from the post-colonies at this ACLALS conference such as perhaps never seen before. And, most enabling of all perhaps, as many as one-quarter of the 200 papers to be presented, judging by their titles, seem to use materials from an indigenous language other than English, and/or to address specifically the issues of language or translation. Indeed, the very title of one of the panels is in an Indian language, “Kal Aaj aur Kal” (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow)—a little phrase sufficient to signal even to the uninitiated that Hindi has the same word for both (precolonial) Yesterday and (postcolonial) Tomorrow! Go figure that long *duree*—for a more polyphonous Postcolonial tomorrow.

Harish Trivedi
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ACLALS 2004 Conference Speakers

Vikram Seth, the keynote speaker of this conference in which the broad theme is 'Nation and Imagination', refuses to stay confined within the boundaries of any one nation. His three novels *The Golden Gate* (1986), *A Suitable Boy* (1993) and *An Equal Music* (1999), set in three different continents, enter the ethos and mental climate of each location with such effortless ease and the casual confidence of an insider that it seems pointless to attempt to put a national label on him.



Nor can this elusive writer be pinned down to a single genre. His first publication—a book of poems *Mappings* (1981) was followed by a travelogue—*From Heaven Lake* (1983) which won an award. The next book, again a collection of poems *The Humble Administrator's Garden* (1985), received the Commonwealth Poetry Prize. He has written verse for children (*Beastly Tales from Here and There*, 1991), translated from Chinese (*Three Chinese Poets*, 1994) and composed the libretto for an opera (*Arion and the Dolphin*, 1994). The book he is currently engaged in writing—*Two Lives* will probably be difficult to fit into any genre—based as it is on the lives of two persons—an Indian Khatri and a German Jew who met just before the Second World War and married in England later.

The publication of each of Vikram Seth's book is a literary event and his readers are spread across the world. Born in Calcutta, Seth did his schooling in Dehradun and graduated from Corpus Christi College, Oxford. After doing an M A from Stanford University, he worked as a senior editor in Stanford University Press for a year and began researching in Nanking University for a doctoral degree that was never finished. He has been a full-time writer since then.

Vikram Seth agreed to be the keynote speaker at the ACLALS 13th Triennial on the condition that instead of a prepared speech we let him engage in a conversation. We agreed in the hope that this too will be another transcending of boundaries, another dismantling of a given format — something Seth always manages to do with elegance and elan.



In 1986 Aijaz Ahmad's spirited debate with Frederic Jameson in the pages of *Social Text* was an exciting milestone in the study of 'Third World' literature. Since then the term 'Third World' has been overtaken by 'postcolonial' and subsequently Ahmad's book *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (1993) has consolidated and expanded those early arguments into a thorough critique of some of the cherished myths of postcolonial studies. Through detailed reconsideration of the works of Jameson, Edward Said, Salman Rushdie and a few migrant

intellectuals, *In Theory* provides incisive analyses of the principal developments in literary theory in the last few decades, and of the conditions under which postcolonial studies emerged in metropolitan intellectual circles. The book also contains an essay on the idea of Indian literature which has been discussed widely. Since then he has written *Lineages of the Present: Political Essays* (1996), *Globalization and Culture: Offensives of the Far Right* (2002), and *Afghanistan, Iraq and the Imperialism of Our Times* (2003). He is the editor and co-translator of *Ghazals of Ghalib* (1994), and the editor of Marx and Engels' *On the National and Colonial Questions: Selected Writings* (2001).

Aijaz Ahmad is a regular contributor to *Frontline* where he comments on contemporary political issues. In these essays his strong conviction and social concerns are backed up by rigorous research.

Ahmad has been associated with universities and institutions in a number of countries. He taught in Rutgers University in USA, York University in Canada, Jawaharlal Nehru University in India, and was a Professorial Fellow at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library for seven years in the nineties. From July 2004 he has taken up the Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan Chair in the Academy for Third World Studies in Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi.

Long before *The Location of Culture* (1994) brought together in a volume a dozen of his seminal essays in the field of cultural criticism, **Homi Bhabha** had been acknowledged as a theorist of uncommon power and brilliance who looked at familiar texts in innovative ways and transformed questions of identity, social agency and national affiliation by dissolving their familiar coordinates.



