

July/Aug 2020

ASAA NEWSLETTER

Association for the Study of Australasia in Asia
Website: www.asaa.net.au



Association for the Study of
Australasia in Asia

Australia: Guest Nation Hyderabad Literary Festival 2020

ASAA members at literary sessions at HLF 2020



Kieran Dolin & Alf Taylor Centre: Lynette Lounsbury Left: Kieran Dolin



Right: Rashida Murphy



Centre: Stephen Alomes

HLF Report 21-24 January 2020

The guest nation at this year's Hyderabad Literature Festival was Australia, and two groups of Australian writers, one organised by ASAA, and the other by the Australian Consul-General were in attendance. The ASAA

contingent, consisting of Alf Taylor, Rashida Murphy, Lynnette Lounsbury, Stephen Alomes and Kieran Dolin, all stayed in the same hotel, along with other guest writers, from both India and overseas, so we got to know quite a

few others in a convivial way. It was also good to meet the other Australian writers, including Anita Heiss, Bronwyn Fredericks, Caroline Overington, Gideon Haigh, John Zubrzycki, Kim Wilkins and Lisa Heidke, and to be on panels with them, along with many distinguished writers, artists and scholars from India and elsewhere.

The venue for the festival was the picturesque Vidyaranya High School in the city, rather an oasis in the midst of the bustle. The festival sessions are free and open to the general public, and the event was abuzz with activities, stalls, and many sessions and workshops. There was a wonderful spirit throughout, and student helpers made it easy for us to find our sessions, and kindly assisted in many other ways.

The festival was inaugurated with a moving opening ceremony, which included official representatives from India, the Australian Consul-General in Chennai, Susan Grace, and the renowned Mayalam film-maker Adoor Gopalakrishnan, who delivered an inspiring keynote address on Cinema, Literature and Society.

This was followed by a packed session on Aboriginal writing, entitled Indigenous Australian perspectives, in which Anita Heiss and Bronwyn Fredericks, Indigenous writers based at the University of Queensland, were the main speakers. It was a very engaging session, that drew numerous questions from the audience.

A session on Australian poetry with senior Noongar writer Alf Taylor and Kieran Dolin was very well received. Kieran Dolin gave a brief overview on publishing and participation, recurrent preoccupations, and key themes. Alf Taylor read a selection of his work and spoke about the events and observations that inspired them. The panel ended with a reading of two

poems by Glen Phillips, who was originally scheduled to read but withdrew due to ill-health.

A highlight of the Australian programme on the second day was an absorbing panel on Immigrant Voices involving Rashida Murphy and Roanna Gonsalves, two Indo-Australian writers, who responded to a range of questions on some of the challenging aspects of Indian diasporic life in Australia. Roanna read an extract from her work, *Sunita da Silva Goes to Sydney* (Australian title, *The Permanent Resident*), and Rashida from her novel, *The Historian's Daughter*.

The third day, January 26, is Republic Day in India and also Australia Day, and the former was movingly acknowledged with a reading of the preamble to the Indian Constitution, and the latter acknowledged 'in solidarity with Aboriginal people.' At the following panel, on New Age Fiction, Lynnette Lounsbury spoke about and read from her reworking of Jack Kerouac, *We Ate the Road like Vultures*, and the Portuguese writer Filippa Martins presented a defence of literature for postmodern times.

Later that day, the national theme was front and centre in a panel on 'Games Nations Play,' at which Stephen Alomes (RMIT) was joined by the *Australian* newspaper's cricket writer, Gideon Haigh. Sport and social values, cricket, the games of politics, and the politics of games were among the topic discussed with an enthusiastic audience.



ASAA members at the Selfie Point HLF

This is a very selective summary of what was a richly varied and highly enjoyable event. On behalf of the ASAA guests I would like to express my appreciation to the organisers, especially Professor Vijay Kumar, for their hospitality and for the inclusive vision that animates the HLF.

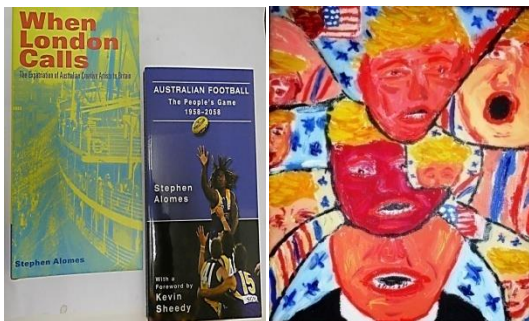
Kieran Dolin

University of Western Australia

Stephen Alomes Author, painter and poet



Growing up in Tasmania, Stephen Alomes has written the stories of the varieties of Australian nationalism (*A Nation at Last?*, 1988), war memory, popular culture and sport (*Australian Football The People's Game 1958-2058*, 2012, 2017).



Faces of the Donald

Following studies of the colonial cultural cringe to Britain, he explored the call of London to Australians in writing and the creative arts (*When London Calls*, 1999). His forthcoming prose poetry collection is entitled *Selective Ironies* Ginninderra Press, 2020). His expressionist portraits explore the faces of populist leaders across several continents, from Donald Trump and Pauline Hanson to Silvio Berlusconi and Vladimir Putin; they follow contemporary populism, the subject of his academic research in

global studies at RMIT University Melbourne.

