



Indian Association for
Commonwealth Literature
and Language Studies

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 1. 2014

CHANGE OF GUARD

2014 was once again an election year, one that sprang a huge surprise on many of our members. Harish Trivedi, who had taken over as Chairperson in 2005 from the equally eminent Meenakshi Mukherjee, decided to hand over the baton. Along with him, Brinda Bose, Secretary (who had joined the team as Treasurer at Chennai in 2005), also decided to take a Sabbatical from IACLALS office work, thus necessitating an almost brand new team at the helm. All this happened at the wonderfully organised Annual Conference on “Margins, Globalization and the Postcolonial”, which was co-hosted by the English Department of Panjab University. Almost as if they knew of Harish Trivedi’s decision many senior members of IACLALS attended the conference but the icing on the cake was the presence of Dieter Riemenschneider, who was celebrating his own anniversary as an India scholar and a scholar in India!

I remember writing an editorial with the same title in July 2005. I began then by saying that Harish Trivedi “had to match his steps to those of his illustrious predecessors, CD Narasimhaiah and Meenakshi Mukherjee.” I must say that he matched them step for step, and took IACLALS along newer paths and oversaw a change of demography in our membership, with newer and younger scholars making up the majority. In his eventful nine years at the helm, IACLALS introduced two major prizes for our members – the CD Narasimhaiah Prize for the best paper read at the Annual Conference, and the Meenakshi Mukherjee Prize for the best paper published by a member. The CDN Prize has gone on to be the centerpiece of our conferences while the standard of entries of the MM Prize has been so high that our judges have a really tough task. The focused conferences Harish organised on RK Narayan, Raja Rao, and Ahmed Ali were academic feasts and highpoints of his stewardship. He is now part of the triumvirate of Indian English academy – CDN, MM, and HT. So much so that we already have offers for entering whatever Prize we institute in his name!

Brinda Bose brought both style and substance to her years as Secretary of IACLALS. Her interest in newer areas on inquiry attracted a number of new researchers into the folds of IACLALS. She established herself in the team right after Chennai as a great conference programmer, one we could depend on to see the patterns in the bewildering number of abstracts that we started getting soon after – something that made for bigger and bigger conferences and has now necessitated a stricter scrutiny and pruning of proposals. Her sub-headings in

programmes were a delight and became something to look forward to. This is not a goodbye to her as an office bearer because hopefully she will be back in the future.

We now have two new faces in the team – M. Asaduddin takes over as one of our Vice Chairpersons and Angelie Multani as our Treasurer. Subhendu Mund has agreed to continue as the other Vice Chair. Rina Ramdev is our new Secretary and is looking forward to less strenuous days after her years as Treasurer. We have a brand new Executive Committee but a very significant change is that our tried and trusted (and perhaps very tired and overworked) webmaster A. Giridhar Rao has given the reins to Sandhya Devesan Nambiar. We cannot thank Giri enough for all that he has done for IACLALS almost single handedly for very many years.

The discussion group that Giri set up is still going strong and if you look at the archives you will find how much our members appreciated Harish Trivedi's work as the Chair and how all of them requested him not to snap his association with IACLALS. Harish, abhi picture baki hai!

I must say that it is perhaps an undeserved honour to follow in his footsteps but the first few steps have been easy – we have just implemented a number of plans the earlier team had. This e-newsletter that you are reading is one of them. The revamped website (www.iacials.com) is another. The first issue of the IACLALS Journal has also been announced and will be out in a few months.

All this is an indication that we don't plan to let our illustrious forebears down.

GJV Prasad

CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR REPORTS

IACLALS ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 20-22 February 2014

“Margins, Globalization and the Postcolonial”

If conferences are judged both on the quality of papers presented and also the food served, then the 2014 IACLALS Annual Conference at Panjab University, Chandigarh came out an absolute winner. Expansive, generous hospitality steered by the unflappable, tireless Akshaya Kumar, Professor and local Co ordinator of the conference along with his wonderful Department colleagues Deepti Gupta and many others, as also his bright and eager team of students, ensured that delegates were actually loathe for the conference to end. The accommodation both at PU Campus and at Mohali matched the royal hospitality we were welcomed through the conference days at Chandigarh.

