

Chimo



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Chimo (Chee'mo) greetings [inuit]

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CACLALS Annual Membership Fee: Regular \$50.00, Part-time Sessional and Post Docs \$20.00, Student or Unwaged \$20.00. Please address membership correspondence to Maria Caridad Casas, Department of English, University of Toronto, 170 St. George Street, Rm 923, Toronto, Canada, M5R 2M8, or by email at maria.casas@utoronto.ca

On the cover: *Three Birds*, 2003, ink on paper. Damon Badger-Heit graduated from the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College at the University of Regina in 2003 with a B.A. in English and Indian Art. Since then he has developed as a practising artist with works displayed at Saskatchewan galleries, including the 5th Parallel, Otherside, Exchange, and Wanuskêwin. Damon is also a freelance writer with contracts from a number of organizations, including the First Nations University of Canada, the Regina Leader Post, and the OSAC. In 2003, the Saskatchewan Arts Board recently awarded Damon an Individual Assistance Grant to develop his play *Broken Bones*. Having recently completed an eighteen-month contract as an art instructor at the MacKenzie Art Gallery of Regina, Damon has accepted a position as Project Manager for Common Weal Community Arts Inc., an arts organization dedicated to achieving social justice by connecting artists and their art with the community. Damon Badger-Heit is a member of the Mistawasis First Nation of Saskatchewan.

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The Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

I hope your year is off to a good start. It was great to see many of you at the 2006 CACLALS conference at York. Many thanks are due to Maria Casas, Sailaja Krishnamurti, and David Lafferty for giving freely of their time to help out with the conference. In addition, I wish to thank Maria and David for generating the minutes and the conference report, respectively.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Armand Ruffo, Chelva Kanaganayakam, and Rinaldo Walcott for their stimulating talks. At the Annual General Meeting (AGM), the membership voted in favour of a motion proposing that we publish *Chimo* online. This saves us printing and mailing costs, which are considerable even at the bulk mailing rate. We will print a few paper copies, mostly for libraries that subscribe to *Chimo*, and offer members the option of acquiring a paper copy for a charge (see Minutes for the details of this discussion and the outcome). At the AGM we also discussed other issues, some raised by members, including the possibility of instituting a prize for the best graduate paper presented at the annual CACLALS conference, and ways of encouraging greater conference participation. John Ball raised the possibility of broadening the Book Review section to include performance reviews as well as reviews of novels, poetry, and films. I encourage you to contact him if you would like to review a cultural text that deals with issues covered in postcolonial studies.

The next CACLALS conference will be held at the University of Saskatoon at the end of May 2007. It will be a three-day conference focusing on indigenous literatures and culture. Thanks to those of you who responded to our query regarding the conference. A major-

ity of respondents were in favour of holding a conference dedicated to the area mentioned above, and I hope that some of you will be able to attend. A committee has been struck and it will decide on the structure of the conference, and the Call for Papers can be found in this volume of *Chimo* and on the CACLALS website.

All future issues of *Chimo* will be posted on the website and announced in an email sent to members who have provided us with an email address. Members who do not have an email address will be sent a letter. Thanks for your cooperation in this matter, and we look forward to publishing more issues in this new online format.

Best,

Sukeshi Kamra

FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

Greetings,

September 1 marks the end of my first year in office and it has been a pleasant year, due in large part to the support of Sukeshi Kamra and to the efforts of last year's President and Secretary-Treasurer in creating a smooth transition. Finances are in reasonable shape thanks to the extra boost of the 2003 Commonwealth Foundation grant disbursed in 2005. See the minutes of the Annual General Meeting in which I report on membership and my activities through the first eight months of the year.

In the remaining four months—the summer hiatus after the May conference—I received applications under the new system for distributing our SSHRC Aid and Attendance Grant. Instead of giving honoraria to all presenters at the conference, we asked for applications from those with no travel funding or only partial funding who needed to make up the difference. I am happy to report that we were able to meet all requests in their full amount, ranging from \$260 to \$820. Four recipients were graduate students, one an independent researcher, and one a member who had travelled from quite a distance. Three of these had no other sources of funding. We distributed almost all of the \$3480 SSHRC grant. Since only those who had full funding from their departments or other professional sources were not eligible for funds under this new system, I conclude with pleasure that the SSHRC grant reached those who needed it most.

The Financial Report presented at the AGM in May, which follows this report, does not include the SSHRC Aid and Attendance grant because the grant was received and disbursed after March 31, 2006.

Please note that my mailing address has changed to: Department of English and Drama, University of Toronto at Mississauga, 3359 Mississauga Road North, North Building, Room 227, Mississauga, Ontario, L5L 1C6. My email address remains the same. Thanks to the Department of English at the St. George campus of the University of Toronto for maintaining my mailbox over the summer so that CACLALS correspondence would reach me safely; and thanks also to the department for receiving and sending CACLALS correspondence through IUTS throughout the year.

I also owe a big thanks to Jennifer Kelly, last year's Secretary-Treasurer, for setting up the membership database on which I depend; for keeping such meticulous financial records that few questions were necessary; and for answering those few with kindness and dispatch.

Lastly, an online membership registration and renewal facility is now available on the CACLALS website. It allows members and those interested in joining the association to do so instantaneously by typing in their information and credit card details. The credit card information is protected by rigorous security and the transaction administered by IATS (Ticketmaster). The link for the renewal form is

<https://media6.magma.ca/www.leverus.com/caclals/>

Best wishes,

Maria Caridad Casas

FINANCIAL REPORT

October 1, 2005 – March 31, 2006

Balance (October 1, 2005) 1203

Income:

Memberships	2485
Commonwealth Foundation Grant	1900
COSSH 2005 income (shared speaker fees)	509
CFHSS grant (Aid for Interdisc. Outreach 2005)	250
Library subscriptions (<i>Chimo</i>)	38

Total Income 5182

Expenditures:

2005 Conference	2274
2005 Conference travel grants	575
Bank fees	114
Artwork for new <i>Chimo</i> cover	100

Total expenditures 3063

Balance (March 31, 2006) \$3322.00

Maria C. Casas
Secretary-Treasurer
CACLALS

**MINUTES OF THE
CACLALS 2006 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MAY 27, 2006**

Present: John Ball, Renate Eigenbrod, Susan Gingell, Jennifer Gustar, Smaro Kamboureli, Brian Johnson, Guy Beauregard, Jo-Ann Episkenew, Shao-Pin Luo, Pam McCallum, Gugu Hlongwane, Summer Pervez, Sailaja Krishnamurti, Maria Casas, Sukeshi Kamra, David Lafferty.

The meeting was called to order at 1:10.

The meeting began with a visit from representatives of the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (Agenda Item 4). They encouraged CACLALS members to get involved in the discussion on open-access journals—there is a document on open access at the Federation website at <http://www.fedcan.ca/> under the Advocacy link. They also mentioned an upcoming Federation report on how to support humanities research better, requested by SSHRC. This was in response to the Federation's point, made during the Transformation exercise carried out by SSHRC, about the imbalance in social sciences and humanities funding. SSHRC is also looking at ways to fund more projects with smaller grants. In the recent Federal budget there was an increase in funding for SSHRC.