Alf Taylor – Author/Poet



Alf Taylor is a Western Australian Nyoongah writer. Born in the late 1940s, Taylor and his brother while children were removed from their family and placed in the New Norcia Mission, making them members of the Stolen Generation. Taylor discovered his heritage only when he left the Mission as a teenager and searched for his family. Taylor worked in the Perth and Geraldton areas as a seasonal farm worker, before joining the armed forces and living in several locations around Australia. Taylor and his wife had seven children, of whom only two survived.

Although Taylor had enjoyed writing from an early age, he only published his first book of poetry, *Singer Songwriter* in 1992. Later Taylor published an acclaimed short story collection, *Long Time Now* in 2001, and an excerpt of his memoirs *God, the Devil and Me*, about his life in New Norcia, in 2003 in the literary journal, *Westerly*.

His publications include *Long Time Now: Stories of the Dreamtime, the Here and Now*(2001); *Rimfire: Poetry from Aboriginal Australia* (2000); *Singer Songwriter* (1992); *Winds* (1994); *People of the Park* (1994). Awards 2004 and 2006 Literature Board Grants for Established Writers.

Rashida Murphy

Writer, poet



Rashida Murphy is a writer, poet, reviewer and blogger. She has published her short fiction and poetry in various international literary journals and anthologies such as *Westerly*, *Open Road Review* and *Veils Halos and Shackles*. Her debut novel, *The Historian's Daughter* was shortlisted in the Scottish Dundee International Book Prize in 2015 (UWA Publishing). In 2016 she was a guest editor at *Westerly* and was on the editorial board at *Cafe Dissensus* from 2014–2018. Rashida has a Masters degree in English Literature and a PhD in Writing from Edith Cowan University. She has worked as an Education lecturer for several years in Perth before undertaking her PhD. In 2016 she was the joint winner of the Magdalena Prize for feminist research for her thesis which includes the novel *The Historian's Daughter*.

She has judged literary competitions such as the Spilt Ink competition, the Talus Prize, the Ellen Kemp Memorial Prize and the KSP short story competition. She won a writing residency at the Katherine Susannah Pritchard Writers centre in 2017 and has been an invited guest and facilitator at the Perth Writers Festival from 2017–2019. She was a mentor in the Indian Ocean Writing project in 2018 and 2019. She has recently completed a

writing residency in NSW. She lives in Perth and is currently working on a new novel and a collection of short stories.

Lynette Lounsbury

Novelist



Lynette Lounsbury writes particularly for an audience of youth amongst which she has established a distinguished reputation. Her novels include *Afterworld* (Allen and Unwin, Melbourne 2014) ; *We ate the Road Like Vultures* (Inkerman & Blunt, Melbourne 2016”, Haunted: Claws and Teeth”, in Rossignol, Rachel ed, "Hauntings Special Issue", Bukker Tillibul: *The Online Journal of Writing and Practice-led Research*, Vol 10, 2016”; A Girl and the Beats”, *Nieuwe Vide Journal of the Humanities*, Amsterdam, January, 2017.

UWA-OU Discussions



L-R: Y L Srinivas, Kieran Dolin, C. Murali Krishna, Parimala Kulkarni at Osmania University, Hyderabad

Formal discussions were held in January 2020, between the officials of Osmania University and the University of Western Australia with the aim of promoting further

negotiations for signing an MoU between the two institutions. Prof. C. Murali Krishna, Head, Dept. of English, Prof. Y L Srinivas, Chair, Board of Studies, Dept. of English, Dr. Parimala Kulkarni, faculty member from Osmania University participated. Dr. Kieran Dolin Associate Professor, English and Cultural Studies, represented the University of Western Australia.

Bridge differences instead of vilifying the unfamiliar

Meira Chand



Meira Chand

In Singapore, we are struggling nationally with the huge spike in Covid-19 cases among migrant workers, just when we thought we had the virus under control. From the status of being an almost invisible community, this huge workforce has now taken centre stage.

We all know that without migrant workers, the glitzy miracle of modern Singapore could not have been built with such ease. Yet now, because Covid-19 has ravaged this transient community, these men have become visible in a new way.[...]

The successful control of Covid-19 cases earned Singapore the accolade of setting the gold standard in stemming the virus. Now that status appears to have been tarnished. In a recent article, *The Guardian*

newspaper in Britain reported that to some Singaporeans, this international demotion in status is upsetting.[...]

Our rightful national pride in Singapore's achievements make derogatory international reportage, such as that in *The Guardian*, uncomfortable reading. Yet, we must ask why the rights and living conditions of these men, now thrown into the spotlight by Covid-19, have not generally been issues of more importance. Perhaps the simplistic answer is that they are "Other"[...]

Othering is a collective failure to recognise the darker side of human nature and out of this failure comes the mechanism of scapegoating. Black or white, physically handicapped, refugee or immigrant, whatever the differences we find to categorise people - ultimately, we are all one.[...]

Beyond the impressive skyline of modern Singapore, a visit to the humble premises of the Chinese Heritage Centre in Pagoda Street is a deeply moving experience. Here, in touching detail, is documented the beginnings of modern Singapore. The coolies and amahs, the rickshaw men and house boys whose lives are documented here, came to a city whose streets were supposedly paved with gold.[...]