The conference began with a wonderfully incisive keynote presentation on, “The Postcolonial Agenda: Literary Configurations of Retrieving Human Rights in Animal's People” by Dieter Riemenschneider, that also set the thematic tone of the conference in critically nuanced ways. Dieter Riemenschneider had in fact taught at the Panjab University half a century earlier and the Iaclals 2014 Conference thus became the site of a nostalgic homecoming for him. From the keynote to an expansive wide-ranging valedictory given by PU’s very own Shelley Walia through intellectually diverse papers on Marginalities, the Conference witnessed some intense and stimulating conversations.

There was as it has always been at past conferences, the ever-exciting CDN Prize panel, and the Cultural Evening with some very energetic and entertaining performances by students of the university and by the Riemenschneiders AND Harish Trivedi (all of who were persuaded on to the stage by some very enthusiastically infectious dancers), the award of the Meenakshi Mukherjee Memorial Prize, a plenary by Meera Nanda and the GBM.

The closely contested CDN Prize saw a final panel comprising Parvinder and Shivashish Sah from the host university, and Anandita Pan and Somrita Ganguly from IIT Kanpur and JNU respectively. The fact that the betting during the lunch

went many ways proved how close the papers were in quality. The CDN Prize after a hair splitting final went to Parvinder for his paper on "Sports Heroes from the Margins and the Politics of Ghostwriting". Congratulations to the prize winner as well as all the panelists. The guests who had helped short list the final panelists were Vijaya Guttal and Ludmila Volna. The three judges on the spot were ML Raina, Fatima Rizwi, and Rina Ramdev. The announcement of the result and the presentation was followed by the awarding of the MM Memorial Prize for the best published paper to Somdatta Mandal. The three judges for the prize were M. Asaduddin, Subhendu Mund, and Gareth Griffiths and the prize was presented by Dieter Riemenschneider. Somdatta Mandal made a brief presentation from her prize winning paper, "Dismemberment and/or Reconstitution: Visual Representations of the Partition of Bengal", published in the anthology, "Borders and Partitions in South Asia", edited by Jayita Sengupta (Routledge, 2012).

The GBM was held on the evening of the 21st. After the presentation of the Secretary's Report and the Treasurer's Report, the members raised a number of pertinent issues. They suggested that the Association should initiate a forum for dissemination of news and views and that the promised annual journal should begin publication at the earliest. It was also suggested that the revamping of the IACLALS website be handed over to a professional since the Association had used the gratis services of the tireless A. Giridhar Rao (Giri) for far too long. After the discussion, Harish Trivedi announced that the term for the outgoing team had come to an end and it was time for a new team to be elected. He then handed the floor to Prof Vijaya Guttal who took charge as the Returning Officer to conduct the election process. When several voices from the floor of the house expressed the wish for the old team to continue for three more years, Harish Trivedi announced that Brinda Bose had expressed her inability to continue in the committee and that he too had made up his mind to leave. He spoke of his immensely fulfilling time with the IACLALS from the time he took over as Secretary in 1993. He also spoke of his illustrious predecessors, CD Narsimaiah and Meenakshi Mukherjee, and of his own experiences as part of the team of office-bearers in various capacities. He then proposed the name of the next Chairperson and asked that it be seconded, which it was. Since there were no other nominations, Vijaya Guttal announced that GJV Prasad had been elected unopposed to the post of Chairperson of IACLALS. The GBM then elected Subhendu Mund and M Asaduddin as Vice Chairpersons, Rina Ramdev as Secretary, and Angelie Multani as Treasurer. Akshaya Kumar (North Zone), Nilak Datta (West Zone), Meena Pillai (South Zone), and Debaditya Bhattacharya (East Zone) were elected as Zonal Representatives on the Executive Committee. Ludmila Volna was re-elected as the Foreign Representative. The