Bhabha's engagement with the concept of the nation led to his editing a volume *Nation and Narration* (1990) which has had long-term influence on literary and cultural studies. His introduction to the volume takes off from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983), but his own essay in the volume pushes the discourse to the borderline of history, to the limits of race and gender, not in order to formulate a general theory, but to consider the productive tension of the perplexity of language in various locations of living. He offers an exhilarated sense of alternate possibilities in which a culture is in permanent transition and incompleteness. Bhabha's theories of mimicry and hybridity have coloured postcolonial discourse so deeply that even those who have not read Bhabha's work now use them as points of reference.

Bhabha has co-edited a volume *Cosmopolitanism* jointly with Carol Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock and Dipesh Chakrabarty in 2000. His forthcoming books are *The Right to Narrate* and *A Measure of Dwelling: Reflections on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism*.

After graduating from Elphinston College, Bombay, Bhabha did his postgraduate and doctoral work at Oxford. He is currently the Rothenberg Professor of English and American Literature at Harvard University. His plenary at ACLALS 2004 is titled “Scrambled Egg and a Dish of Rice: ‘National’ Internationalism and the Literary Imagination”.



Born in 1934 in the Caribbean island of Barbados, which was still under British colonial rule, **Austin Chesterfield Clarke** began life with obvious disadvantages — colour, race,

class. But he was not to be put off by any of these; he was determined to seek success and recognition. The journey to success, however, was an arduous one. Like many young Caribbeans of his age, he emigrated to Canada in quest of greener pastures. Enrolled as a student at the University of Toronto, he was soon disillusioned with life in the academia.

Though he knew early in life that his passion was creative writing, he tried his hand at several jobs—actor, watchman, typist, and employee of the postal service. He started writing poems, short stories and novels in the fifties but kept them to himself.

It was the publication of *The Survivors of the Crossing* (1964) that catapulted him into public view. After this there was no looking back. He published nine novels and five short-story collections, and emerged as a major Caribbean-Canadian writer. He has won several awards, including the Toronto Arts Award, Lifetime Achievement Award (from Frontier College in Toronto) and Martin Luther King Junior Award. His most successful novel to date, *The Polished Hoe*, has won the 2003 Commonwealth Writers Prize, the 2003 Trillium Award and the 2002 Giller Prize. Austin Clarke has played an important role in the civil rights movement in Canada, and was a significant contributor to the emerging black cultural movement in North America. His life and works are marked by a relentless struggle against discrimination, which he carries on with an amazing blend of aggression, assertion and nonchalance.

Ashis Nandy has worked for more than thirty-five years on two diametrically opposite domains of social existence—human potentialities and mass violence. It is the oscillation between these two domains that has defined his life and work. Even in his ongoing study of genocides in South Asia, the emphasis is not only on human destructiveness, but also on the resistance offered by ordinary people to organised machine violence and ethno-nationalism. This has brought him close to social movements and non-state political actors grappling with issues of peace, human rights, environment, and cultural survival.

Originally trained as a sociologist and clinical psychologist, Nandy is also known for his work in



political science and future studies. However, he has tried hard during the last two decades to de-professionalise himself and allow his work to be ‘contaminated’ by the categories, worldviews and styles of social criticism that emerge from—or could be built upon—vernacular subjectivities. Some of his books

are *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism*, *The Savage Freud and Other Essays on Possible and Retrievable Selves*, *An Ambiguous Journey to the City*, *At the Edge of Psychology*, *The Romance of the State*, *Time Warps and Traditions*, *Tyranny and Utopias*. The book most widely read by students of literature is *The Intimate Enemy: The Recovery and Loss of Self Under Colonialism*. He is associated with the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi.

Nandy is an original thinker who cannot be easily slotted into the simplistic binaries commonly used in Indian public discourse, for example those of secular/fundamentalist, nativist/cosmopolitan, traditional/modern. A challenging and stimulating writer, he often triggers off controversies and revels in them. In ACLALS 2004 he will participate in the concluding plenary panel discussion on “The Future of the Nation”.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is one of the most influential critical theorists of our time. Her diverse areas of interest—Comparative Literature, Marxist, Feminist, Postcolonial and Cultural Studies, Subaltern Historiography, Translation—impinge on each other as she stretches the margins at which disciplinary discourses break down and enter the world of political agency.