In British colonial Singapore, early Chinese immigrants were Other and remained so in the British colonial psyche until our relatively recent independence and the end of British rule.

The narrative that emerges from that early pre-independent Singapore of Chinese immigrants is a narrative of courage and hope, of hard work and reinvention. It is a narrative to be proud of and one that has produced all we take so easily for granted in today's Singapore. Our narratives reflect not only our histories, hopes and fears, but also the values we live by.[...]

In creating bridges, we celebrate diversity, deepen our sense of ourselves and create a society where all can belong, contribute and grow.

(A version of this article appeared in the print edition of *The Sunday Times* on May 31, 2020)

Born and educated in London, Dr Meira Chand is regarded as Singapore's premier novelist. She is the author of nine novels, whose themes examine the conflict of cultures and the search for identity.

Meira Chand has graciously accepted the position of Patron of ASAA. She is a long time member of ASAA and is well-known to an international readership..Her career has spanned both East and West: UK., India, Japan and Singapore. We like to think she has a bond with Australia having completed her doctoral studies at the University of Western Australia.

See her website:

<https://www.meirachand.com>

The Economy: Gota's Enemy Number One Sri Lanka Dr. Ameer Ali



President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's victory over LTTE and limited victory over Covid-19 are fast turning into just sweet but distant memories. A

new enemy [...]the economic virus is hitting every one[...] By the second quarter of this year, almost 300 million jobs [would] have been wiped out. In short, the world is experiencing the worst economic recession ever. Given this gloomy scenario what chance does tiny Sri Lanka have to swim against the tide?

[...]. As consumer spending falls, businesses will suffer,

unemployment will increase, household income will fall, and government revenue collection will fall. It is going to be a vicious circle[...]

In several of my earlier pieces I have emphasised the point that economic recovery should be a collective effort involving every community in the country. Any policy or measure that keeps communities divided and disunited is a criminal offence against the economy and the country. This is lesson number one that should be learnt from the experience of 1970s.[...]The crying need of the time therefore is economic survival, and any impediment that disrupts economic output in any part of the country by any section of the population must be removed forthwith. This is a fundamental truth that the regime must understand. Unfortunately, the heat of an election is accentuating disunity and obstructing recovery efforts. The Economy is Gota's enemy no.1. If he fails to defeat it, he would become peoples' enemy no.1.

The Colombo Telegraph 26 July 2020

<https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/the-economy-gotas-enemy-number-one/>

Statues...When They Fall

**Satendra Nandan
University of Canberra**

**Sceptre and
Crown
Must tumble
down,
And in the dust
be equal made
With poor
crooked scythe and spade.**



...
**Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the
dust.**

[James Shirley 1596 -1666]

Years ago I wrote an essay on why the bust will survive the city. Today, even as archaeologists are digging up ancient ruins to find the human route to civilization, the statues which adorned many a city and cobbled streets are being toppled.

Many are under serious public scrutiny as people dig out the dirty linen of history by some of our revered 'heroes' whose lives chime with those cruel times.

Many were despots, slave owners, tyrants, dictators and those who abused and suppressed some part of our humanity with most brutal means.

Black Lives Matter, BLM, marches have brought all this to a crescendo and the sight of statues being so unceremoniously rolled down the streets like rubbish bins is not an uplifting sight.

Push these into the rubbish bin of history, where they belong, seems the catch-cry of the many.

No time is better than this contagion: COVID-19. It's this virus that is not only affecting our daily reality but is turning the pages of history to be re-read as a man's memory rejuvenates just before he faces death.

The mental anguish of COVID-19 will take us a generation or two to understand: it will make us dig our own lives as Death makes us read and re-read texts that the living created for us to face this one fatal reality.

This, I hope, is not seen as a pessimistic view: it is what great upheavals in human affairs do. The world, though, is born anew with a new light and message.

The Crucifixion and Resurrection seem part of that metaphor. The *Mahabharata* is the most apocalyptic endgame of our existential fate: the *Bhagavadgita* is its preamble.

*

The current tragedy enveloping the whole world is a time for

contemplation and critical evaluation of our modern civilization.

These thoughts come to my mind as I'm writing a rather long essay for a book on Mahatma Gandhi to be published from Washington: I mention Washington advisedly. My editor-friend, who teaches there, has written only today: 'the work of ours will be weighty and relevant--so crucial in India and for the world'.

Gandhi is not an easy subject: he questions all your assumptions and fixed ideas. His book, *Hind Swaraj*, written in 10 days on a ship, *SS Kildonan Castle*, is a classic of its genre: it is a severe indictment of European civilization at its peak.

The volume was published in 1909 and promptly banned by the British Raj. It was composed when Gandhi was returning from London to Durban where he spent twenty years fighting against racial prejudice and significantly changed the world in its relentless pursuit of life and liberty, greed and aggrandizement.

He considered western civilization self-destructive with its brute colonization but not beyond redemption by its Christian ethics, although he knew that Christianity, like all religions, was complicit in exploitation.

He believed that there's a possibility of a better world even as Europe was marching towards a chasm on the road of immorality after immorality.

Within five years of the publication of the volume, Europe was plunged in that devastatingly destructive war from which it has never recovered.