following members were also elected to the EC from Delhi – Swati Pal, Shubhra Ray, and Sandhya Devesan Nambiar. The new team expressed its sincere appreciation for the work put in by Harish Trivedi and Brinda Bose. GJV Prasad, Subhendu Mund, and Rina Ramdev spoke of the leadership qualities of Harish Trivedi and of the sheer joy of being part of the team with him and Brinda Bose. A number of delegates also thanked Harish Trivedi for his contribution to IACLALS and recorded their appreciation. The meeting ended with a round of applause for Vijaya Guttal, the genial Returning Officer.

And even as Panjab University offered a conference rich in every way, the city of Chandigarh also held us with sunny, balmy days in cold February. The hosts took the delegates on a lovely sightseeing outing to the famed Rock Gardens and the lake, adding to the wonderful days spent in this city for the 2014 Annual Conference. We came back with happy memories and look forward to many more such fulfilling events and conferences at the IACLALS.

Rina Ramdev

National Seminar on 'Narratives of Violence in Postmodern Literature'

The Department of English at Dr. Harisingh Gour Central University at Sagar in Madhya Pradesh organized a National Seminar on the theme of 'Narratives of Violence in Postmodern Literature' on 27 and 28 February 2014. The purpose of the Seminar had been to rethink about, and redirect critical thought on, the various varieties of explicit and implicit violence getting presented in the literature and other forms of art. The thrust of the Seminar was on the ways that the subtler and illusively volatile forms of violence have affected the thought processes and discourses at academia.

The tone and direction of the Seminar got set with Professor GJV Prasad delivering the keynote speech on the endemic nature of violence and its pervasiveness. Just prior to the keynote speech, the Convener of the Seminar and the Head of the host Department, Dr. Nivedita Maitra, elaborated the theme statement by delineating the explicit and implicit forms of violence.

In the first plenary session, there were two presentations with Professor GJV Prasad in Chair: by Professor Anita Singh of Banaras Hindu University and by

Professor Ranu Uniyal of Lucknow University. While Professor Singh evaluated Gender related violence through ‘feminist’ Performance, Professor Uniyal made a postmodern historiographical analysis of the short narratives of Amar Jaleel from Sindh in the context of the theme of the seminar.

The speakers in the successive plenary sessions of the day and the next day were Professor Supriya Agarwal of the Central University of Rajasthan, Professor Kalpana Purohit of the University of Jodhpur, Dr. Lata Dubey of Banaras Hindu University and Dr. Nidhi Singh of the University of Rajasthan. Their presentations spanned and covered the wide expanse and contours of violence and its enunciation, beginning with ‘train massacres’ in Professor Supriya’s speech to ‘diegetic and mimetic telling of violence’ in media and fiction in Dr. Lata Dubey’s talk.

A special feature of the Seminar was an Interdisciplinary Panel Discussion on the theme with experts from Humanities, Social, Basic and Applied Sciences. The Seminar was attended by presenters from the universities and Colleges of Jammu & Kashmir, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and other states.

Dr. Prakash Joshi
(Organizing Secretary)

Seminar on “Translation and Assamese Literature: History and Theory”

A national seminar on “Translation and Assamese Literature: History and Theory” was held on 7-8 March 2014 at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati. The Seminar was organized in collaboration with the Centre for North East studies and Policy Research, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi and Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi.

The inaugural session on the first day of the seminar started with a welcome address by Dr. Rohini Mokashi Punekar, HOD, HSS, IITG, welcoming everyone to the seminar and giving a brief insight into the theme of the seminar. Prof. M. Asaduddin, Jamia Millia Islamia, gave the introductory remarks saying that the history of literary translation in Assam must be uncovered to trace the lineages of colonial modernity, literary efflorescence in Assam and the making of a public sphere. He said that the seminar has been conceived as a part of a larger project to build the history of translation in different Indian languages. The session was

chaired by Basudev Chatterji, Chairman, ICHR and the keynote address was given by Prof. Ranjit Kr. Dev Goswami, Gauhati University, who spoke on *Bhangoni* as Translation referring to a number of translations in Assamese and throwing light on the literal and figural aspects of translation.