The Feminist and Equity Audit Card will be updated, from relatively small changes like removing the phrase "Ivory Tower" (which was meant tongue in cheek but taken all too seriously) to covering more issues. The Federation would like to hear input from all associations regarding women and equity policy issues. They are also looking for a contact person from CACLALS for a re-established national network on women's and equity issues. Finally, the Federation would like suggestions for Breakfast on the Hill speakers, and on how to profile speakers to address women's and equity issues.

The Federation has also launched an initiative for pan-Canadian support for post-secondary education, so that the federal and provincial governments meet to discuss support for post-secondary education funding, such funding not to be earmarked. The Aid to Scholarly Publications Program has received more funds from SSHRC; grants have increased from 7 thousand to 8 thou-

sand per book and the number of authors funded increased from 145 to 180.

Next year's Congress (2007), to be held in Saskatoon at the University of Saskatchewan, has the theme "Bridging Communities." The CACLALS conference dates are May 26-28 inclusive. Congress will be held at UBC in 2008 and at Carleton in 2009.

1. At 2:40, there was a motion to accept the agenda by Smaro Kamboureli, seconded by John Ball. Carried.
2. Moved by Pam McCallum and seconded by Susan Gingell to approve the minutes from the 2005 AGM as circulated in *Chimo* 50 and re-circulated by Sukeshi at the meeting. Carried.
3. There was no business arising from the minutes.
4. (see above)
5. President's Report

Sukeshi began her report by noting that the past year has been occupied with the transition from the last Executive to this one. She thanked the Dean of Arts at Carleton University for funds to publish and post *Chimo* and print the conference program and letterhead. These were one-time funds that were very welcome during this year of adjustment. The next issue of *Chimo*, with the approval of the Executive Committee and the membership, may be online, since *Chimo* is expensive to produce. Sukeshi also thanked David Lafferty for setting up and maintaining the CACLALS website at Carleton University.

Sukeshi would like to devote some of the money freed up by putting *Chimo* online to fund awards for exemplary articles and/or by new scholars. Perhaps two awards of \$100 each (best essay, for example) would help stimulate interest in the kind of work undertaken by members of the Association. She then introduced some of the issues that would be coming up during discussion of new business (9), circulating a copy of a small survey sent out by the Subcommittee on Research Ethics and Scholarly Integrity for the Federation

of the Humanities and Social Sciences and asked for discussion of the scope and perspective of the survey. Finally, she asked for suggestions for speakers for the conference in Saskatoon next year, suggesting as a start Timothy Brennan.

6. Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Maria Casas reported that as of May 27, 2006 there were 220 members of CACLALS, of which 65 were students, postdoctoral fellows or sessionals, 102 were regular members, and 13 were honorary members. These numbers are very similar to last year's. She then referred members to the Financial Report in *Chimo* 51 which covered April 1 - September 3, 2005 and circulated copies of the Financial Report for October 1, 2005-March 31, 2006. She commented that the balance has dropped to about \$3000 following a rough pattern established over the last five years in which Expenditures each year were usually higher than Income. The gradually dropping balance was imperceptible to the Secretary-Treasurers during those terms because of a fairly frequent turnover of incumbents.

She noted that past-President Ranjini Mendis spotted a missing Commonwealth Foundation grant for the year 2003 and subsequently spent much energy corresponding with the ACLALS past-President in India in the fall of 2005, resulting in the payment of that grant.

Maria is in the process of setting up a fully secure, online membership renewal system. She first tried to secure a guarantee from IATS that they would not increase fees over time; when that guarantee was not forthcoming, she proceeded after contacting Susan Gingell, who had raised this possibility at the last AGM. She then spent quite a few emails trying to understand the technological questions of three different representatives of IATS, whom she contacted initially on the recommendation of the Federation. Having got as far as an online VISA facility that she can use to renew memberships herself, she was directed to Leverus, who will set up the online form.

7. Book Review Editor's Report

John Ball commented that it was difficult to get publishers to send books to *Chimo*. Two reviews were published in the last issue and he has assigned two

reviews over the summer for the next *Chimo*. He would appreciate suggestions for books to review, as well as volunteers to review books. The move to *Chimo* online offers opportunities to expand the review section to cover fiction/poetry and also performances.

8. No Graduate Student Report.

9. New Business

i) Possible move to an exclusively online version of *Chimo*:

Discussion: Renate Eigenbrod commented that ACCUTE has done this and wondered how it has gone. David Lafferty said that it had gone well though there was a minority who protested regarding access. Smaro Kamboureli remarked that as people get older it may become a problem for them to read everything online. Smaro suggested sending a paper mailing to members when the new online *Chimo* comes out. John suggested differential membership fees, for example \$55 for a print *Chimo*, \$50 for online. Susan Gingell pointed out that if *Chimo* is online, reviews can be more timely. However, people's reading habits on the web means there could be problems reading long academic articles online. John said that *Chimo* has content that can be read easily on the Net: short, informative pieces.

Susan moved, and Jo-Ann Episkenew seconded the **motion**, to put all new issues of *Chimo* online and that we preserve the possibility of paper copies. Passed unanimously.

John introduced a motion to charge a subscription fee for paper copies of *Chimo*.

Discussion: John wondered if *Chimo* will be restricted on the website? _____ answered no, because people who pay for the paper copy want the material, not the information.

John moved, and Renate seconded the **motion**, to charge a subscription fee for paper copies of *Chimo* of whatever it took to recover the cost for printing and mailing it, to be collected at the time of membership registration or renewal. Motion passed unanimously.

ii) Possible change to constitution adding cultural studies to CACLALS mandate:

Susan spoke on the issue of changing the constitution, adding cultural studies to our mandate. This requires a constitutional change, so she was raising the issue at this meeting (and gathering suggestions) in order to have it ready to pass at the next AGM. Signatures from ten current members are required to make constitutional change

Discussion: There was an objection that cultural studies is already addressed by the mandate of CACLALS. Smaro objected also, saying the change ignores more complex issues. Sukeshi suggested carrying out a discussion on our email list. The discussion would address questions such as, does the existing definition describe what we do? It would also flag financial repercussions—for example, the word Commonwealth must remain a part of the name of the Association if we want to continue receiving grants from the Commonwealth Foundation. Jo-Ann suggested a change to the name that reflects our focus on Aboriginal literature.

iii) Creation of a policy on research ethics (see President's Report above):

Discussion: Renate said such a policy was germane to Aboriginal literatures. Smaro talked of the ramifications, saying the move was Social Sciences-based and potentially problematic. Susan wanted to know who the ethics guidelines were for? Jo-Ann spoke about ownership/control/access/possession for a play, and stated that the medical ethics model was not appropriate. She suggested we should report this back to the Subcommittee on Research Ethics. Sukeshi said she would take this back to the meeting. Renate said community-based oral narratives do need thinking on ethics. Sukeshi suggested that those working on Aboriginal literature should get together via email and work out what we need.

iv) CACLALS 2007 at Congress (calls for papers, plenary speakers, etc.):

Sukeshi asked for email suggestions for the call for papers and suggestions for plenary speakers. Susan suggested Louise Halfe, Maria Campbell, Guy Vanderhaeghe, Ian Martel, Len Findlay, Neil McLeod. Timothy Brennan was

also mentioned. Jo-Ann will organize the Aboriginal Roundtable and is thinking of asking Neil McLeod. Renate suggested a performance. Sukeshi pointed out that three plenaries means one per day, with a corresponding decrease in time for paper sessions—should we move to parallel sessions? Jennifer Gustar said she loves the non-parallel sessions; John suggested we stay with non-parallel sessions.