Brexit is simply a footnote to that historical suicide of a mighty civilization and the world's greatest but very brief Empire. Joseph Conrad's great short novel *Heart Of Darkness* was not about Africa: it was more about Europe.

When Gandhi's book was published one professor was writing: *Britain controls today the destinies of some 350,000,000 alien people, unable yet to govern themselves.*

Within forty years the empire that governed roughly 'a quarter of the world's population, covered about the same proportions of the land's surface and dominated nearly all ocean', unraveled.

Today many monuments of kings and queens lie upon one another in obscure museums, gathering dust and eaten by rust and rats.

How the mighty have fallen is best shown in sharp steel images in the demolition of some of the statues in the current crisis.

As if people are asking for a new evaluation of our historical past in the context of new knowledge and perspectives on history itself.

Dig but how deep do you want to dig? And it's not only history's distorted truth that is being questioned: it's our democracies, our economic structures, our financial arrangements, our glorification of globalization, our treatment of asylum seekers and refugees: the 100 million displaced roaming the seas and land to find a place in the lands of the conquered and more significantly the conquerors.

Mr Donald Trump promised to build several walls: today the White House itself has a steel fence.

Nothing will stop now the peoples' migration: just as empires were built with guns and genocide on all the continents and so many islands: often with divine sanction in the name of civilizing missions.

The modern world is created by migration: the new migration has disturbed the status quo. And COVID-19 has reshaped the world by its invisible presence and made us all deeply vulnerable: wave after wave, until it becomes a tsunami, unless we combine the world's resources to

combat this with hope, innovation and collective determination.

No-one is safe until all are safe.

So far the signs are not promising: from Washington to New Delhi, London to Sao Paulo. Beijing and Moscow seem to be on another planet altogether.

The future is no longer like the pandemic of the past: our priorities and pride, our perceptions and prejudices, must undergo a sea-change even as the world's climate is changing catastrophically, invisibly very moment.

The Earth is not wearing any mask: look around from your backyard, across your street and see the setting sun or the rising moon and say if you've cared for the largest life-giving force: our one and only Mother Earth.

*

I'm not much for statues. Ultimately they are good for pigeons, or perhaps a few monkeys, only.

But I've been involved in the erection of one statue: that of Mahatma Gandhi installed in Glebe Park in Canberra in the heart of the city. It was an initiative of a friend of mine--a devotee of the Mahatma: the statues are his gift to several cities.

He's planning to send one to Fiji also: luckily he's a rich accountant with more than an accountant's accountability to a society that has given him a home and security.

So today, among several statues, we've two in Canberra that I've some interest in: Gandhi of course. But there's another one: I'd not noticed it on the ANU campus where I had a cottage for three years.

Across the road from where we lived, shrouded in the ghostly gum tress, is another statue: that of Winston Churchill. It stands there covered in leaves unlike the one in London protected by a steel fence.

Because it was camouflaged, I hadn't noticed it.

It was only when we were thinking of installing a Gandhi statue that someone pointed it out to me that there's one of Winston Churchill.

Gandhi and Churchill, were inveterate adversaries; Churchill saw that if Gandhi wins, the Empire will be dismantled. Hitler for him was an easier enemy; violence can be defeated with violence.

How do you fight someone who doesn't see you as an enemy but a friend.

Few national leaders were as friendly as Gandhi to the British Empire, trained as a lawyer in London, and where he discovered many treasures of his Indian heritage and cultivated enduring friendships in exile.

Churchill, of course, was the British hero who won the war, helped by Russian, American and Empire's soldiers, more than a million from India alone.

Today Sir Winston Churchill's statues are under threat in England and elsewhere; Gandhi's have been defaced by some rebels in the Eastern India and in some African campuses; and the Indian Parliament now has installed a portrait of the man who conspired to assassinate the Mahatma . The ironies of history are manifold.

I remember being briefly a Fellow in Churchill College in Cambridge some years ago: as you approach the Dining Hall there's a statue of Churchill right in the front: what strikes you is the shining feet where people must have touched them as they entered the hall for a meal.

Today I think that the man who never fasted, and the one who fasted to save others, are two different qualities of heroes. Whose bust will survive COVID-19?

My bet is with the half-naked fakir; rather than the man with a big cigar-- all cigars, after all, end in ashes. The half-naked understood the true meaning of nakedness in a world where we, the other half, overload ourselves in the Emperor's new clothes, presumably 'Made in China'.

-----27 June, 2020.

Note

Satendra Nandan's two books, *GIRMIT: Epic lives in Small Lines ; Twin Journeys: Love and Grief*, will be published later this year.

