
EACLALS

European Association for
Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

EACLALS Newsletter July 2001

Executive Committee:

Gerhard Stilz, University of Tübingen (Chair)
Geoffrey V. Davis, RWTH Aachen, (Secretary)
Susanne Müller, University of Tübingen (Treasurer)

Contents:

Anna Rutherford: Obituary

1. Introduction
2. The next EACLALS Triennial Conference, Copenhagen 2002
3. Finance
4. News of forthcoming conferences
5. New Publications by and/or of interest to EACLALS members

Anna Rutherford †

Anna Rutherford,
founder of the European Association for
Commonwealth Literature and Language
Studies,
died
in Sydney on February 21st, 2001
at the age of 68.

Gerhard Stilz, the current chair of the Association, wrote a message to be read out at her funeral:

Dear relatives and friends of Anna Rutherford,

On behalf of the executive committee and the members of the European Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, I would like to express my sympathy and compassion on the loss of our warm-hearted, joyful and energetic friend Anna, the shaping spirit of our association. This is neither the place nor the time to measure out what Anna has done for us and our common pursuit. In the silence of mourning, however, we would like to enfold our confidence and trust that her efforts, her work and her warmth will outlive the fragilities and determinations of the body.

Born on November 27, 1932 in Newcastle, New South Wales, Anna's background was Irish-Catholic, working-class Australian. After she graduated from the University of Newcastle she came in 1955 to England where she worked as a supply teacher. She always liked to recall the very British condescension with which the headmistress greeted her when she arrived at her first school and introduced herself: "Oh, you're a colonial" was the response. In 1966, having applied for jobs in a most unlikely pair of places — Addis Ababa and Aarhus — she went to live in Denmark since, as she put it, "Aarhus replied first" so that in a sense "I didn't choose Denmark, Denmark chose me." She decided to write her doctorate for Derry Jeffares at Leeds University, and it was he who encouraged her to attend the first ACLALS conference in Brisbane in 1968. It was this conference which set her on the course she was to follow for the rest of her life and which would involve her in a succession of new and, at the time, pioneering activities. She established the teaching of Commonwealth Literature at her own university and ran the programme there for the next 28 years. She attended the Second ACLALS conference in Jamaica and having concluded that "it had not been a great success," promptly resolved to host one herself. The conference on Commonwealth Literature in Aarhus was the first of its kind in Europe and it in turn led both to the establishment of the *Commonwealth Newsletter* and to the setting up of a European branch of ACLALS in 1972. A series of lectures by Wilson Harris at Aarhus elicited such enthusiasm that she decided in 1974 to found a publishing house of her own specifically for the purpose of bringing out an introduction to his ideas. She called it Dangaroo Press and it has been publishing post-colonial writing ever since. In 1978, she expanded

the *Newsletter* into a full-scale literary magazine – *Kunapipi* – and from the start placed particular emphasis on the work of new writers and younger scholars. How she managed to fund all these projects remains a matter of conjecture, but she certainly did dip frequently into her own pocket. Anna was also instrumental in setting up the Commonwealth Writers' prize and on several occasions served as a judge for the Commonwealth Poetry Prize and for the Commonwealth Fiction Prize.

It is not easy to do full justice to a career so full of innovative thinking, restless energy, and purposeful initiative. When the editors of the *Cross/Cultures* series tried to do so by compiling a *estschrift* in her honour in 1996 – it was presented to her at the EACLALS conference in Oviedo – they found themselves deluged with an astonishing array of contributions – prose and poetry, art works and photographs – ninety-five of them in all, from the Outer Hebrides and from Fiji and from everywhere between. Such an outpouring of friendship, gratitude and respect from almost all the world is surely unique in the history of *estschriften* – as was the photograph of the volume's dedicatee posing on an Australian beach dressed in a wetsuit and clutching a surfboard under her arm!

Anna meant a very great deal to an inordinately large number of people whose lives she enriched and whose work she promoted. We all share in the legacy of the organisations she set up and the publications she promoted. Her many activities have benefited all of us. We have all delighted in the brilliant covers of new Dangaroo Press books – "Good covers sell books," she used to say – and in the abundance of new writing which appeared in the pages of *Kunapipi*. We will all be telling for a long time yet anecdotes about the occasions we have shared with

her, the places – usually at some far-flung corner of the globe – where we met, the tasks – usually somewhat improbable – we were entrusted with: "Remember that time on the bus going to Malacca...?" "Remember the time she sent you to Hamburg to find boxes of Dangaroo books she'd left in a friend's garage...?" "Did she really drive across the Sahara to Nigeria...?" And we all treasure a store of memories of a person whose warm-hearted dedication to friends and colleagues, unsparing personal commitment to EACLALS, *Kunapipi* and the press, and infectious love of life were truly exemplary.