The 1st business session of Day 1 was chaired by Prof. Krishna Barua, IIT Guwahati. The speakers in the session were Prof Madan Mohan Sarma, Tezpur University, Manjeet Baruah, JNU, and Shalim Hussain, Jamia Millia Islamia. Prof. Sarma delivered his talk mainly on his observation on the strategies of translating the Bible into Assamese. Manjeet Baruah focused mainly on the translated works of Bishnu Prasad Rabha, a multifaceted artist and revolutionary singer of Assam. His paper highlighted the objective of art and the object of art, as outlined by Rabha, throwing light on two kinds of politics Rabha was engaged in. Shalim M Hussain posited some questions via his research work regarding the authenticity of the historical records of some translated works, especially their publication dates and authorship. His paper was titled “Gaps and Contradictions in the Sources of History of Translation in Assam”.

The panel discussion of Day 1 was on “Translation in Assamese: History and Practice – II”. The session was chaired by Prof. Madan Mohan Sarmah, Tezpur University. Prof Tilottama Misra (formerly of Dibrugarh University), Prof. M. Asaduddin (Jamia Milia Islamia) and Prof. Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee (Sahitya Akademi) raised various issues relating to the history of translation in Assam including the role played by institutions like the Sahitya Akademi and the National Book Trust.

The second day of the National seminar started with a session chaired by Prof. M. Asaduddin and the first presentation was made by Mr. Sanjib Kr. Baishya, Ph.D scholar, Jamia Millia Islamia. The paper tried to draw a trajectory of Shakespeare’s plays translated/adapted into Assamese throughout the late nineteenth century to the present time. He examined the paradigm shifts in the history of Assamese theatre through the prism of translated plays and also commented upon the methods and the problems faced by the translators in the process. Dr. Arzuman Ara, EFLU, Shillong focused on how the media mediates between different forms of inter-semiotic translation. The third paper was presented by freelance writer Komoruzzaman Ahmed. His paper traced the beginning of Islamic Writings in Assamese and the history of translation of the Koran and other scriptural texts. The final paper of this session was presented by Dr. Prasun Barman. His paper focused on Bengali to Assamese Translations from 1877 to 2000, the

historical contexts of translations from colonial to post-colonial era and the translations by Government Cultural Agencies and Independent Efforts.

The next session was chaired by Prof. Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee, Sahitya Akademi. Prof Pradip Acharya, Cotton College, concentrated in his discussion on the main purpose of the translation works. He considered that the purpose of translation was purely ‘evangelical’ and ‘ethical’, which he playfully referred to as an ‘export/import business’. Dr. Bibhash Choudhury, Gauhati University, presented a critical debate generated by some of the theoretical formulations and remarks by the noted Assamese poet Ajit Baruah, who had to his fame the Sahitya Akademi and the Assam Valley Literary Awards. Dr. Choudhury pointed out the unacceptability of such statements by the noted poet that ‘translation from translation is not acceptable’.