Isabel Alonso-Breto



Remember

In the memory of the COVID 19 victims

I shall be
in a daisy
I shall be
in a finch
I shall be in every chime
of the bell in its tower
I shall be in every laugh

I shall be in the crack of the snow
when you walk
in sharp winter

I shall be in the sea and the meadows

Find me too in the sigh
of an elderly person
I shall be in the angle chosen by
the camerawoman

in the stroke *aflamencado* wept out by
the guitar
in the white sky, in the hunger
in the failure not to dream

I shall be in Teruel's mighty holm oaks
and Australian eucalypti
in the cheerful rhythms of summers of
old
and in every one of the books we
accepted

as life presents
including Geometry and Byung Chul
Han's

I shall be in Bruno's yawning and
stretching
its swift catty laziness
and in the silence of those who do not
have

I shall be in your eyes
and in your hands
and in the fresh light of every early
morning

I shall be
in all the poems

Springtime that year

Written on 21 March 2020

Every sign cried out to heaven
The plastic, the sea, the rush
The orange leader's gold faucets
apartment
Nasdaq composite index, private
burials
Children soldiers, children wives
Monsanto
Howls in the world democracy
tribunes
The over-famous fifteen minutes of
fame
Our oblivion of being
The plastic, the sea, virtual kissing
Flags as garment, guns
Skint lunch family gatherings at home
on the sidewalk

Walls sealing in affluence
and sealing off need
Animal, human abuse
Putting an end to one life
And killing thousands

Tanks, refugee camps
Walls sealing in affluence
The plastic
The sea
The oblivion
The urgency

Every palpable sign
cried out to heaven
that spring

Isabel Alonso-Breto
Centre for Australian and
Transnational Studies
University of Barcelona, Spain

**Australia Unmasked - We're all in
this together but not quite...***
-Stephen Alomes 12 July 2020

* An Australian view written in June - when
the gravity of the pandemic was not fully
apparent.

Scenes from the Pandemic war zone
...a light on a society's complexities
Australia has done well with just over
100 deaths and around 8,000 cases.
'We have a moat and we'll use it' said
the Tasmanian Premier. Restricted or
no entry was implemented by several
states and by the federal government.



*Coffee Tribalism, Flat White Wars –
suggesting the Victorian view of the quality of
coffee in New South Wales.*

Except there are complexities involving every social category.

The rich – skiers who came back from Colorado brought the virus from the US (luckily slightly less affluent skiers went to Japan)

Women ...who lost more jobs in service, hospitality, retail than men

Men ...who die more easily from Covid-19

Boomers ...older people who die more easily from Covid-19 ...in an amusing black joke on social media the virus was described as a ‘Boomer Remover’

Millennials and after ...who spread the virus by failing to social distance Grandparents and those in aged care ...often unable to see or to hug their younger relatives

Workers ...who have jobs which can't be done at home ... and economically need to go to work ...and sometimes, like Singapore building workers, live in more crowded or smaller spaces

Different ethnicities ...some of whom have larger families in houses, may not have received all the information in their languages, and have cultural traditions of large gatherings and embracing plus...

Victorians ...to some Queenslanders the ‘Mexicans’ who remained banned from that northern border in early July ...in a state with a June outbreak, following those other Mexicans from New South Wales who had the biggest outbreaks from a cruise ship and in aged care homes ...interestingly ‘state patriotism’ had strong moments, but few nationalist drums were heard.

Political leaders who were either ‘dictators’ for encouraging a lockdown or social isolation and social distancing or had saved the state and the nation Labour-hire companies whose workers spread the disease (Burnie Tasmania one worker at two hospitals and three

aged care homes, Victoria, a meat works spread)

Travellers, returnees and others, did they bring the virus?

International students, who have been deprived of their part-time work and did not receive the government's support packages ...along with many casual workers, temporary workers from overseas, arts workers; or the universities (on which the government practised vengeance)

Early, in some areas, people of Chinese origin, who a few racists wrongly assumed were carriers of the virus

Incompetent security companies, who failed (or did government health department's fail) to train their staff working in quarantine hotels in safe practices.

Toilet paper hoarders who felt that they needed to control what they could control (do they think they are sports coaches?)

And in the vernacular, there are those ubiquitous ‘wankers’ – middle class WASPs, tradies and orange top workers, keyboard warriors on social media, all sorts of people who don't think it matters. I suggested that they hold a telepathic Zoom conversation with the half a million dead just to confirm their views.

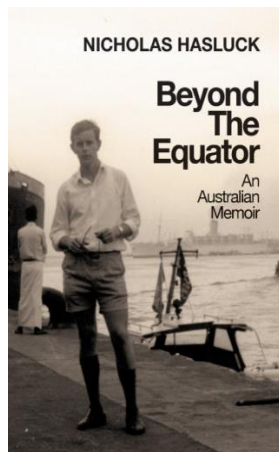
The Prize

And who gets the Donald Trump/ Jair Bolsonaro (‘it's a little flu...some people will die, that's life’ said the Brazilian, who then became infected) prize for making mistakes?

I would give it to the herd mentality among several official epidemiologists who did not recognise the evidence that to a degree, as with all medical and safety interventions, masks help reduce the spread of infections.

Masks plus Social Distancing plus Hand washing work in many countries.

Nicholas Hasluck



‘I see traces in my past that point to what the world has now become.’

Like many young Australians in the 1960s Nick Hasluck set sail for London, in his case for a post-graduate law degree, but looking also for new horizons and ways to be a writer. From a seedy room at the International Language Club he explored the ‘Kangaroo Valley’ party scene around Earl’s Court – until he met a girl from the Cotswolds who was to change his life, a romance leading to misadventures in Europe and eventually to a job in Fleet Street.