Anna's death has occasioned a great wealth of tributes. The following brief extracts from tributes by two EACLALS members writing in the most recent issue of the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (1/2001) may stand for many. Bernard Hickey had this to say:

"As an academic in Europe she added lustre to the reputation of Australians in academic life. Above all, for every writer whose cause she espoused Anna's generosity knew no bounds. [...] She herself always remained unequivocally and disinterestedly Australian. For decades she played a crucial role in ensuring overseas respect for Australia's maturing cultural self-awareness, one which so far has never been fully examined nor sufficiently recognized.[...] We are in Anna's debt. She would be the first to encourage us to build on what she has done, to continue to fight the good fight for contemporary, creative arts as a transforming power in our daily lives. *Requiescat in pace.*"

John Thieme wrote in the same journal:

"Her unflagging industry, her campaigning zeal, her eclectic generosity created a community that to a large extent came into being because of her and

became greater than the sum of its parts.[...] I suspect that round the world there are ten thousand and one people who will remember her as much for her warmth, generosity and humour, as for her professional pursuit of the ideal of Common Wealth."

We who are numbered among the ten thousand and one mourn her loss and will honour her memory.

1. Introduction

The present newsletter has unfortunately been delayed due to pressure of work.

The executive has appointed Susanne Müller to the position of acting treasurer which she will hold until the Copenhagen conference. Susanne succeeds Svenja Kuhfuss who has had to retire because of recent ill-health and to whom we send our best wishes and our thanks for her efforts on behalf of EACLALS. We apologise for delays in dealing with outstanding business caused by this change-over.

We now have a new e-mail address: eaclals@uni-tuebingen.de

On March 30, 2001, the former chair of EACLALS, Hena Maes-Jelinek, together with the Centre for Commonwealth Studies at the University of Liège hosted a one-day tribute to Wilson Harris on the occasion of the award to him of an Honorary Doctorate. This event also marked the writer's 80th birthday and the publication of his latest novel *The Dark Jester*. The degree ceremony – in the presence of the King of Belgium, who was also honoured – was attended by several EACLALS members. The association formally congratulated both Wilson Harris and the University of Liège for their initiative. A day later the conference opened with a brilliant tribute by fellow Guyanese writer Fred d'Aguiar ("How Wilson Harris changed my life") and included

papers by Hena Maes-Jelinek (Liège), Gordon Rohlehr (Guyana/Trinidad), Mary-Lou Emery (Iowa), Vera Kutzinski (Yale), Stuart Murray (Leeds), Gordon Collier (Giessen), Louis James (Kent), Michael Mitchell (Warwick), and Dominique Dubois (Angers). The proceedings of the conference will appear in Rodopi's Cross/Cultures series next year.

The members of the board (Stilz, Davis, Müller) paid a visit to Copenhagen on June 8 and 9, 2001 to meet with the local organizers of the next Triennial conference. They viewed the various sites for conference sessions, discussed the programme, conferred on suggestions as to possible keynote speakers and writers to be invited and agreed the conference budget. Particular attention was paid to the question of conference accommodation. By common consent the long meetings proved most useful.

The board members also devoted a long evening to an EACLALS meeting at which the association's financial position, the journal *Kunapipi* and forthcoming conferences were discussed.

If any member is interested in hosting a future EACLALS conference (2005 and 2008) we should welcome proposals, which could then be put to the business meeting in Copenhagen. We should be particularly happy to receive proposals from countries in Eastern Europe.

The proceedings of the Nice conference on short fiction hosted by the late Jacqueline Bardolph have now been published. The publication was partly funded by EACLALS. The massive, 477-page volume – Jacqueline Bardolph, (ed.). *Telling Stories. Postcolonial Short Fiction in English* (Amsterdam/Atlanta GA: Rodopi, 2001), Cross/Cultures 47 – has a cover showing an African

statuette from Jacqueline's own collection and includes contributions from a large number of EACLALS members.

2. The next EACLALS Triennial Conference

**EACLALS 2002: University of Copenhagen
21.3 – 27.3. 2002**

Call for Papers

BODIES AND VOICES

"Bodies and Voices" strikes at the heart of many contemporary debates in colonial and post-colonial studies: debates about the colonised subject; colonisation of the body and the mind; representations of "the other"; subaltern agency; even the question "Can the subaltern speak?"