10. There was a motion to adjourn from Jennifer, seconded by Pam McCallum. Carried.

Prepared with help from the files of David Lafferty. Any discrepancies between his notes and mine were resolved in favour of my notes, so all responsibility for errors rests with me. MCC

CONFERENCE REPORT

The 2006 CACLALS conference offered a variety of interesting approaches to the congress theme.

The two plenary sessions were particularly well-attended and spurred much discussion. Rinaldo Walcott delivered a stimulating talk entitled “Metropolitan Spaces and Postcolonial Crimes,” in which he examined the implications of the idea of “Creoleness” in relation to the paranoid discourses of the post-9/11 era, incorporating an analysis of Dionne Brand’s *What We All Long For*. Arguing that the fusion of cultures in the North American metropolis is producing a new sort of “creole” person that social science should recognize, Walcott looked at Brand’s representations of Toronto life as prefiguring a new postcolonialism. Chelva Kanaganayakam, in his talk, looked at the problems he argues are affecting postcolonial studies as a discipline, such as the notion of the inseparability of literature and politics and the implications of a dismissal of literary aesthetics.

The papers in the first session, “Historicizing Our Present,” addressed diverse topics. For example, Geordan Patterson examined the relationship between magazines and the formation of city life and nationalist sentiment in early nineteenth-century Canada, while Kofi Campbell’s paper dealt with the ways in which Africa and Africans are constructed and represented in Middle English literature, arguing that such texts as *The Travels of John Mandeville* prefigure a later, explicitly colonialist ideology. Charmaine Cadeau and Katrine Raymond utilized Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction between “smooth” and “striated” spaces to theorize space in Daphne Marlatt’s *Ana Historic* and Margaret Atwood’s poetry, respectively.

In the next session, “Inner-City Spaces,” Antje Rauwerda looked at Chris Abani’s *GraceLand*, focusing on the protagonist’s conflict with the underground economies that hold together the city of Lagos and his resulting sense of displacement. Gugu Hlongwane

pointed to the absence of Nelson Mandela's ideal of a "rainbow nation" in Phaswane Mpe's representation of the South African city of Hillbrow. Finally, using the idea of the *bildungsroman* as a frame of reference, Emma Hunt examined Peter Abrahams' *Tell Freedom* and Es'kia Mphahlele's *Down Second Avenue*, focusing on the attempts of the protagonists to gain an understanding of the segregated city.

Representations of the postcolonial city were the subject of a number of papers, and of one session in particular. The first paper of the "Figurative Postcolonialisms" panel, by Stephen Ney, dealt with two works by Wole Soyinka, focusing on Soyinka's attitudes towards the city of Lagos. Geographical and spatial metaphors of the self figured largely in Purna Chowdhury's paper on the work of Sara Suleri, and Yaw Asante looked at the discontinuity between the postcolonial vision and the poverty of the street children of Accra, Ghana, as portrayed in Amma Darko's *Faceless*.

Another session focused on the issue of displacement. In her analysis of Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*, Marjorie Stone discerned the ways in which culture and identity can be said to be rooted in the city. Brian Johnson's paper dealt with abject spaces and the economy of abjection within the corporeal city in John Marlyn's *Under the Ribs of Death*. Shauna Singh Baldwin's fictionalization of the life of British secret agent Noor Inayat Khan was the subject of Alex Pett's paper, which focused on the ways in which Khan prefigures a number of postcolonial attitudes, as both a literary and an historical figure.

In the session entitled "Outport Cities," Jennifer Delisle examined the universal/local dichotomy in the literature of Newfoundland and its connection to discourses of authenticity, while Anna Guttman exposed the limitations of the secular, urban community described in Rupa Bajwa's *The Sari Shop*, arguing that Ramchand, the main character, seeks a nationalism that would transcend Nehruvian ideals.

Another session specifically addressed utopian representations of the city. In his paper, Prasad Bidaye looked at the idea of the “eternal city” in the writings of Ananda Coomaraswamy and Homi Bhabha. D.M.R. Bentley examined Archibald Lampman’s utopian and dystopian visions of the ideal modern city. Sukeshi Kamra located the city, as both symbol and environment, in the literature of the Indian Freedom Movement, linking it to notions of the revolutionary potential of everyday urban life.

The session entitled “Envisioning the Environment” provided insights into a burgeoning area of literary studies. Don Randall argued that J.M. Coetzee’s “new ecology,” implicit in his novels *Disgrace* and *Elizabeth Costello*, takes into account the rights of animals and is founded upon the idea of sentience rather than reason. Ian MacRae examined John Livingstone’s *Rogue Primate* as “imaginative historiography,” focusing on Livingstone’s representations of the natural environment and environmentalism.

In the city-specific session on London, Pamela McCallum examined issues of class in relation to the city in Zadie Smith’s “Stuart,” Terri Tomskey looked at the city as a site of trauma in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*, and Jennifer Gustar, in her discussion of Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*, focused on the conflict between purity and hybridity within the context of genetic engineering.

Lastly, in a session entitled “Everyday Spatial Practice,” Renate Eigenbrod discussed the work of two recently deceased members of the Aboriginal Writers Collective, Marvin Francis and Doug Nepinak, arguing that their works participate in the creation of an urban aboriginal voice. Douglas Ivison looked at the relationship between noise and the urban environment in Bernard Cohen’s *Snowdome* and Russell Smith’s *Noise*. Summer Pervez argued that the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze is compatible with both feminism and postcolonialism, demonstrating this in relation to the works of Meera Syal and Monica Ali.

I regret not being able to attend Armand Ruffo’s reading on

Norval Morrisseau and missing papers by Maria Casas, Emily Johansen, Sidney Eve Matrix, Andrea Medovarski, and Somaya Sabry.

David Lafferty

CACLALS AT COSSH 2006



Outside the conference room.



Session in progress.



Renate Eigenbrod, Jo-Ann Episkenew, and Armand Ruffo



Armand Ruffo, shortly before his reading on Norval Morrisseau.

CALLS FOR PAPERS

Call for Talks:

Aboriginal Storytelling, Poetry, and Performance Art Bridging Communities

The Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (CACLALS) Annual Conference

May 26-29, 2007 [NOTE: date is tentative]

University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

Deadline: January 15, 2007

As Métis poet Marilyn Dumont adeptly diagnoses, audience and publisher expectations have historically governed the Aboriginal literature industry in a prescriptive manner (in Canada and elsewhere). “If you are old,” she writes, “you are supposed to write legends, that is, stories that were passed down to you from your elders. If you are young, you are expected to relate stories about foster homes, street life and loss of culture, and if you are in the middle, you are supposed to write about alcoholism or residential school. And somehow throughout this, you are to infuse everything you write with symbols of the native world view, that is: the circle, mother earth, the number four or the trickster figure.” Despite such restrictions, Aboriginal storytellers consistently transcend the industry’s expectations by producing radically original works that explode unchecked stereotypes about what constitutes “Aboriginal literature.” (Eden Robinson’s multiple-voiced, mixed-genre novel *Blood Sports*, about a sadistic relationship between non-Native cousins in Vancouver’s Downtown East Side, and Daniel Heath Justice’s spectacular fantasy novel *Kynship: The Way of Thorn and Thunder*, offer two examples among many.) Orature, poetry, and performance art trouble such stereotypes even further.