The third session was on “Translation and Politics of Gender”. Three speakers presented papers on the theme – Dr. Garima Kalita (Cotton College), Dr. Banani Chakravarty (Gauhati University) and Hemjyoti Medhi (Tezpur University). Dr. Kalita talked about translation as translocation. She brought into discussion Tilottama Misra’s translated work *Ram Navami* which was criticized, somewhat unfairly and did not reach the common readers due to lack of awareness. The second speaker Banani Chakravarty referred to the Assamese magazine “*Ghor Jeuti*” which played a special role in shaping a ‘contemporary woman’. Hemjyoti Medhi talked about Chandraprabha Saikiani and her revolutionary zeal to build a platform for the woman of her time. The chair of the session was Dr. Rohini Mokashi-Punekar (HSS, IIT, Guwahati). The fourth and the last session of the second day of the seminar was on “Translation and Colonial Interventions”. The session was chaired by Prof. Basudev Chatterji (IIT, Guwahati). There were two speakers for the session - Dr. Arupjyoti Saikia (HSS, IIT, Guwahati) and Chandan Kumar Sarma (Dibrugarh University). They highlighted the seminal role played by translation in shaping Modern Assamese sensibility. The day ended with concluding remarks by Prof. M. Asaduddin, Jamia Milia Islamia who thanked all those who made the event a success, and expressed the hope that there will be more opportunities in future for sharing of knowledge and holding such events together.

Rajashree Bargohain and her team
Dept of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati
Assam

Mini-Conference on the Oral Literature of North-East India

Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous) organized a mini-conference on the oral literature of North-East India on 12 August at 6pm at the Ujjayanta Book Market Complex (First Floor) in collaboration with North-East Centre for Oral Literature, Agartala, Northeastern branch of the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi.

Dr Bhaskar Roy Barman, Patron, Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous), introduced the guests at the mini-conference. Mrs Krairi Mag Chaudhury, well-known Mog poet, singer and writer, presented the inaugural song by singing a poem composed by herself in Mog, Bengali and Hindi. Dr Bhaskar Roy Barman, in his welcome address, reiterated the fact that the Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous) has got internationalized as a concept and said that whoever sits alone in the Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous) and dips into the silence is sure to inhale the fragrance of the concept and drink in its essence.

Dr. Meenakshi Sen Bandyopadhyay, Director, North-East Centre for Oral Literature (NECOL), said in her keynote address that NECOL has been working since its establishment in Agartala to collect as many tribal folktales as possible on the verge of extinction into different books in English translation. She also emphasized that NECOL has not limited itself to collecting the folktales from Tripura, it has extended its purview beyond Tripura over to other Northeastern regions.

Professor Saroj Chudhury, an eminent poet, academician and scholar, enlightened the listeners on the intrinsic problems faced by translators in rendering into different languages, particularly English, the tribal folktales particularly when it comes to rendering the expressions peculiar to the tribal people, and suggested strategies to tackle them. Mr Chandrakanta Murasing, an Akademi-award winning Kokborok poet, dealt in detail with Kokborok oral literature from the perspective of the Mahabharata. Mr Jayanta Das Jugal, a famous singer from Silchar presented three songs to conclude the mini-conference. Among other guests at the mini-conference were Rajkumar Jitendrajit Singh, Raju Barman from Silchar and two research scholars on oral literature.

Bhaskar Roy Barman

SEMINARS AND SYMPOSIA: CALL FOR PAPERS & CONCEPT NOTES

IACLALS Annual Conference 2015

“Space, Place, Travel, Displacement, Exile”

co-hosted by

**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS-Pilani, K.K. Birla Goa
Campus**

12-14 February, 2015

Usually a commonsensical understanding of the terms “displacement” and “exile” defines, maintains, and propagates the corpus of work on diasporic writing and postcolonial literatures. While displacement has seen critical currency in fairly recent times, “exile” has been in fashionable circulation since the modern period proper. “Travel” has been theorized largely in separation from these terms. It has been associated with notions of unscripted adventure and a willingness to go with the flow. However, with the spread of globalization, following the U.S.-led system of late capitalism, the terms “displacement,” “exile,” and “travel” can no longer retain their specific semantic and conceptual domains. Do those who profess themselves “exiles,” or at least project the concept of exile through stylized narrative forms, perhaps “relocate” through an active willingness to travel rather than being involuntarily dis-placed, while retaining the cultural capital that resides in the figure of an exile? Do the cultures of travel in a late capitalist world influence the praxis of exile and dis-placement; are philosophical distinctions between “voluntary” and “forced” courses of action blurred?