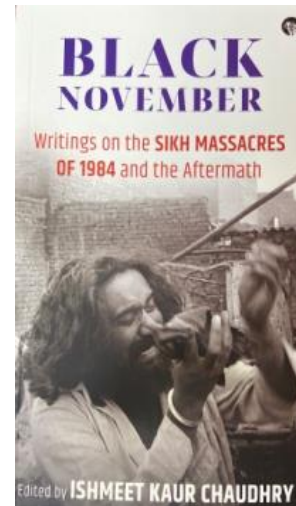
Britain was opening up to him in unexpected ways. He recalls combative speakers at the Oxford Union – Malcolm X, James Baldwin, Tariq Ali – and luminaries in other places such as Menzies, Profumo, Field Marshal Slim and the controversial jurists, Hailsham and Denning.

Along the way, Hasluck writes skilfully of becoming a lawyer, then a Judge, and also a well-known novelist. In this eloquent memoir the mind of the lawyer is constantly enriched by the style of the writer. To a lively storyteller the world beyond the equator is still the miracle it always was.

Publisher: Arcadia Australian
Scholarly Publishing

Black November: Writings on the 1984 Sikh Massacres and the Aftermath

Ed. Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry



Marking the 35th anniversary of 1984 massacres of the Sikhs, an anthology on the subject has been recently published in Oct, 2019. This unprecedented collection brings together interviews of the survivors, selected affidavits filed before the Nanavati commission in 2000, short stories, plays and poems.[...]

The psychological trauma and the distressful conditions have led some of their children into drug addiction and petty crimes; many of the widows of the colony continue fighting in the wait of justice, leaving behind their stories of strength and survival. This volume provides a voice for these women and[...]compels us to seek justice and healing for the survivors.

Publisher: Speaking Tiger, Oct. 2019



**MEMORIES AND
POSTMEMORIES OF THE
PARTITION OF INDIA**

Anjali Roy



By

Anjali Gera Roy

Publisher: Routledge, August 2019

**JEAN ARASANAYAGAM
(1931-2019)
A Tribute**



Jean Arasanayagam

**A New Achievement -Chapter
from Glen Phillips War Novel**



Glen Phillips / Creativity

RESCUE MISSION

[VIEW ARTICLE](#)

Issue 10 (Summer 2020)

<http://voyagesjournal.org/rescue-mission/>

My first memories of Jean Aunty are from the suburb of Watapuluwa in Kandy where the Arasanayagam's were our immediate neighbours. Our house was on a small hillock and they lived immediately below us. Food, neighbourly affection, dogs and cats and many other things including books flowed freely between these porous borders. It is within this small domestic economy that my first substantive encounters with literature in English began to form. Food flowed from our house and literature flowed in return from the Arasanayagam's.[...] the Arasanayagam's house literally overflowed with literature. Books occupied and spilled out of every conceivable surface and the house itself was in perpetual disarray. It is in this strangely magical space that I began to form a love for literature and reading. Jean gave her time and knowledge generously[...]

Perhaps the most enduring memory of Jean was one darkened by the tragic ethno-nationalist history of Sri Lanka. But one, which in many ways captures how the personal and

the political mingle in our lives – both hers and mine. When Black July 1983 happened I was a 9 year- old boy with little or no understanding of the dark political undercurrents of postcolonial Sri Lanka. But they came home to Watapuluwa in the form of a mob that set fire to the Arasanayagam's Tamil neighbours' house and threatened to attack the Arasanayagam's themselves – on account of Arasa Uncle's Tamil identity. Jean and the two daughters sought refuge in our house and uncle at a neighbours' until the army arrived and took them to a refugee camp.

1983 of course marks a turning point in Jean's career as a writer and poet. By this time, she was already well known and critically acclaimed as a writer. But the tragic events of Black July and her complex identity as a Burgher woman married to a man from a high caste Tamil Hindu background and how this in turn made her a victim of chauvinist Sinhala nationalist forces, propelled her writing to national and international recognition. Her narrative voice became one intimately identified with the violence of the Sri Lankan post-independence nation state and the multiple ways in which it excluded people. Speaking from a doubly or triply marginalized space, Jean's poetry became iconic signifiers of the cultural politics of nationalism. The poem I quote at the beginning of this tribute captures the multiple contradictions and potentials of her identity. In the restless energy of the Kindura – half bird, half human – Jean sees herself – constrained and inhibited by the cultural and political forces of mainstream society but full of the promise and potential of a hybrid being. Post-1983 this becomes an abiding and dominant theme in Jean's poetry and prose. In a richly suggestive and lyrical language she begins an intense and passionate exploration of her divided identity which in turn

produced a rich, varied and challenging body of literature that constantly reminds us that Sri Lanka is a place of many peoples, many cultures and many belongings.[...]

Jean's demise leaves a vacuum in Sri Lankan writing in English. She was one of the pioneers of Sri Lankan writing in English who took our writing to the world and helped place Sri Lankan writing in English on the global literary map. The singularity of her personality and poetic vision will remain unmatched. Her passing also marks the passing of a generation that experienced 1983 as a defining moment in the postcolonial history of this country and a generation that was mature enough to craft an enduring literary-cultural legacy out of this trauma. But knowing Jean Aunty, it is not with solemnity and somber reflection she would want to be remembered – rather it would be with the exuberance of her Kindura-like hybrid life.