Radical developments in Aboriginal storytelling, however, have not, as of yet, met with similarly profound developments in the criticism relating to it, which still tends toward the decoding of “resistance,” “decolonization,” and “cultural revitalization” in Aboriginal texts and does so in typically essayist modes. Yet reductions of contemporary Aboriginal storytelling, poetry, and performance art to straight-forward political statements and reactions to colo-

nial impositions belie the complexity of Aboriginal spontaneity, creativity, inspiration, and talent; furthermore, modes of discourse generated in other cultural contexts may not be the only or even the best way in which to approach Aboriginal texts or orature.

This conference seeks to investigate new developments in Aboriginal literatures and oratures and the new and dynamic relationships being forged between contemporary Aboriginal writers and communities, as well as to encourage new ways in which to talk and write about Aboriginal verbal art. It will attempt to foster dialogue on the increasingly complicated place of community within that art and its place within Aboriginal communities. Building on the 2007 Congress theme of “Bridging Communities: Making Public Knowledge – Making Knowledge Public,” this conference will examine the various ways in which Aboriginal storytelling, poetry, and performance art function as bridges between and among communities (Aboriginal and otherwise). Talks are invited to engage with any aspect of these issues and can deal specifically with any of the following questions:

- How is community depicted, configured, and ultimately created in (and by) Aboriginal verbal art, and by responses to it?
- How can engagements with “artistry” and “creativity” lead back to discussions of community?
- How do Aboriginal writers engage creatively with their own cultures and communities while setting their works in distant locations and dealing with disparate cultures and characters?
- How do Aboriginal storytellers, poets, and performance artists demonstrate responsibility to their local communities while not restricting themselves to local community materials in their work?
- How are political issues relevant to community development being addressed in unique ways by Aboriginal artists?
- How do Aboriginal storytelling, poetry, and performance art participate in the healing of communities?
- How do critics account for the multiplicity of communities being engaged with in Aboriginal verbal art?
- How does the teaching of Aboriginal literatures and oratures (both within and outside of Aboriginal communities) impact Aboriginal communities?
- How does Aboriginal publishing (and/or mainstream publishing) function in

forging, supporting, or even undermining the relationships between Aboriginal authors and communities?

- How might comparative studies of Aboriginal storytelling, poetry, and performance art in Canada among other Indigenous peoples be a useful bridging of communities of interest?
- How might textualized oratures bridge the oral and the literary?
- What potential do film and audio-recordings of Aboriginal stories or oral events have for bridging communities?

Abstracts of approximately 300 words for talks of 20 minutes duration which engage with these and other relevant questions and issues should be emailed, with a short biographical note of approximately 50 words and a contact address, to **Sukeshi Kamra at sukeshi_kamra@carleton.ca AND Maria Casas at maria.casas@utoronto.ca no later than January 15, 2007. Please indicate “CACLALS Conference Abstract” in the email subject heading. *Submissions by graduate students in the field of Aboriginal storytelling and poetry are particularly encouraged, as is their participation in roundtables or panels. Works in progress are also welcome.***

- Those wishing to participate in a roundtable discussion on the holistic function of Aboriginal literature in improving community health should email a brief (approximately 100-word) indication of interest to **Sukeshi Kamra at sukeshi_kamra@carleton.ca AND Jo-Ann Episkenew at jepiskenew@firstnationsuniversity.ca, no later than December 15th, 2007.**
- Those wishing to participate in a roundtable discussion on reader response and innovations in the teaching of Aboriginal texts should email a brief (approximately 100-word) indication of interest to **Sukeshi Kamra at sukeshi_kamra@carleton.ca AND Shelley Stigter at Shelley.stigter@uleth.ca, no later than December 15th, 2007.**
- Those wishing to participate in a roundtable discussion on emerging voices and critical developments in Aboriginal literatures should email a brief (approximately 100-word) indication of interest to **Sukeshi Kamra at sukeshi_kamra@connect.carleton.ca AND Renate Eigenbrod at eigenbro@cc.umanitoba.ca, no later than December 15th, 2007.**

MEMBER NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS

Diana Brydon has moved to the University of Manitoba to take up a CRC in Globalization and Cultural Studies, where she plans to establish a Centre for Globalization and Cultural Studies. The preliminary website can be found at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/centres/gcs/>.



Kofi Campbell has a new book out, entitled *Literature and Culture in the Black Atlantic: From Pre- to Postcolonial*, published by Palgrave Macmillan (2006).



Daniel Coleman (McMaster University) has published *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (UTP, 2006); co-edited, with Michael Bucknor, John Corr, and Elizabeth Jackson *Routing and Routing Caribbean-Canadian Writing*, a special issue of *The Journal of West Indian Literature* 14.1&2 (November 2005); and co-edited, with Jennifer Blair, Kate Higginson, and Lorraine York *ReCalling Early Canada: Reading the Political in Literary and Cultural Production* (U of Alberta P, 2005).



Uma Parameswaran's *Riding High with Krishna and a Baseball Bat & Other Stories* has been published by iUniverse. Her novel, *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*, has been republished. Both titles are available through Amazon.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

KUNAPIPI: journal of postcolonial writing is calling for contributions for their 2007 (XXIX:1) Special Issue on Birds. More information can be found at www.kunapipi.com. **Deadline for submissions is October 1, 2006.**

BOOK REVIEWS

Editor: John Ball

MEDIATING AUTO/BIOGRAPHY STUDIES

Julie Rak, ed. *Auto/biography in Canada: Critical Directions*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005. 250 pages. \$32.95

Marlene Kadar, Linda Warley, Jeanne Perrault, and Susanna Egan, eds. *Tracing the Autobiographical*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005. 240 pages. \$32.95

Review by Sarah Brophy, McMaster University

Since the mid-1990s, with the work of critics such as Susanna Egan, Leigh Gilmore, Sidonie Smith, and Shirley Neuman, the field of auto/biography studies has moved decidedly away from thinking about autobiography and biography as fixed genres to re-conceptualize auto/biographical practices and critical reading practices alike as discursive negotiations. This shift has opened up a host of theoretical, political, methodological, and practical questions for critics of auto/biography, questions that remain unresolved: what sorts of documents count as auto/biographical? What are the political imperatives and ethical responsibilities of auto/biography theory and criticism? What kinds of research methods, interdisciplinary conversations, and reading practices need to be developed and deployed? These two new collections of essays published by Wilfrid Laurier University Press and featuring the work of scholars in Canada, much of it on auto/biographical production in and about Canada, seek to represent and develop the new auto/biography studies. Encompassing work by established and newer critics, and crossing disciplinary boundaries with due circumspection, each volume constitutes a valuable effort to rethink the relationship between theory, criticism, and contemporary auto/biographical production.

