**Report on the Annual Conference on “Space, Place, Travel, Displacement, Exile”, held between 12-14 February 2015 at BITS Pilani, Goa**

Within the overwhelming response that the announcement of our annual Iaclals conference in Goa elicited, there were predictably two extreme reactions from members, one excessive jubilation on their abstracts being shortlisted and an equally disproportionate unhappiness and envy from those whose didn’t. For us at the Iaclals this could very well have put us on a slippery slope with the after-conference hours’ planning overshadowing and delimiting every bit of the intellectual investment that we hope all our annual conferences come away richer by. But the 2015, “Space, Place, Travel, Displacement, Exile” conference co hosted with BITS-Pilani Goa campus, was anything but a holiday conference with charged sessions and papers, intellectually provocative plenaries and impeccably managed time keeping and hospitality. It will also be remembered as the conference that saw the release of the first issue of the Iaclals journal.

The keynote address by Maria Couto, distinguished writer (also a Padmashree awardee, a fact she hesitated publicising) on Goan culture, its fraught settlements and its many troubled pasts and present interrogated state politics and the concomitant concerns of capital that lie beneath the Goa most love but few care about. Damodar Mauzo and Elger Noronha our plenary speakers also spoke on Goan identity, writing and history.

This year we received the maximum number of entries for the CDN Prize and, from the final five, in a fiercely fought paper battle between Maninder Sindhu, Avishek Parui, Ritwick Bhattacharjee, Sandhya Devesan Nambiar and Aatreyee Ghosh, the prize was won by Sandhya Devesan Nambiar. Once again our warmest congratulations to Sandhya for her richly theorized paper, “We Walk by the Electric Light”. The Meenakshi Mukherjee Memorial Prize for best published article was awarded to Nilanjana Mukherjee for her reading of D’Oyly’s sketches in “Drawing Roads, Building Empire: Space and Circulation in Charles D'Oyly's Indian Landscapes”, published in *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* Vol. 37, 2, 2014. Congratulations Nilanjana on an incisive paper, one that brought in some critical and original insights into colonial landscape painting.

The BITS-Pilani Goa campus is a sprawling and beautiful space and their conference rooms were state of the art as was their team’s super-efficient handling of the entire programme and sessions over the three days. Days and even months before the conference started, Nilak Datta’s Google docs were late night grenades that came in steadily, smartly spreading fear in tech phobics (like me, yes), but when these ran into a few glitches some of us were secretly relieved and also grateful as we sought to organize our own unruly pre-conference lives. But a big shout out to Prof Meenakshi Raman, Nilak, Amitendu, Geeta and Basavdatta and their lovely enthusiastic students for ensuring everything came together wonderfully, both during the conference days and also before and after with airport picks and drops all of which were coordinated so well thanks to their organizational competence and detailing. The fact that all the delegates stayed (or could have) in one place, that (first versions of) all papers had been written months beforehand, and that there were perfectly briefed volunteers at every venue meant that this was destined to be a memorable conference.

Many thanks and more to all our delegates who read papers and actually resisted the lure of the Goan beaches to stay and bring alive and bring intellectual rigour to some great sessions and conversations. As many Iaclals regulars admitted, this was a conference where all the sessions delivered and set a high standard for future conferences. But BITS-Pilani Goa gave also threw us a lovely gala dinner with music, food and most importantly dance and drink to celebrate our second night with.

Now as withdrawal sets in we also look forward to planning and working on the 2016 Annual Iaclals Conference and would love to hear from our members on possibilities within their Institutions/Universities for co hosting this wonderful and warm coming together of academics from across India and abroad. Do write in to us if you would like to share and co host this vibrant, intellectually charged academic annual conference with us at the Iaclals.

Until next time then..

Warmly

Rina Ramdev

Secretary Iaclals