Her translation of, and scholarly introduction to, Jacques Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* (1976) played a major role in the rethinking of the humanities and social sciences through a deconstructive problematic. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987) brought together essays written over a decade on topics as different as Dante, Marx, Wordsworth, and Mahasweta Devi. *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (1993) addressed the issue of multiculturalism by dismantling “the old anthropological supposition that every person from a culture is nothing but a whole example of that culture.” *The Postcolonial Critic* (1990) comprises a series of interviews in which she engages with questions of pedagogy, representation and self-representation, among others.

Spivak’s translation of Mahasweta Devi’s fiction in four volumes and the Translator’s Notes to them foreground questions of location, target audience and other complex cultural issues involved in the act of translation. Apart from being a scholar and a public intellectual, she is also a grass-root social activist

working with rural literacy teacher training projects in Bangladesh and eastern India.

Educated in Presidency College Kolkata and Cornell University, she has taught in several universities in USA, travelled and lectured in most parts of the world, and is currently Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University, New York.

In view of Spivak's blueprint for the future study of Comparative Literature in an equitable world—*The Death of a Discipline* (2003), we look forward with special interest to her plenary at the 13th Triennial of ACLALS titled "Nationalism and Comparative Literature".

Drew Hayden Taylor scripted, directed and worked on some seventeen film and video documentaries on Native Canadian issues, and worked for some time with CBC Radio as Native Affairs reporter. Next, there was a television phase during which he worked as



script writer, consultant and publicist. As one of Canada's first Native script writer, he has conducted numerous workshops for visible minority writers.

But his leading passion for many years has been the theatre. In addition to being a playwright, he has worked as artistic director and producer. His plays include *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock*, *Education is our Right*, *The Bootlegger Blues*, *The Baby Blues*, *The Buz'gem Blues*, *Someday*, *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth*, and *Girl Who Loved Her Horses*. Many of his plays have received awards in Canada.

He also writes short stories and satirical columns for newspapers. A collection of his best columns was published in a book titled *Funny, You don't look like One: Observations of a Blue-eyed Ojibway* followed by several sequels. He co-edited an anthology of Canadian Native literature and is now directing a documentary on Native humour as well as researching for a documentary on Native Erotica.

Drew is currently working on two movie scripts, several new plays, and a revolutionary new rocket fuel, but according to him the thing his mother is most proud of is his ability to make spaghetti sauce from scratch!

Susie Tharu co-edited with K. Lalita a monumental two-volume anthology *Women Writing in India* (1992-93) that has become a model for subsequent work in this field. Not only are the volumes remarkable for their extensive archival research, but the long introductions to the volumes, the shorter introductions to the various sections, and headnotes to each entry all pointed to a new approach which has now succeeded in relocating Women's Studies in the larger frame of the social and political history of the nation.

Susie Tharu is the rare example of an academic who has combined research and pedagogical innovations with social activism. She has been a member of *Stree*



Shakti Sangathana, a Hyderabad-based womens' organization since its inception in 1978. She was one of the editors of the volume *We Were Making History: Women in Telangana People's Struggle* (1988) which grew out of a project undertaken by this organization. She is a founder member of *Anveshi*, a research

Centre for Women's Studies in Hyderabad. She has co-edited *French Feminism: An Indian Anthology* in 2003. She is a member of Subaltern Studies Collective and has edited *Subaltern Studies Vol. 10* (2000) along with Gautam Bhadra and Gyan Prakash.

Among her other published work is *Subject to Change: Literary Studies in the Nineties* (1997), an edited volume that testifies to her engagement with teaching and extending the boundaries of English Studies. For nearly a decade, Susie Tharu has been teaching a set of courses that can be titled 'Studying Culture in India'. At present she is Professor and Co-ordinator, School of Critical Humanities at Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad. She did her BA from Makerere College Kampala, Uganda, obtained a diploma in Social and Public Administration from Somerville College, Oxford and did her PhD from CIEFL, Hyderabad.

Susie Tharu's current projects include a volume of essays tentatively titled *The Uses of Literature: Citizenship and Subjecthood in Contemporary India*, and a popular book on Indian Feminism, commissioned by Penguin India as part of their 'Interrogating India' series. She is also part of the team doing the Malayalam translation of a *Subaltern Studies Reader*. At ACLALS 2004 she is participating in the concluding panel "The Future of the Nation".