But the topic also opens up innumerable other areas of discussion and investigation at the intersection of classic concerns in Commonwealth literary, linguistic and historical studies with completely new perspectives from within or outside the field. To mention a few: historical anatomies of the body and the voice; global English versus local Englishes and other debates on language and cultural articulation; enslavement of bodies and voices, discourses of race and racism; the senses and histories of the senses; embodiment and incarnation; cargo cults and spirit possession; tattoos and accents; the survival of biological and cultural diversity in the 21st century; bodies of land, bodies of water; voices of air and fire; erotics of the body and the voice; the carnivalesque; drama and performance; mimicry and mime; indeed

"bodies" and "voices" of everything from colonial administration to postcolonial discourse.

Interpretations of the conference theme ranging from the predictable to the surprising are encouraged. Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be sent by **October 31st, 2001** by ordinary or electronic mail to:

Bruce Clunies Ross (direct tel. +45 35 32 85 82)
bcross@hum.ku.dk

University of Copenhagen,
Department of English,
80, Njalsgade,
DK-2300 Copenhagen S,
Denmark
(tel. +45 35 32 86 00; fax +45 35 32 86 15).

Organizing committee:

Bruce Clunies Ross;
Eva Rask Knudsen (erask@hum.ku.dk);
Merete Borch (borch@hum.ku.dk);
Tabish Khair (tabish.khair@get2net.uk);
Svetlana Klimenko (sklimenko@hum.ku.dk);
Justin Edwards (jedwards@hum.ku.dk);
Line Henriksen (linehen@hum.ku.dk);
Martin Leer (leer@hum.ku.dk)

Registration forms with information about accommodation will be available soon. For information contact the conference organizer or a member of the committee.

May we remind you that EACLALS membership is required for all conference speakers.

3. Finances

EACLALS is continuing its support for *Kunapipi* and has recently made two supplementary grants of £500 each for the years 2000 and 2001.

The magazine recently put out a call for subscribers to take out five-year subscriptions at a rate of AUS\$ 250 as a practical tribute to the founding editor, Anna Rutherford.

It is hoped that by the Copenhagen conference next year it will be possible to determine the future relationship of EACLALS and the magazine now that it has relocated to Australia and is seeking new sources of funding. Some remarks from an e-mail from Anne Collett, the new editor based at the University of Wollongong, may be helpful in considering future policy. Anne writes:

"*Kunapipi* is Anna's legacy to commonwealth/postcolonial scholarship and I believe it is very important to maintain the continuance and the tradition of a journal that has pioneered the field and continues to make an energetic, imaginative and scholarly contribution. [...] I believe the Commonwealth/Europe relationship is an important one and something that should be maintained, in part as a recognition of Anna's founding role in both the journal and the association. I also believe the journal's move out of the UK is to the good. It seems important to me that a journal of Commonwealth writing in English should not be produced at the old and originating centre of Empire but should remain an active and persuasive voice 'from the margins.' [...] I am however also aware that European members may feel it to be something of an anachronism that the journal of a European association should be produced in Australia (although no more of an anachronism than

Anna's teaching of Australian literature in Denmark!)." Steps are currently being taken to appoint a

"European editor" to ensure ongoing publication of European scholarship in the journal.

4. News of Forthcoming Conferences

EASA 6th BIENNIAL CONFERENCE.
UNIVERSITY OF LECCE (ITALY)
Sept. 25- 29 2001.

*100 Years of Australian Federation:
Reconciliations: Home and Abroad.*

Convenor: Bernard Hickey
Università di Lecce,
Viale Gallipoli, 49
73100 Lecce
Italy

Fax: +39 0832 2453109

Phone: +39 0832 336595 / 245301 / 247531

E-mail: hickeyb@ilenic.unile.it

*

Text in context:

African languages between orality and scriptuality

University of Zürich, Switzerland
18-20 October 2001

Inquiries to:
Dept. of General Linguistics,
African Symposium
Plattenstr. 54,

CH-8032 Zurich,
Switzerland

email: afrosympo@access.unizh.ch

Fax: 0041-1-634 43 57

*

*Rethinking Commonwealth/Postcolonial Literatures:
Cartographies and Topographies, Past and Present*

Second International Conference of the United States
Association
for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

Santa Clara University, California
April 26-28, 2002

Deadline for applications: October 15
300 word abstracts to:

John C. Hawley, Dept. of English,
500 El Camino, Santa Clara University,
Santa Clara CA 95053.

email: jhawley@scu.edu.

fax: 408 554 4837

*

Images of Loss and Reconciliation.