Both introductions state the aim of making criticism more attentive to emerging forms of auto/biography. They tie this in part to an empirical observation that auto/biographical impulses now find expression in an increasingly wide variety of media (personal home pages, reality television, etc.). But, equally important, both volumes work with a significantly altered concept of what sorts of materials can be read as auto/biographical; this becomes par-

ticularly interesting in essays that deal with what Kadar and Perrault refer to as “unlikely documents” (2) — reading archives, for example, in the place of auto/biographical texts per se, or engaging with the life narratives produced by social science researchers attempting to record and interpret the life stories and consciousnesses of persons who have been diagnosed with cognitive or psychological impairments. Both introductions emphasize, moreover, that expanding the field of auto/biography studies beyond single-authored print texts to engage texts that do not conform to auto/biographical conventions demands increased ethical engagement and self-awareness. As they contend with texts that cast up resistances, the contributors to these volumes knowingly enter tricky terrain, fraught with paradoxes, terrain that necessitates reflection on their own representational activities.

Particularly when the two collections are read together, the essays represent new directions very well. Two essays on Holocaust texts (by Adrienne Kertzer and by Susanna Egan and Gabriele Helms) seek to map the differences between first- and second-generation Holocaust texts, productively taking up Marianne Hirsch’s concept of second-generation “postmemory” to foreground the distinctive dilemmas of cultural production for those who are not direct survivors but indirect witnesses of others’ memories. A third related essay, by Marlene Kadar, considers how to remember the losses suffered by the European Roma during the 1930s and 40s in light of the fact that this group does not have a tradition of recording cultural and individual narratives in written form; Kadar inquires into whether Roma women and girls can perhaps be remembered through the traces left in documents such as photographs and camp records. Because they refuse too-easy recourse to the stabilizing consolations of aesthetic and moral hierarchies, these essays successfully bring disparate forms of Holocaust memory into a comparative and critical focus. Several other essays in these collections similarly edge into the domain of history writing, not simply to return life writing documents to the “discipline” of history, but to tangle with historiographical questions as consequential questions of personal and collective memory. Jeanne Perrault refers, for example, to documents penned by and about Muriel Rukeyser during the Second World War, arguing that “As a functionary in the Office of War Information, Rukeyser asserted her poet’s imagination and sensibility, irritated her superiors, and initiated propaganda that affirmed an egalitarian and democratic America” (144). This reading of Rukeyser’s papers renders a more complex understanding of the social work performed by propaganda, of its ideological provenance, and of the motivations of those who craft it.

There are, in addition, three very strong pieces that read Native auto/biographical production in Canada (by Albert Braz, Deena Rymhs, and Cheryl Suzack) and one equally convincing piece on the significance of bodily pain in Australian Aboriginal stolen generations narratives (by Christine Crowe). While Braz looks closely at the ambiguities of Grey Owl's self-inventions in performance and in print, the other three essayists consider problems of how to write beyond trauma and how to challenge the shaping powers of colonial and legal discourses, linking these material and discursive problems, in turn, to debates about authorship. All by relatively new scholars, these essays cautiously take apart the usual definitions of authenticity and appropriation of voice, and attempt to trace the complex flows of authority amongst agents in scenarios of oral testimony and textual production. Of Rudy Wiebe and Yvonne Johnson's collaboration on *Stolen Life*, Rymhs argues, for example, that when critics dismiss this text as one that evinces nothing but domination (particularly, a white man's authority over a native woman's painful story), they downplay both Johnson's considerable authority over the text and Wiebe's self-reflexivity about his role. In so doing, critics problematically rehearse "universal humanist judgements – with their assumptions of individual agency" and forget about the driving political need to find some way to tell the story and ensure that it is heard (105).

The appearance of several essays on aging and dis/ability in *Auto/biography in Canada* (by Sally Chivers, by Anne Fudge Schormans, and by Lilijana Vuletic and Michel Ferrari) is also highly significant. Julie Rak evidently set herself the task of connecting with scholars in the social sciences who are using narrative research methods, and the result is the publication here of essays that have resounding implications for how we, in several intersecting fields, think about what constitutes a good life and what counts as competent communication to others about our lives. To take what I thought was the strongest of these essays as an example, Vuletic and Ferrari's "A Transfer Boy: About Himself" challenges "the Theory of Mind deficit hypothesis of autism" by taking seriously how "special interests form the centre of personal gravity of people diagnosed with autism" (138-39). Their case-study subject, thirteen-year-old T, emphasizes in both interviews and written accounts his fascination with public transportation systems and his desire to "have fun with sounds" (138). Shifting research's "centre of gravity" accordingly, Vuletic and Ferrari argue that "autobiographical accounts and case studies of people diagnosed with autism clearly show that these people *are* capable of sophisticated self-knowledge" and that narrative methods have a

vital role to play in exploring the meanings of illness beyond the interpretations supplied by experimental psychology and its assumptions of deficiency (138-39; original emphasis).

All of these analyses demonstrate the shaping influence of cultural studies considered in the broadest sense, but the essays on media in *Tracing* (by Helen Buss, Linda Warley, and Gabriele Helms) and on mundane practices in *Auto/biography in Canada* (by Laurie McNeill) are particularly important efforts to think about auto/biographical production in ways that go beyond “literary methods and literary theories” (Warley 28). In this cluster of essays, Linda Warley’s exploration of digital life stands out as a particularly rigorous and insightful contribution. Grounding her discussion in a thorough engagement with scholarship in media studies, Warley convincingly highlights the formal differences and ideological continuities between traditional auto/biography and digital life writing: characterized formally by its “interactive” and “multimodal” dimensions, digital life writing is far from necessarily radical, but seeks rather more often to show individuals’ successful approximation of middle-class, professional, and gendered norms. Warley further anchors this argument in a detailed, convincing analysis of one academic’s self-representation on his personal home page in light of her own ambivalence about creating such a page for herself and general observations based on close reading of numerous other examples.

While both collections are characterized by a diversification of topics and methods, it is also worth noting that neither volume deals with all of the avenues the editors identify as important. Some of the gaps are surprising and frustrating. To echo and amplify Kadar and Perrault’s question (see 5), where is queer autobiographical production in these volumes? Only one essay, Andrew Lesk’s “Camp, Kitsch, and Queer: Carole Pope and Toller Cranston Perform on the Page” in *Auto/biography in Canada*, deals in a sustained way with queer texts and queer reading practices. According to Lesk, recent memoirs by Rough Trade singer Carole Pope and figure skater Toller Cranston illustrate that “autobiographies – especially queer ones – are invariably truncated affairs with varying degrees of dissimulation”; moreover, they mediate the world of fame with sharply contrasting levels of knowingness (Pope is far more sceptical about her text than Cranston is about his) — a key criterion distinguishing camp (175-76). This kind of analysis warrants a more prominent place in auto/biography studies, as it bears not only on sexuality but on postmodern identity construction more generally. Curiously, Lesk’s essay is also one of remarkably few essays in these books addressing celebrity and

what Rak calls “mass marketed” auto/biographical texts (24). Just as significantly, neither volume offers in-depth theorizing of the relationship between diasporic identities and auto/biography. As in the writings of Dionne Brand, to mention just one of many possible examples, much contemporary writing about geographical and cultural displacement is deeply auto/biographical in its motivations and tactics. Disposed to stirring up memories, rewriting myth, and flirting with fiction, memoirs constitute a hybrid textual space in which writers attempt to fashion new claims of belonging and to register longings that cannot be resolved or relocated. Some essays in these volumes touch on ideas of home and exile and cultural/textual hybridity in their readings (see Susanna Egan on Daphne Marlatt, Kathy Mezei on domestic space in Mary Gordon and Dionne Brand, and Yuko Yamade on Régine Robin), but I am left with the impression that more substantial links can and should be made between auto/biography studies and diaspora studies in the Canadian context.