Author -Prof. Harshana Rambukwella

Open University of Sri Lanka
(Re-print from *The Colombo Telegraph*)

Note: This eloquent tribute to a unique woman, novelist and poet is best read in its entirety at the following link:

<https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/jean-aranayagam-a-life-lived-in-exuberance-a-personal-professional-tribute/>

International Conference by Katherine Mansfield Society

"Katherine Mansfield:
Germany and Beyond"
Bad Wörishofen, Germany
15–16 April 2021

Abstracts of 200 words, together with a 50-word bio-sketch, should be sent to the conference organisers:

Dr Delia da Sousa Correa (Open University, UK), Dr Gerri Kimber (University of Northampton, UK), Monika Sobotta (Open University, UK) and Professor Janet Wilson (University of Northampton, UK) at kms@katherinemansfieldsociety.org

Submission deadline:

28 February 2021

Update: CISLE Conferences

The biennial CISLE Conference which had been scheduled for July 2020 had to be transferred twice. Several members of ASAA are regular attendees at this extremely popular biennial conference; it has been much missed this year. See plans for the future below.

From Prof. Wolfgang Zach (University of Innsbruck, Austria) and Prof. Lily Tope (University of the Philippines) wolfgang.zach@uibk.ac.at; lrtope@yahoo.com.

(1) Re 2020 Cancellations, Transferences etc:

It is deeply ironic that we tried to save our biennial conference from a catastrophic volcanic eruption

threatening our venue Manila by transferring it to Innsbruck, the hub of CISLE, in February, shortly before the outbreak of the corona virus in China.[...] Lily Rose Tope and I as convenors are [were] in favour of postponing our conference to Innsbruck in July 2021 rather than cancelling it altogether as we have[had] received so many excellent abstracts of most interesting papers[...]

(2) CISLE Conferences Galway 2022 and Rome 2024

Our Executive Committee and Advisory Board have agreed to the proposal by the Director of CISLE to accept offers of holding our next biennial conferences at Galway in July 2022 and in Rome in July 2024.

(3) Publication of CISLE Ljubljana Conference Volume

Good news : Our Ljubljana Conference Volume on "Transcending Boundaries: Migrations, Dislocations, and Literary Transformations" with thirty-four fine papers by scholars and writers from around the world has just gone to print and will be out very soon in our book series SECL 26 published by Stauffenburg Publ.: Tuebingen, Germany.

ASAA TEAM

Meira Chand—Patron

Stephen Alomes—President, ASAA (Australia) Adjunct Professor at RMIT University, Melbourne. He is possibly one of the longest-standing members of the Association and has made a distinctive contribution to all our conferences and publications over many years, with a particular interest in the national and the colonial in a globalising world.

(See several annotations regarding Stephen Alomes in this Newsletter)

Email: stephen.alomes@rmit.edu.au

Kieran Dolin—Vice-President, ASAA (Australia) is Associate Professor of English at the University of Western Australia and Head of Postgraduate Studies. He was a representative for WA with ASAA and has visited Hyderabad before for an ASAA Conference. His work to assist the ASAA group attend the Hyderabad Literary Festival 2020 was phenomenal. Besides presentations at the Festival he also met with officials of Osmania University to initiate official discussions on the possibility of establishing a formal Link with the University of Western Australia. (See the numerous annotations in this Newsletter) Email: kieran.dolin@uwa.edu.au

Kavita Ivy Nandan—Secretary, ASAA (Australia) is editor co-editor several work from 1998- 2007. Her first novel *Home after Dark* was published in 2015.. She completed her PhD in Literature at the Australian National University and has lectured in Creative Writing and Literature at the University of Canberra, the University of the South Pacific, Charles Darwin University and the Australian National University. Kavita was born in New Delhi, grew up in Suva and moved to Canberra in 1987. While still a postgraduate Kavita attended the historic first ASAA conference in Kerala in 1997. Email: nandan.kavita@gmail.com

Parimala Kulkarni—President, ASAA (Asia) teaches in the Department of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad. Her area of specialization is Women's Writing. Her research interests include Indian Literature, Gender Studies, and English Language Pedagogy. She has co-edited a book, *Contemporary British Literature - Post 1990s: A Critical Study*. She is a recipient of a UGC Research Award 2014-2016. She was previously Secretary (Asia) and has had crucial responsibilities for the production of the ASAA Newsletter. Email: paripavan@gmail.com

[Sincere thanks to Dr. Vijay Kumar Tadakamalla who served in this position with distinction despite his manifold duties as Professor of English at Osmania University and many responsibilities serving the larger Hyderabad community in the field of literature, media and the arts.]

K.T. Sunitha—Vice-President, ASAA (Asia) was formerly Professor of English at the University of Mysore. She organised the ASAA Conference in Mysore in July 2010, bringing together several institutions, besides the University of Mysore: Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah's Dhvanyaloka as well as Professor Anniah Gowda's International Centre for Commonwealth and American Literature and Language Studies. She has presented research papers on Indian writers at Australian university conferences and taught Australian literature and presented research papers in the field at Indian and other international conferences. Email: kt_sunitha@yahoo.co.in

Secretary, ASAA (Asia)- TBA

Ishmeet Kaur—Editor, ASAA Website is an Assistant Professor in the School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies at the Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar. She teaches courses in English literature, language and communication studies and has worked on translations of texts from Punjabi into English and vice versa. Her specialist interests in research lie in Australian Literature, Post-colonial Studies and Sikh Studies. She has worked on Indigenous writing from Australia and India. Her doctoral thesis was a comparative study of Patrick White's novels and *Guru Granth Sahib*. She has recently published (2014) a

work entitled, *Patrick White: Critical Issues*. She was selected as an “Inspired Teacher” for the President of India’s In-Residence Programme at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. Email: ishmeetsaini@gmail.com