Helen Tiffin wrote a path-breaking book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures* (1989) together with Bill Ashcroft and Gareth Griffith which made the teaching of this body of writing possible in universities across the world.



These three scholars managed to tidy up a vast and amorphous field and to put together a range of complex theories in a language that was accessible yet nuanced. In the fifteen years that have passed since then, much has happened in the field of postcolonial studies. New advances have been made, earlier formulations have been challenged and the authors of *The Empire Writes Back* have themselves revised some of their positions. But the book will always remain important as a landmark in the pedagogical history of postcolonial literature.

Helen Tiffin taught at the University of Queensland, Australia until recently. At present she holds a Canada

Research Chair in English and Postcolonial Studies at Queens University, Kingston, Ontario. She is the author of *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (1998) and has written *Decolonising Fictions* (1993) with Diana Brydon. She has edited (or co-edited) five collections of essays on postcolonial literatures and literary theory, and has published numerous papers on Australian, Canadian and Indian Literatures and postcolonial studies generally. She has an unusual ability to connect diverse fields of human activity in order to understand aspects of social and literary behaviour in colonial or postcolonial culture.

She is currently working on the connection between racism and speciesism and her plenary paper in the ACLALS 2004 "Re-imagined Community: Land, Animals and People" emerges from this project. She has been actively involved with our Association for a long time and is now the only member to have attended all the international ACLALS conferences since 1969.

A social scientist with varied interests, **Jayadeva Uyangoda** has been involved in issues of human rights, minority identity, social justice, and the peace process in Sri Lanka. At present Professor of Political Science and Public Policy in the University of Colombo, he has earlier been the Director of the National Film Corporation of Sri Lanka Foundation. He was the Founder Editor and later co-editor of *Pravada*, an academic journal in English that focuses on Sri Lanka and South Asia.



Jayadeva Uyangoda is one of South Asia's most original commentators on the changing social and political map of the subcontinent. Nearly twenty years ago he did his doctoral research in the University of Hawaii on 'Nationalism and State Formation in Bangladesh' a theme that anticipates some of the concerns of the present conference. He has published widely. His books include *Beyond the Talk: Towards Transformative Peace in Sri Lanka* (2002), *Questions of Sri Lanka's Minority Rights* (2001), *Caste, Social Justice and Political Change in Sri Lanka* (1998) and *Women Workers in Rubber Plantations* (1995).

Uyangoda is a speaker in the concluding panel of the conference "The Future of the Nation" along with Ashis Nandy and Susie Tharu.



Writers Reading at the Conference

Jean Arasanayagam | Diana Bridge | Austin Clarke | David Dabydeen | Keki Daruwalla | Shashi Deshpande | Feroza Jussawalla | Girish Karnad | Jan Kemp | Jayanta Mahapatra | Hoshang Merchant | Suniti Namjoshi | Makarand Paranjape | K Satchidanandan | Satendranandan | Vikram Seth | Drew Taylor

Chair's Report

The ACLALS team has been busy for the last few months with the spadework for the International Triennial to be held in August 2004 in Hyderabad. This is in



addition to its core task of coordinating the activities of its various branches. As this newsletter goes to press, preparations for the conference seem almost complete. This is going to be a very special event with over 300 participants from 30 countries—perhaps the biggest ever literary meet of its kind in India.

A generous grant given by the Commonwealth Foundation enabled us to plan such an ambitious venture. Other sponsors of this five-day event include FILLM, Sahitya Akademi, British Council, Australia India Council, and publishers and bookshops like Orient Longman, Penguin India, Oxford University Press, and Akshara. We are happy that we have been able to waive 50% of the registration fee to all student participants from India and abroad. We have also been able to offer a subsidized registration package to our South Asian participants.

ACLALS has been in regular touch with its various chapters, and has brought out two newsletters reporting their activities. It has also functioned as an effective liaison between Commonwealth Foundation and the regional chapters. Three of our executive members were in London on individual academic assignments at different points of time during the last year. They used the opportunity to interact with the staff of Commonwealth Foundation. This has paved the way for a smooth relationship with the Foundation, and has made working together a pleasant experience.