Despite these possible changes, academic discussions on “travel” have continued to understand the term as signifying voluntary acts of movement either for leisure or for individual exigencies; those on dis-placement see the term as implying a forced, extenuating result of artistic censorship in the cultural sphere or excommunication from public space due to local political exigencies. These shifts have also affected notions of “space” and “place.” In *The Practice of Everyday Life* Michel de Certeau defined “place” as denoting the order in which “elements are distributed in relations of co-existence,” “space” is defined as “the effect produced by the operations [of culture] that orient it, situate it, temporalize it.”

Given the changing relationships between “exile,” “displacement,” and “travel,” de Certeau’s notions of “space” and “place” also need to be interrogated.

Our conference aims at examining the following broad questions: Faced with the availability of choices at the individual and social levels –and they are not mutually exclusive –how do contemporary narrative forms (fiction, poetry, film, art) cope with these shifting grounds? How can we theorize notions of “space” and “place” when spaces of everyday life and places of business and entertainment collide in unexpected ways? How do cultural narratives negotiate this new order of things? How have newer avenues of mass “distraction” influenced the way we gauge the seriousness of “exile,” “displacement,” “space,” “place,” and “travel”, given the understanding of “distraction” as a perpetual state of euphoria where the worker is elevated to the level of the commodity in both concrete and abstract form. This state allows the worker to relish her/his alienation. Under late capitalism, the notion of “exile,” with its attendant cultural capital, has to be understood as a specific kind of loss, a removal from the state of specific freedoms –the freedom to choose, the freedom to travel, the freedom to express oneself –within the naturalized promises of individual development.

Travel is not always either voluntary or politically imposed – it may also be the result of forced migration, for economic or other necessities, or even via kidnapping and other violent via media. The conference would be interested in examining the representation of such ‘travel’ and the related concepts of ‘to and from’, the freedoms won or lost and the experience itself.

In relation to the above, sub-topics for our conference include, but are not limited to, “genealogical” studies of art/non-art forms, cultural studies-oriented approaches to these new developments, and localized “petit” narratives of postcolonial (and non-canonized) cultural producers. Theoretical papers that explore these questions are especially welcome.

Sub-Themes

- The Work of Postcolonial Art in the Age of Global Travel
- Mass Distraction and Exile: Theoretical Connections
- Voluntary Exile and Involuntary Travel: Theories and Practices
- Practices of Everyday Life and Postcolonial Literature
- Postcolonial Literature and Late Capitalism
- Genealogies of Exile, Travel, and Displacement
- Traveling Places and Exilic Spaces

- Censorship and Traveling Cultures
- Exile's Cultural Capital
- Displaced Artists, Migrant Labor, and the Postcolonial
- Forced Migration: Kidnapping, Trafficking, and Marriage.
- Any other topic related to the theme of the Conference

Abstracts of 300 words with a bio-note of 50 words may be submitted to iaclalsconferences@gmail.com by 30th September 2014. Acceptances will be mailed by 15th October 2014.

This conference is open only to members and others are encouraged to avail of membership before sending abstracts for the conference (please write to angeliemultani@gmail.com for membership information)

If you desire to participate in the C. D. Narasimhaiah Prize for the Best Paper Presented at an Annual Conference, please indicate so when you send in your full papers (last date for submission of complete papers is 15th November 2014).

Entries are also open for the Meenakshi Mukherjee Memorial Prize for the Best Academic Paper published by a member during the period 2013-14. Members may submit their papers for consideration to iaclalsconferences@gmail.com by 10th November 2014. You should have been a member when you published the paper.

Registration Fee

Rs 3,500/- (includes 3 Nights' Stay, Lunch, Refreshments, and Conference Kit).

Mode of Payment

Payment shall be by cheque in favor of "The Director, BITS-Pilani, K.K. Birla Goa Campus" or through online money transfer. Other details TBA.