A Multidisciplinary International conference.

University of Bath, UK
Sept. 2002

Contact: Ian Wallace,
Dept. of European Studies,
University of Bath,
Bath BA2 7AY,
England

phone: +44 1225 826 244

e-mail: I.Wallace@bath.ac.uk

5. New Publications by and/or of interest to EACLALS members.

The following recent publications have come to our attention:

Anyidoho, Kofi and James Gibbs (ed.). *FonTomFrom. Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theater and Film* (Amsterdam/Atlanta GA: Rodopi, 2000), *Matatu* 21-22.

Banharn, Martin, James Gibbs & Femi Osofisan (ed.) *African Theatre. Playwrights & Politics* (Oxford: James Currey; Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2001).

Bardolph, Jacqueline (ed.). *Telling Stories. Postcolonial Short Fiction in English* (Amsterdam/Atlanta GA: Rodopi, 2001), *Cross/Cultures* 47.

Booker, M. Keith & Dubravka Juraga. *The Caribbean Novel in English: An Introduction* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001)

Goonetilleke, D.C.R.A. (ed.). *Perspectives on Post-Colonial Literature* (London: Skoob, 2001). Obtainable from: Skoob Russell Square, 10 Brunswick Centre, Off Bernard Street, London WC1N 1AE.

Hale, Nanette & Tabish Khair (ed.). *Angles of the English-speaking World. Unhinging Hinglish: The Languages and Politics of Fiction in English from the Indian Subcontinent* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 2001). ISBN: 87-7289-672-8. Obtainable from : Museum Tusulanum Press, Njalsgade 92, DK-2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark.

Lehmann, E., E. Reckwitz, L. Vennarini (ed.). *Constructing South African Literary History* (Essen: blaue eule, 2000).

Lindfors, Bernth (ed.). *Africans on Stage. Studies in Ethnological Show Business* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; Cape Town: David Philip, 1999).

Pordzik, Ralph. *Die moderne englischsprachige Lyrik in Südafrika 1950-1980. Eine Darstellung aus funktions- und wirkungsgeschichtlicher Perspektive* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2000).

Jamie S. Scott & Paul Simpson-Housley (ed.). *Mapping the Sacred. Religion, Geography and Postcolonial Literatures* (Amsterdam/Atlanta GA: Rodopi, 2001), *Cross/Cultures* 48.

Sharkey, Michael. *Poems 2001* (Armidale, NSW: Kardoorair Press, 2001) ISBN: 0 908 244 39-8. Obtainable from: Kardoorair Press, PO Box 478, Armidale NSW, Australia 2350.

Stülz, Gerhard (ed.). *Colonies, Missions, Cultures in the English-speaking World: General and Comparative Studies* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2001)

The *Australian Book Review*, now handsomely redesigned and under new editorship (Peter Rose), is currently running a promotional campaign. Overseas Subscriptions (airmail) cost AUS\$ 107 (individuals) and AUS\$ 112 (institutions). Obtainable from: *Australian Book Review*, PO Box 2320, Richmond South, Victoria, 3121. E-mail: abr@vicnet.net.au

For those who have never come across it, the *festschrift* for Anna Rutherford is entitled *A Talent(ed) Digger* and was published by Rodopi in 1996 (*Cross/Cultures* 20).

The National English Literary Museum in Grahamstown (South Africa) would be very happy to receive review copies of books and articles pertaining to South African literature. NELM, which provides a very useful research service for scholars world-wide, is now responsible for compiling the Annual Bibliography published in the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*.

Their address is: National English Literary Museum (NELM), Private Bag 1019, Grahamstown 6140, South Africa.

Those of you who have encountered difficulty in obtaining books from overseas may find the following addresses useful:

Kate Shepherd,
Austral Ed
38 Ardross Crescent,
Coolbinia 6050, Western Australia
Fax: 618 9201 0733 / Phone: 618 9201 2726
e-mail: kateshep@iinet.net.au

The Abbey Bookshop,
La librairie canadienne,
29 rue de la Parcheminerie,
75005 Paris.
e-mail: ABParis@compuserve.com

New Zealand Books Abroad,
174 Wilton Rd.,
P.O.Box 17-244,
Wellington 6005,
New Zealand.
e-mail: nzbooks@xtra.co.nz