The self-conscious identification of significant absences by the editors of each collection (and the existence of other unacknowledged ones) suggests that there is a lag in what critics deem important and would like to see become the subject of more intensive investigation, on the one hand, and what scholars are equipped and inclined to produce, on the other. But is this lag simply a function of happenstance and the slow time of academic trends, or is it shaped by detectable critical investments? Looking at the two introductions more closely and considering that each encompasses some of what the other collection did or could not, it does seem that the two projects have quite different conceptual bases that shape how they constitute, represent, and develop the field.

It is to Rak’s introduction (“Widening the Field: Auto/biography Theory and Criticism in Canada”) that one can look for a systematic mapping of auto/biography studies as a scholarly field (historical and current) and for an explicit engagement with the overlap between autobiography studies and cultural studies as political *projects*. A model of clarity and comprehensiveness, this introduction will be a valuable starting point for advanced undergraduate and beginning graduate students, and an important sounding-board for the next wave of scholarship on auto/biography in Canada. By tactically limiting its field of intervention to Canadian cultural production, Rak’s collection sets out specifically to question the positioning of auto/biographical production in Canada “as a type of documentary evidence for the growth and development of Canadian literature, culture, or history” (12); she is, accordingly, interested

in auto/biographical texts and scholarly approaches that either critically investigate or tellingly sidestep “a Canadian national project” (12). Kadar and Perrault’s relatively short introduction can be read as a more implicit response to, and intervention in, the intellectual terrain mapped by Rak. Due to its eclectic, broad-based approach (while there is significant Canadian content here, it is equally attuned to international feminist, trauma, and media scholarship), *Tracing* is able to include some intriguing and important essays that range across national contexts.

But the differences between the two introductions extend beyond such matters of scope. I noticed the surfacing of a high humanist and aestheticizing rhetoric in Kadar and Perrault’s introduction:

The forces at the heart of this collection are the inexhaustible variety of human identity and experience, and the irrepressible impulse to explore, express, and understand it. All the essays that appear here are driven by the curiosity that breathes life into any intellectual effort; what shapes this volume is each author’s attention to the complexity of the voice that shapes or performs selfhood. (2)

One wants to ask what is meant by complexity here and otherwise is left to assume that some poetic and/or self-reflexive quality is being posited as a source of interest and value. There is a contradiction between such an emphasis on “self”-expression, on the one hand, and an emphasis on (the difficulties of) reading auto/biographical traces, on the other. Kadar and Perrault seem anxious to preserve a creator for auto/biographical texts, and implicitly to preserve for the critic the role of analyst, a function that does not necessarily intend, or effect, a concerted political intervention. In practice, however, “voice,” “selfhood,” and the valorization of “complexity” are rendered exceedingly problematic in a number of these essays, as they work with traces and fragments that cannot always be assembled to posit a singular, coherent voice admirable for its knowing negotiations with the paradigms of selfhood, or as they locate in a significant number of more mundane postmodern texts forms of identity that are “achingly traditional” (Warley 30).

In the “Polemical Conclusion” that ends her introduction, Rak lays out her position:

In the 1990s, auto/biography scholarship was characterized by something that I do not want it to lose. The area had many theorists who discussed auto/biography as a way to work through the impasse between political agency and poststructuralist approaches to subjectivity and language.... In literary studies now, however, auto/biography theory is

all too often treated as if it were “finished,” so that debates about subjectivity and politics are not mentioned in criticism all that often, and auto/biographical texts are treated as something which can simply be close-read. The politics of many auto/biographical works becomes blunted when auto/biography is treated as a genre with definable properties, and not as a dynamic field of production which has much to say about what selfhood is, and how the world works. (23)

I am wary of overstating the differences between the positions adopted in these two introductions, because the discrepancy in length between the two pieces makes comparison perhaps unfair, and because it seems important to note that in the paragraph from which I have been quoting, Rak in fact cites Kadar’s career contributions as exemplifying auto/biography studies’ participation in “the broader political work in women’s studies” (23). Still, these introductions gesture in contrasting directions, suggesting a zone of theoretical contention between different understandings of poststructuralist theory and the politics of criticism. While I strongly agree with Rak’s criticism of the privileging of close reading over or against political engagement, I would also suggest that painstaking attention to textual details and processes of signification remains a powerful critical tool, but only when these reading practices are not positioned as more important in themselves than is the development of new theoretical understandings of the inter-implications of self, community, and world. At their best, the essays in these collections exemplify a dynamic balance between theory, analysis, and intervention, furnishing us not only with provocative new perspectives on postmodern life narratives and on historical memory, but also with models for engaged and rigorous future work in auto/biography studies.

Jill Didur, *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006. 220 pages. \$50.00

Review by Summer Pervez, University of Ottawa

In the wake of some of the most important and pioneering historical research on the subject over the past forty years, Jill Didur's *Unsettling Partition* attempts to carry forward the project set out by recent postmodernist scholars of examining the gendered nature of Partition violence. Jill Didur is concerned in particular with narratives surrounding silent, 'abducted' women (sexually assaulted, abducted, and displaced from their families) and the roles they play in "constructing the memory" of India's partition (11). In previous literary criticism, the 'recovery' of these women's narratives has often been represented as "a way of completing what is an otherwise unproblematic narrative of national history" (158). Alternatively, Didur suggests that the very notion of 'recovery' becomes problematic in such readings, given their tendency to render "language as transparent and experience as unmediated" (158); they treat experience as a record of historical 'reality' rather than as mediated representation. Rather than read them as a kind of 'record' of objective history, as modernist historians have, Didur examines Partition narratives more sensitively as *literary representations* of the period, attending to how the "literariness of language" mediates our perception of the history, memory, and fictional representation of the event itself (10).

Using examples such as Rajinder Singh Bedi's "Lajwanti," Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*, Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, and Jyotirmoyee Devi's *The River Churning*, Didur insists that "the silence at the core of 'abducted' women's narratives should not ... be resolved, accounted for, translated, or recovered, but understood as a refusal to identify with the project of (patriarchal) modernity that has produced it in the first place" (156). By 'documenting' rather than representing the violence that took place, earlier scholars of Partition narratives have attempted to unpack women's silences in order to uncover a history of Partition that is whole and unified. Didur insists that "what have been pushed to the margins of these types of readings are representations of the 'everyday' and local experience that challenge the totalizing logic of bourgeois nationalism and point to a more contingent and polyphonic reading of national identity" (6). Invoking the unsettling potential of counter-narratives by focusing on the undecidability of texts in general, Didur redirects the gaze of the researcher away from

women's bodies and sexuality towards the way in which they "intervene in totalizing discourses that have spoken, and continue to speak, for their experiences" (13). Rather than "recover" gaps and silences in texts about women and violence with the aim of creating an 'ideal' history – a "misguided project" at best (157) – *Unsettling Partition* examines how the agency of such women is elided as they are kept and remain silent under a patriarchy that seeks to create a particularly monolithic and traditional vision of the new nation-state.