Accommodation

Accommodation will be available for all outstation participants. The rooms will be allotted on sharing basis. Transportation to the conference venue will be arranged by the organizers. Details of accommodation will be communicated after submission of registration fees.

About Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani

The Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani, established in the year 1964, is an all-India Institute for Higher Education deemed to be a university

by the Government of India. BITS offers admission in three tiers: First Degree, Higher Degree and Doctoral Degree. Programmes are offered in various disciplines such as Engineering, Science, Management and Humanities. BITS has always been ranked as one of the top few educational institutions of its kind. The university has four campuses in Pilani (Rajasthan), Goa, Hyderabad (Telengana) and Dubai (UAE).

The Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the K.K. Birla Goa Campus of BITS Pilani offers various courses in the areas of English language and Literature, Professional Communication, Mass Media, Philosophy, Political Science, Ecocriticism, Sociology and Developmental Studies. The department aims at enriching the knowledge and awareness of students in various areas of humanistic and social studies and enhancing the life-quality of all living beings. For more details about the department, please check: <http://www.bits-pilani.ac.in/goa/HumanitiesandSocialSciences/HumanitiesandSocialSciences>.

Important Dates and Deadlines for the Conference

- Abstract: 30th Sep, 2014
- Confirmation and Acceptance of Abstracts: 15th Oct, 2014
- Receipt of Complete Papers: 15th Nov, 2014
- Registration: Open from 1st November to 30th Nov, 2014

Check our new website for updates: <http://www.iacials.com/new-cfps-and-events.html>

BOOK REVIEW

- **Mangalesh Dabral, *This Number Does Not Exist: Selected Poems 1981-2013*, translated from Hindi by various translators, Poetrywala, Mumbai, 2014, pp 71, Rs. 200, paperback**

This is yet another excellent book brought out by Poetrywala, the new imprint from Mumbai, which has started publishing quality poetry books. This particular volume collects poems written by the eminent Hindi poet, Mangalesh Dabral and translated into English by eleven different translators

over a period of three decades. Excellent translators include Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Rupert Snell, Robert Hueckstedt, Christi Merrill, Asad Zaidi, Vishnu Khare, Sudeep Sen and also the Late Daniel Weissbort, who founded the excellent Modern Poetry in Translation magazine along with Ted Hughes.

The fifty two poems here have been ably chosen and well translated. They bring out the modernist in Mangalesh Dabral well. These are poems of the searing urban landscape, lyrics that grapple with the issues of existence. The translations beautifully bring out the greatness of this unique poet. As a poet, who grapples with history as also with issues of identity, Dabral's poems bring a Cavafy-like vision to the English poetic canon. Sudeep Sen brings out the haunting quality of the title poem "This Number Does Not Exist" in his translation, where the notion of identity itself is called into question. In another poem, "The City, Again", Christi Merrill brings out the harsh urban landscape in its entirety, while in the poem, "Delhi: 2", in Girdhar Rathi's translation, the poet says "No one recounts how Muktibodh died. / No one wonders what sort of life it is."

The book also carries a helpful Afterword by the Indian English poet, Manohar Shetty. My only regret was that it was too short to be truly meaningful. Mangalesh Dabral's book, *This Number Does Not Exist* is a notable contribution to the Indian poetic canon in English.

Roomy Naqvy
Jamia Millia Islamia

- **Manohar Mouli Biswas, *The Wheel will Turn: Poems by Manohar Mouli Biswas*, edited by Jaydeep Sarangi, Allahabad: cyberwit.net, 2014, Rs 200/- ISBN 978-81-92187-7-1**

This is a collection of forty nine poems by the most impressive Dalit poet Manohar Mouli Biswas. Manohar Mouli Biswas is a significant voice in the growing corpus of Dalit literature from West Bengal. He is a writer, editor, critic and activist, and also a retired bureaucrat. Manohar Biswas has written more than a dozen books including his autobiography. This collection carries the work of ten translators including the poet himself. The poems are on diverse themes but what links them all together is an

awareness of human suffering and the very human hope: “Human life is about/ negotiating steps/ There I see them/ the sun-seared/ forging their tired feet,/ one step before the other”.