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Greg Battye is Adjunct Professor in Design and Creative Practice at the University of Canberra. His research includes photography, narrative theory and new writing technologies and new media forms. Greg’s works are held by the National Gallery of Australia, the National Library of Australia and other national institutions. Greg was vice-president of ASAA for several years from 2007. Email: Greg.Battye@canberra.edu.au

Tony Simoes da Silva was Professor and Associate Dean of International Programmes with responsibility for South Asia till he recently took up the position of Head of the School of Humanities at the University of Tasmania. Tony co-edits the *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature (JASAL)* and *La Questioners Meridionale/The Southern Question*. He attended the ASAA conference at Osmania University and is well-known to many of our Asian colleagues. Email: Tony.SimoesdaSilva@utas.edu.au (Note: TBC).

Glen Phillips is a well-known poet and is Director of the Landscape and Language Centre at Edith Cowan University adjunct ECU professor. He serves on several literary boards and Foundations and is represented in more than 20 anthologies and is author or editor of 20 books. Glen has been a long-time supporter of ASAA initiatives, since its inception in 1995. Email: glenlyp@bigpond.com

Anjali Gera Roy is Professor in the Department of Humanities of Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. She has published essays in literature, film and cultural studies on India as well as on African culture. She is now researching the transnational flows of Bollywood cinema and has recently co-edited several volumes in this field. She was President of ASAA (Asia) for several years and has remained an active member of ASAA for many years. Email: agera_99@yahoo.com

Satendra Nandan is Emeritus Professor at the University of Canberra. He is also widely known for his creative work as and as a poet. In March 2012 he was awarded the prestigious Harold White Fellowship at the National Library to write his autobiography. He has lately been appointed a member of the Fiji Constitutional Commission (July 2, 2012). He helped found ASAA at the historic meeting at the ACLALS conference in Colombo in 1995 and has served as vice-president for many years. E-mail: satendra.nandan@gmail.com

Cynthia vanden Driesen is a Research Fellow with the School of Humanities, University of Western Australia. Her research and publications are mainly in the area of Australian writing and other New Literatures in English. With help from Satendra Nandan she set up ASAA at an international meeting of Asian and Australian academics in Colombo (noted above). She has served continuously as President since the inception of the Association and is currently the Chair of the Advisory Council. E-mail: cynthia.v@westnet.com.au

Additional Committee Members in the Region

India

Dr. N. Bindu (Madras) Dr.Suneetha Rani (Hyderabad), Dr.Keya Majumdar (Jamshedpur); Prof. Indibar Mukherjee (Patna); Prof. Mani Meitel (Manipur); Dr. Jagdish Batra (MDU); Dr. V. Sangeetha (Tamil Nadu), Arindam Das (Kolkata); Dr. Julie Mehta (Kolkata); Dr Suman Bala (Delhi); Prof. R.K. Dhawan (Delhi); A/Prof. Pavan B P (Mysore); Dr. Neeta Sashidharan (Kerala); Prof. Ravishankar Rao (Mangalore)

Australia

Dr. Lynnette Lounsbury, Avondale College; Prof. Bill Ashcroft, UNSW; Ms. Julia Gross, ECU; Dr. Abu Siddique, UWA; Dr. Keith Truscott, Curtin University ; Prof. Glen Phillips, ECU; Dr. Ameer Ali, Murdoch University; A/Prof. Abu Siddique, Dr. Michael Gillan, A/Prof. Kieran Dolin, University of Western Australia; Prof. Stephen Alomes, RMIT; Prof. Satendra Nandan, University of Canberra.

New Zealand

Professor Mark Williams, Victoria University of Canterbury.

Singapore

Professor Kirpal Singh, Singapore Management University.

Sri Lanka

Professor Frances Bulathsinghala, Open University of Sri Lanka. Writer, Journalist, Academic. Jean Arasanayagam's successor tba.

Malaysia

A/Professor Carol Leon, University of Malaysia.

S. Korea

Professor Kim Hyung Shik, Chung-Ang University.

China

Professor Lu Le, Australian Studies Center, University of Shanghai for Science and Technology.

Professor Liang Zhong, Mudangiang, Australian Studies Center

Japan

Professor Yasue Amritsu, Doshisa University, Kyoto.

Philippines

Professor Marjorie Evanescio-Pernia, De La Salle University.

Bangladesh

Dr.MashrurHosain, Jhanaginagar University

West Africa

Professor Karen King-Aribisala, University of Lagos

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Dr. Aparna Halpe, University of Toronto

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Dr. Bridget Grogan, University of Johannesburg

Application for Membership of ASAA

Name (in capital letters) Prof./Dr./Mr./Ms. _____

Institutional Affiliation _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone No _____

E-mail Address _____

Special interest in Australian/NZ Studies Publications/Research/Teaching

Signature

Date:

(Please address applications to the presidents or committee members of either the Asian or Australasian branches of the association, depending on where you are located. Email addresses provided above)