Didur's project of unsettling is in direct contradiction to the aims of the Central Recovery Operation, a post-Partition effort to 'recover' abducted women's voices in order to restore their 'honour' as "the bearers of cultural authenticity," thereby creating a "meta-narrative of the history of Indian nationalism" (103, 158). *Unsettling Partition* reveals how certain counter-narratives do not complete this narrative of a monolithic national history but rather aim to 'unsettle' or problematize and pluralize it. Ultimately, Didur's postmodern readings of such narratives, attentive in particular to gaps and silences, question the very possibility of uncovering any monolithic history of Partition. By intervening in totalizing discourses that speak for women's experiences, key narratives by Bedi, Sidhwa, Hosain, and Devi highlight the potential for the emergence of a national imaginary that is "porous, fissured, and fragmented," one in which difference is not erased and experiences that "[do] not conform to the script" are not elided (158).

In her analysis of five key Partition narratives, Didur shows how the silence surrounding abducted women's experiences of violence forces them to "re-narrativize their relationship to the state, community, and their own identities in order to make sense of the inscription that violence has left on their bodies, and through this, re-negotiate their survival" (11). These texts, she argues, are pivotal in opposing "conventional ways of narrativizing the Partition experience" as they are all engaged in a process of "rewriting the nation by challenging the construction of Woman as nation" (14). With this aim in mind, in the first chapter Didur sets up important historical and theoretical context surrounding gender and nationalist discourse in South Asia. She specifically highlights how patriarchal cultural representations of partition offered images of Indian nationalism for consumption, including that of ideal womanhood. This overview of Indian national discourse helps to explain how women's bodies became sites of violence during a time when South Asia's various "ethnic communities sought to establish their dominance over each other" (36). As a result of the pervasive presence of such na-

tionalist discourse, what Homi Bhabha calls “forgetting to remember” (311; qtd. in Didur 39) came to characterize popular perceptions of Indian identity in the aftermath of Partition.

As Didur’s reading of Rajinder Singh Bedi’s “Lajwanti” suggests, abducted women in particular were encouraged to forget the violence inscribed on their bodies and (re)constitute their identities “in the domestic sphere” (66). While the study of silence in literary representations of Partition is not new, in her reading of “Lajwanti” Didur does not simply document the silence in story and foreclose further examination; rather, she implodes the silence, arguing that its presence signals the need to raise questions about how the text might work to shatter the dominant perception of events surrounding Partition, and thereby critique the desire to create a national “monolithic imaginary” (162). Lajwanti understands that her husband Sunder Lal’s acceptance of her is “in exchange for her silence and performance of a new, more disciplined gender identity” (64) that reflects the nation’s desired roles of women as wives and mothers in its discourse of domesticity. Didur reads the narrative’s conclusion as a “critique of the power relations that inflected the sociopolitical process” (the Recovery Operation) by which women came to be seen as a containable threat to the “monolithic patriarchal imaginary” of the “postcolonial modern nation-state” (57, 14).

While Didur praises recent historiographers’ efforts to articulate that the practice of writing history is ‘fragmentary’ rather than omniscient, she is unsatisfied with “their deployment of the ‘literary’ as ‘evidence’ of the ‘everyday’” (17). Rather, she insists in *Unsettling Partition* that the “fictional power of texts can be an important resource for understanding the collusion among state and patriarchal and elite interests in the treatment of ‘abducted’ women” (17). In chapters three and four, Didur nuances her argument by offering Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Cracking India* and Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column* as examples of novels concerned with unsettling the gendered aspect of citizenship, working to “destabilize truth claims about the past, disrupting totalizing accounts of independence and the division of India, and... deterritorializing national discourse” (11). While Lenny’s self-reflexive narration of Ayah’s story in Sidhwa’s novel “points to the gendered aspects of modern national imaginaries in which policing women’s sexuality is tantamount to policing national borders” (18), Didur argues that in *Sunlight* Hosain subverts the popular romance genre (in contrast to more traditional interpretations of the novel as Romance) and satirizes espoused Muslim models of female behaviour based on “patriarchal nationalist assumptions” in

Laila's story (124).

In the final chapter of *Unsettling Partition*, Didur offers Devi's *The River Churning* as another example of how "patriarchal nationalist assumptions" can lead to the fracturing not only of individual identity but also the identities of "family, community, and nation" (124). In representing the Bangladeshi experience of Partition, Devi deliberately refuses to provide a 'conclusive' account of Sutara's abduction, leaving the details of her assault "unverifiable" to both herself and her relatives (126). This fragmented figuration results in the reader's understanding of how in the community's discourse patriarchal categories have been constructed and normalized for women "in the name of the nation" (155). Furthermore, Didur argues that Devi's refusal to 'recover' Sutara's experience can be read as a model for "challenging the absence of women's and Eastern Indian perspectives from the history of partition without inscribing the discursive practices that produced this absence originally" (19).

Rather than filling in a gap or "supplementing existing Historical research," *Unsettling Partition* considers how women's Partition narratives might "destabilize the concept of representation in this scholarship as a whole" (47). Instead of simply offering a series of literary analyses that fit together like a jigsaw puzzle to 'reveal' a larger picture of 'what really happened' (thereby showing *what* happened and to *whom*, while ignoring *how* it is represented and *why*), Didur engages in a more useful practice that "recognizes how language and discourse mediate and fragment all experience and textual analysis of the past" (47-48). Rather than "papering over the cracks in historical memory" (136-37), Didur argues that when viewed in the "different, non-realist, and fragmentary context" of instability, women's partition narratives offer a "uniquely disruptive view of hegemonic histories" that can be understood as a "refusal to identify with the project of (patriarchal) modernity that has produced it in the first place" (162, 156). It is ultimately the clarity of this postmodern position, as well as the depth of literary analysis and the wide scope of historical research it presents, that will make Jill Didur's wide-ranging study distinctive among contemporary Partition criticism.

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Neil ten Kortenaar. *Self, Nation, Text in Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children*.

McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004. 317 pages. \$27.95 (pb); \$75.00 (hc).

Review by Antje M. Rauwerda, Goucher College

There is no doubt that Neil ten Kortenaar is an authority on Salman Rushdie's writing. In *Self, Nation, Text in Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children* he reveals an encyclopedic knowledge of criticism on the novel, and his use of the text itself is precise and comprehensive. Similarly, his analyses of Timothy Brennan's works (themselves seminal in terms of Rushdie's characterization as "cosmopolitan") are extensive. Indeed, ten Kortenaar's text begins and ends with the conundrum Brennan introduces: what to do with a novel that is at once nationalist and cosmopolitan? Addressing this problem involves confronting the novel's rampant and celebrated inconsistencies, and it is through the details of these that Kortenaar reads the novel in relation to nation, to the possibility of nationlessness, and to Rushdie himself. Ten Kortenaar argues that *Midnight's Children* "defends one kind of cosmopolitan nationalism against a rival version" (13). In other words, rather than seeing the complexities of Rushdie's text as challenging a putatively homogeneous norm, ten Kortenaar suggests that Rushdie defends Indian nationalist hybridity from other kinds of hybridity (13). The strength of this text is its immaculate use of textual evidence; the weakness is that the evidence overshadows ten Kortenaar's own analyses.