In February 2003, when Meenakshi Mukherjee, Chair ACLALS, was in London to give the Keynote speech at a conference on South Asian Literature at Barbican Centre, she met Sharon Robinson of Commonwealth Foundation and had a long and satisfactory discussion about the aims and objectives of ACLALS, and how they can be best achieved. Harish Trivedi, Vice-Chair, was the Leverhulme Visiting Professor in the School of Asian and African Studies at University of London, and was directly in touch with Commonwealth Foundation. C Vijayasree, Vice-Chair and Secretary of ACLALS, was in England in July 2003 to present a paper at a conference at the School of Cultural Studies, University College, Northampton. While passing through London she had a very useful conversation with Sharon Robinson about the changing priorities of ACLALS in general, and about the Triennial in particular.

As planned earlier, ACLALS has now extended its scope to training college and school teachers, so that its impact can reach a larger section of society. Malaysian ACLALS has already organized a

workshop for college lecturers, and Indian ACLALS is conducting a training camp for school teachers with the help of NGOs in August- September 2004. We hope other chapters will also take initiative in this direction.

Besides Sri Lanka and India, ACLALS has now made an entry into other regions of South Asia such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal. We are happy that some members from these countries are attending the 13th Triennial in Hyderabad. Plans for a new chapter in Hong Kong seem to be in the pipeline.

The ACLALS website has been regularly updated thanks to our efficient and innovative webmaster, A Giridhar Rao, and the untiring energy of our Treasurer, T Vijay Kumar. Information about the activities of the Association as well as of the conference have thus been readily accessible to members, and this has promoted greater networking.

We have enjoyed our three years in office. The camaraderie of the executive team, the warmth of all those who helped us, the friendship of members from around the world—some of whom we have not yet met!—the excitement of exchanging ideas, and the generosity of the institutions who have responded to our request for help, have made all the hard work worthwhile.

MM

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Reports from ACLALS Branches

Canadian ACLALS

This year has been particularly busy for CACLALS as we participated in a nation-wide consultation on research funding, while organizing our annual conference which took place in May 2004, and producing the winter 2003 issue of CHIMO. We are now preparing for the summer 2004 CHIMO and looking forward to the Hyderabad conference.

Early this year, we were invited to participate in an intensive consultation spearheaded by the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS) on a transformation of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The objective of this was to determine the most effective ways to distribute existing funding as well as hoped-for increased funding from the federal government. Not having a crystal ball to predict the future, I can only say that by the time this report appears in the ACLALS newsletter, the Canadian federal elections would have taken place on 28 June 2004 and SSHRC plans may have become academic (an exercise in futility?), or worth the effort of academics in universities and scholarly associations all over Canada.

CACLALS is mentioned specifically in the Federation's final report as an association that has worked significantly on anti-racism, international

outreach, and aboriginal issues, and we also made sure that our concern for travel funding for Congress, especially for graduate students, was highlighted. The priorities of SSHRC for the coming years are multiculturalism, internationality, and aboriginal issues, which resonate strongly with the main concerns of CACLALS, and we have worked hard to feature the needs of our association and those of other small associations of the Federation, in this exercise. Our report is posted on the CACLALS website at www.kwantlen.ca/caclals/.

In May we held a very successful conference at the Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities, at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. CACLALS conferences have always had the reputation of being warm and friendly events; this year it was a warm, friendly, and very wet, as Winnipeg experienced heavy rain during our conference. During our three-day event which began with an opening ceremony by "Dancing Sun Singers", a mother-daughter team who sang songs of healing and love, we presented a varied program with well-attended plenaries, panels, readings, and roundtables. A very well-received talk by Lynn Mario Menezes de Souza on indigenous writing in Brazil and a plenary by Emma La Rocque who stressed the need to include indigenous writers in publications of postcolonial criticism contributed a great deal to the tone of the conference, while readings by Cyril Dabydeen and Uma Parameswaran; panels on "Postcolonial Professional Concerns" and "Black/African-Inflected literatures in Canada," a graduate-student roundtable on "Confluence: Postcoloniality and Globalization," and a reading by M G Vassanji at an informal dinner in the pouring rain drew an enthusiastic audience. On the third day, we held again the popular annual Aboriginal roundtable, followed by a joint session with the Canadian Comparative Literature Association on "War in the 20th century", not forgetting the many sessions at which our members presented papers.