All writing is translation as all reading is — and to translate the almost untranslatable, poetry that has struggled into being to bruise the skin of this hierarchical and indifferent world, poetry that is full of edges and sees the ironies of life with a starkness that defines a new aesthetic, is courageous and admirable and my congratulations to all the translators and the editor. It would have been good if in such a collection, which has an editor’s note and an introduction and an interview and comments on the book, we also had details of where the poems were published, their original titles, their year of publication, as well as some biographical information on the poet.

Perhaps this can be addressed in the next edition.

- **Alladi Uma, K Suneetha Rani and D Murali Manohar (eds), *English in the Dalit Context*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, isbn 978-81-250-5519-8**

This is a collection of fourteen papers read at a conference on a significant contemporary moment — when English seems to be and do all kinds of things to all the world. Is globalisation of any good to anyone? Is English the only language in which you can reap the fruits of globalisation? Does English enslave or liberate? Should everyone be taught English and should everything be taught in English? Is English the language of equity and equality?

A short notice of this kind cannot do justice to the issues raised in the book — suffice to say that the papers address a complex network of issues from the role of the state in the teaching of English to translation to the redemptive role of the language, to the use of English in specific contexts to the role of language in caste and cultural politics. The book is a significant intervention in current academic politics as well as the linguistic politics and policies of contemporary India.

GJV Prasad

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY MEMBERS

Alpana Gupta and Sagar Mal Gupta, edited, *Love and Sex in English Fiction from 18th to 21st Century*, Yking Books, 2014

HS Komalesha, *Rashtrakavi Kuvempu*, Sahitya Akademi, English translation of a Kannada monograph on the life and works of Kuvempu (1904-1994)

Jaydeep Sarangi, edited, *The Wheel Will Turn: Poems by Manohar Mouli Biswas*(translation from Bangla), Cyberwit.net, Allahabad, 2014, INR 200/-

Jaydeep Sarangi and Rob Harle, edited, *Voices Across the Ocean: Poems from Australia and India*, Cyberwit.net, Allahabad, 2014

Jaydeep Sarangi, *A Door-Somewhere? (poems)*, Cyberwit.net, Allahabad, 2014. INR 200/-

Keki N. Daruwalla, *Fire Altar: Poems on the Persians and the Greeks*, Harper Collins, 2014

Makarand Paranjape, *The Death and Afterlife of Mahatma Gandhi*, Routledge, 2014

ISBN: 978-0415695732

Prem Kumari Srivastava, *Leslie Fiedler: Critic, Provocateur, Pop Culture Guru*, McFarland & Co. 2014. Print ISBN: 978-0-7864-6351-0

Somdatta Mandal, edited, *Margaret Atwood: Critical Perspectives*, Pencraft International, 2014

Vibha S. Chauhan and Khalid Alv, *Angarey*, Translated from Urdu, Foreword by Nadira Z. Babbar, Rupa Publications. ISBN 978-81-291-3108-9. also available as an e-book.

OBITUARY

Dr. Rajyashree Khushu-Lahiri, a valued member of the IACLALS and Head of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar, passed away in a tragic road accident on August 3rd. As the community reeled in shock, messages of grief poured in on our group mail, one of the most heartfelt being from Shweta Garg, who wrote her doctoral thesis under the supervision of Rajyashree Khushu-Lahiri. We reproduce part of Shweta's message:

"I had the privilege to be her first PhD student. She was my friend, philosopher and guide. She was deeply committed to her students' well being. Her energy and verve infected almost everyone around her. Her sudden death has created a void in the lives of all those she has touched.

I remember her sense of urgency while dealing with everything. Life is too short indeed."

Our deepest sympathies to Dr Khushu-Lahiri's family.