Ten Kortenaar exhaustively catalogues Rushdie's use of metaphors and references to body parts, mosques, gender, and more—all by way of establishing the slippery interactions between narrative and "truth" and between cosmopolitanism and nation. In one chapter, he cites Rushdie's use of Stanley Wolpert's *A New History of India* (1989), in which metaphors of birth proliferate (there are numerous variations on "birth of nation," plus references to British India severed "as though by caesarian section" 34); ten Kortenaar aptly observes that "what Rushdie has done is take these metaphors literally by adding the pangs and the screams, the forceps and the midwives, that Wolpert implies but forgets" (34). This comment introduces a collection of details about Rushdie's use of metaphors that ten Kortenaar uses to make a series of brief, note-like observations about metaphorical representations of paternity, history, and nation.

Ten Kortenaar also quotes no fewer than twenty metaphors that feature

“of,” among them “a hard cloud of determination,” “the twin viruses of fame,” and “the baby things of bitterness” (49-50). In this case, ten Kortenaar doesn’t use his compendium of metaphors to make any grander claim than “In Saleem’s narrative there are no images borrowed for the purposes of metaphor from among the internal organs, from among large animals, or from artistic practices” (50). After appreciating what must have amounted to so much observant, careful work, a reader would benefit from hearing more of ten Kortenaar’s own interpretation, and more by way of over-arching argument. Moreover, it also feels as though certain intriguing questions go unanswered: why, for instance, does Rushdie have Saleem metaphorise so many people and things as emotional or intangible states of being (such as determination, fame, and bitterness)?

Ten Kortenaar does a similar thing in his treatment of body parts. He provides ten pages of quotations showing Rushdie (and Saleem’s) use of them in the novel (86-96). He offers insightful, but short interpretations of the significance of different types of image (seldom more than a sentence). They are variously indicative of Saleem’s centrality/ peripherality to “nation”; the divisiveness of new “nations” as reflected in fragmented bodies; male and female bodies/ qualities and their symbolic import; English language body idioms and clichés; autonomous body parts; and the improbability implied by excess and grotesqueness. The bulk of detail is, again, impressive but it is also, again, disappointing that ten Kortenaar does not expand his own analyses.

The extensive glossary for *Midnight’s Children* provided at the end of this text is another impressive compendium of information, but one to which ten Kortenaar makes no reference in the body of his text, and which ten Kortenaar’s own writing does not require for clarity. Thus, although useful for reading *Midnight’s Children*, here it seems out of place and unexpected.

Ten Kortenaar is more rewarding when he examines visual materials, in the chapters “The State” (in which he uses political cartoons to help explicate the novel) and “England and Mimicry” (in which he includes a reproduction and offers a reading of the Millais painting that hangs on the young Saleem’s bedroom wall). These chapters differ from the others in providing readings of historical events and cultural texts. There are also interpretive passages in these chapters that are concisely phrased, succinct, and elegant:

Identity in Rushdie’s novel is a matter of culture (in the sense of upbringing) and not of race or blood, but culture appears every bit as ine-

luctable as race ever was. Those raised in poverty and those raised in privilege will perpetuate their class-determined identities through generations. You can be whatever you want, sings Mary Pereira, but she is wrong: in Saleem's world, you will always be what you were at ten. (203)

Or

The partiality that Islam represents is best illustrated by Saleem's depiction of Pakistan, which is to his India as singleness is to multiplicity, purity to hybridity. At stake are not merely rival states but incompatible definitions of the nation and statehood. (156)

Statements like the two above read like enticing mini-theses in the midst of this larger document; each could form the basis of more sustained analysis.

Kortenaar's text reads, at times, as if it were trying to reconcile its interests in Rushdie's writing choices with the big buzz words in Rushdie criticism and postcolonial theory. This is most apparent in the disjunction between chapter titles and content: "Hybridity" actually focuses on magic realism in Rushdie's novel rather than on, say, Homi Bhabha's theories as they apply to *Midnight's Children*. The chapter entitled "Magic Realism" actually deals with Rushdie's metaphors. Ten Kortenaar may frustrate readers with headings that seem to reach for Big Issues of Consequence rather than making an argument for the significance of the proliferations of small details he observes. Wouldn't "Hindu India" be just as impressive a chapter if it were titled, more aptly, "The Outside World and Saleem's Body"?

Ten Kortenaar's book is interesting and useful because it suggests ways to analyse history and culture in sprawling narratives such as *Midnight's Children* by examining the specific choices the writer made. However, a reader might want to see a more unified argument sustained through the length of ten Kortenaar's own book.

ERRATA

Page 7: Note after “Commonwealth Foundation Grant” in the Secretary-Treasurer’s report removed. The matter has already been settled. Originally read “Grant for 2003; Ranjini Mendis following up on final 100 pounds sterling.”

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ADDENDUM

Note: The following Call for Panel Discussants for the CACLALS 2007 Conference was created after the publication date of *Chimo* 52, and is meant to supplement the Call for Talks on page 19. It is included here as an addendum.

Supplemental Call for Panel Discussants

Because of the relevance to CACLALS members of issues raised in Stephen Slemon's call to ACCUTE members to address the limits of current critical discourse, "Why Do I Have to Write Like That?" (see full call below), the CACLALS conference planning committee is trying to arrange a companion session with ACCUTE to follow Slemon's proposed panel. For our membership, however, the questions Slemon asks may be differently inflected. For example, for scholars working with Aboriginal cultural production, accountability to the wider Aboriginal community is an issue of primary importance. So we might ask, what are the forms of critical discourse appropriate to Aboriginal oratures, literatures, and performance art? What models for alternate forms of critical discourse exist in scholarship 1) by Aboriginal critics or 2) on Aboriginal writing, or more broadly in Aboriginal writing itself? Do we risk marginalizing Aboriginal critical discourse and/or cultural production by encouraging these different forms, and if so, should we care about this potential marginalization vis-à-vis the mainstream? Whose interests are best served by currently dominant forms of critical discourse?

If these issues engage your attention, please send a 300-500 word proposal that indicates the significance and argument of the proposed talk and the principal texts to be discussed. In addition to this proposal, please send a 100-word abstract of the talk and a 50-word

bio-bibliographical note. These materials must be sent by 15 November 2006 to:

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Here's the full text of Stephen Slemon's call "Why Do I Have to Write Like That?":

"Literary criticism" is a baleful genre, overrun with disinclination and overwhelmed by the dispirited. And what is more, it is institutionally fraudulent. We entice students into our discipline through the lure of pleasurable reading. We then proceed to train them in the manufacture of tortured analytical documents - a perfect example of marketing logic at the level of "bait and switch". For those of us who are employed in the English Studies industry, this fraudulence comprises a necessary self-deception: our careers depend on our ability to write the kinds of books and articles that we would never willingly read. For those of us who are just entering the profession, however - graduate students especially - a hope prevails for the possibility of real professional change. This panel will examine that hope, preferably in the context of actual global practice in the gen-

eral field of "academic writing" in English Studies. *Can* one write differently in "English"? Who has tried to do so, and under what conditions? What is ventured in the attempt to revolutionize critical commentary in the discipline? What is not ventured? Were we to succeed in writing professional documents differently, who might we seek to address as we proceed?

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