Among the many guest speakers at the Congress was Ken Wiwa who spoke eloquently at a Breakfast on Campus event about the plight of the Ogoni people and his new project for recording their resources on the new website at Suanu.com so that multinational corporations and western nations may not exploit the wealth of Nigeria. Please see summaries of other key speeches at the Congress on the CACLALS Bulletin Board: <http://meadow.kwantlen.ca/caclals>.

Next year's conference at The University of Western Ontario (27-29 May 2005) will be on the overarching theme of "Paradoxes of Citizenship: Environments, Exclusion, Equity" which we hope will interest as many or more Canadian and international presenters as this year.

Looking to the future, the CACLALS members voted to have Stephen Slemon and Victor Ramraj head ACLALS as co-chairs should our bid be successful for the next headquarters of ACLALS. If all goes well, Canada might well be a guiding force and facilitator of key debate and dialogue in the next several years, drawing global interest and participation.

As the current executive of ACLALS ends their term, we thank them very much for being most supportive and responsive, and for providing us with a Commonwealth Foundation grant. We also thank the Canadian Federation for Humanities and Social Sciences for their assistance for our conference, and Kwantlen University College in British Columbia for graciously hosting CACLALS. Warm wishes from Surrey, British Columbia.

Ranjini Mendis
President, CACLALS
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Indian ACLALS

The last year has been a hectic one for IACLALS. Preparations for the ACLALS 2004 have assumed priority and, inevitably, taken most of our time. However, the IACLALS work has gone on unimpeded. An anthology of essays *Writing the West: Representations from Indian Literatures*, compiled from the proceedings of an IACLALS –Sahitya Akademi seminar held at SCILET Madurai, was published by Sahitya Akademi in 2004.

A special number of the IACLALS newsletter is under preparation and will (hopefully!) be ready by the time the ACLALS International Conference starts.

IACLALS is planning to institute a prize for the best published research article in the general area of postcolonial studies. The modalities of the award will be finalized soon in consultation with the IACLALS Executive.

The IACLALS website and the discussion group continue to be active. Issues of common concern and interest—theoretical, literary, political, socio-cultural—are being debated by members not only at the annual conferences and occasional seminars but on a day-to-day basis through the Yahoo E-group discussions. These discussions promote exchange of views, dissemination of information, sharing and whetting of insights and of course plenty of bonhomie.

C Vijayasree
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Sri Lankan ACLALS

The Triennial General Meeting postponed from December 2002 was held in September 2003. Professor Halpe and Rajpal Abeynaikie were re-elected Chairman and Secretary respectively. The meeting, which was well attended (52 participants), was followed by a lively seminar on *Issues in Translation* led by Vijita Fernando, winner of the Gratiaen Prize 2002 with a translation, with Carl Muller in the chair.

Ashley Halpé
Chair, SLACLALS
(ashleyhalpe@hotmail.com)



ACLALS Business Report

During the last three years, ACLALS has obtained funding every year from Commonwealth Foundation. The Executive has maintained financial records of the Association meticulously, and has made applications for funding well in time. Besides, members of the Executive—Meenakhi Mukherjee, Harish Trivedi and C Vijayasree—have had meetings with the staff of the Foundation and kept the communication between ACLALS and the Foundation active and effective.

Here is a summary of the accounts of ACLALS for 2001-2003.

2001-2002. In July 2002, the Foundation sanctioned a total amount of GBP 8,765 (Core — GBP 3,765 + Activity — GBP 5,000 [for the Branches]). This amount was actually transferred to the ACLALS account only in December 2002. The allocated amount was disbursed to all the eligible Branches according to the eligibility criteria decided at the Executive Committee meeting in 2001 in Canberra, Australia.

The core grant was spent on production, printing and posting of the newsletter, purchase and printing of stationery, executive travel, and website development and maintenance. The members of the executive ran the ACLALS office rather frugally, doing most of the secretarial work on their own with some part-time assistance. The year therefore saw a *surplus* in the ACLALS account.

2002-2003. In June 2003, Commonwealth Foundation sanctioned an amount of GBP 12,400 (Core Grant including grant to Branches — GBP 9,900 + Activity Grant — GBP 2,500). The amount was received in July 2003. Once again the amount due to Branches was disbursed to them. ACLALS experienced delays in getting annual reports and financial statements from some of its Branches, making accounting difficult.

From the remaining Core Grant, ACLALS met its routine administrative expenses: printing and posting of the newsletter; hiring secretarial services; stationery and postage; holding executive meetings; and website maintenance.

The Activity Grant was used to meet pre-conference expenses such as booking the venues, printing and distribution of fliers, and executive travel meant for meeting prospective sponsors. Part of this grant was kept in reserve to be used for ACLALS Triennial 2004.

The grants have supported a variety of activities in different parts of the world to promote commonwealth literary studies. One of the key objectives of the Association has been to support infrastructure development for its member countries. This includes the strengthening of social and professional networks across the Commonwealth. The websites maintained by ACLALS and three of its branches—the European, Canadian and Indian branches—are playing a vital role in promoting professional networking among scholars and teachers of Commonwealth literatures.

The increasing attention paid to women's issues and women's professional development is

demonstrated in the greater participation of women writers and academics in both the international and regional activities of the Association. ACLALS and its regional chapters have been playing an important role in providing a forum for meaningful discussion of issues relating to international cooperation and understanding.

For instance, Canadian ACLALS organized a colloquium on the theme of "Conflict and Cooperation: Wealth and Creativity" chaired by Diana Brydon (University of Western Ontario). The colloquim addressed how the humanities and social sciences are approaching interrelated issues of inequality of resource distribution, and colonial and postcolonial cultural complexities. It explored the role of imaginative writing, research, scholarship, and technology in expressing and ameliorating pain, and enabling humane conditions through effective global communication.

The Association is encouraging activities such as teacher training and discussions on curriculum and pedagogy since such activities will have a broader social significance. The priority of the Association has been to support and promote activities that foster pan-Commonwealth and inter-country networking.

A detailed account of ACLALS income and expenditure until 3 July 2003, submitted to and approved by the Commonwealth Foundation is given below.

C Vijayasree
Vice-Chair and Secretary

T Vijay Kumar
Treasurer

Call for Papers

Sharing Places: Searching for common ground in a world of continuing exclusion, EACLALS Triennial Conference, Malta, 21–26 March 2005.

The Conference theme, 'Sharing Places', strikes at the heart of contemporary experience while also allowing for the development of long-standing debates within 'post'-colonial studies.

Abstracts of no more than 200 words for 20-minute papers should be submitted no later than **15 September 2004**.

All correspondence should be addressed to the Conference chair, Dr Stella Borg Barthet, stella.borg-barthet@um.edu.mt.

For further information please consult the Conference webpage which is now accessible from the EACLALS site at www.ulg.ac.be/facphl/uer/d-german/eaclals/main.html.

ACLALS International, Hyderabad, India Cash Flow Statement for the Period Ended 1 July 2002 to 3 July 2003

Particulars	Total Rs
A. Opening Cash Balance	0
B. Add Receipts	
1. Grants received from Commonwealth Foundation	1,616,054
2. Grants received from ACLALS Canberra	300,000
3. Amount received from ACLALS Canberra	191,400
4. Interest received on Bank Account	4,734
5. Advertisement amount received	14,301
Total	2,126,489
C. Less Payments	
1. Administration expenses	55,000
2. Website expenses	16,000
3. Executive travel	60,000
4. Newsletter expenses	20,400
5. Remittance to Regional Branches	413,595
Total	564,995
D. Closing Cash Balance (A+B-C)	1,561,494

Note: An amount of Rs 420,000 from the surplus mentioned above is due to be paid to the branches. So effective surplus is Rs 1,141,494.

Call for Papers

14th Annual British Commonwealth & Postcolonial Conference and the 3rd Annual USACLALS Conference, February 25–26, 2005, Coastal Georgia Center/Savannah, Georgia. Deadline for Submissions: **November 1, 2004**. All submissions may be made on-line <http://ceps.georgiasouthern.edu/conted/britishsubmitonline.html>

Individual critical papers and panels are invited on topics pertaining to the broad theme of **Culture and Conflict: Crossing and Negotiating Borders** in relation to the Literature & the Arts, colonial and postcolonial societies and histories, and postcolonial readings of race, gender and ethnicity within the US and the Americas.

Each paper should be designed for 15-minute delivery, and panels for 75 minutes. Plenary sessions might run 75 to 90 minutes. Abstracts for each paper should be 200-300 words and proposals for panels should include an abstract for each paper along with full contact information on each presenter. For more information e-mail: schille@georgiasouthern.edu or dchampion@georgiasouthern.edu.

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