

Chimo



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Chimo

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Chimo (Chee'mo) greetings [Inuit]

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The Editors request all extended submissions be in electronic form (Microsoft Word, if possible). The Editors reserve the right to amend phrasing and punctuation in items accepted for publication in *Chimo*.

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On the cover: *Three Birds*, 2003, ink on paper, by Damon Badger Heit. Badger Heit holds a BA in Indian Art and English from the First Nations University of Canada, is a member of the Mistawasis First Nation, and resides in Regina. His art-making is education-based, and he has worked as an art instructor for youth programs in schools through organizations like the MacKenzie Art Gallery and Common Weal Inc., producing a number of public art works with youth at Regina's Connaught and Thompson Community Schools. Damon currently works as the Coordinator of First Nations and Métis Initiatives at SaskCulture Inc., a non-profit volunteer-driven organization that supports cultural activity throughout the province.

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The Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello everyone! It's that time of year when most of us are in recuperation mode from the extended time of climbing the mountain of essays and exams, a time that in other quarters is known as March and April. For those lucky dogs of us who have been on sabbatical, it's a time to savour the last stretch of that precious time. And for me, who has been one of those lucky dogs, it is also time to say thank you to those members of the Association who have contributed so much to its functioning.

Multiple Votes of Thanks

A particularly warm thank you to Anna **Guttman** for so ably and willingly picking up the Secretary-Treasurer's reins in mid-April when Kristina **Fagan** had to relinquish them, but thanks go out to Kristina too for the work she did since last year's AGM, especially in helping to prepare the report to the Commonwealth Foundation and then the application for this year's funding. My gratitude to Chelva **Kanaganayakam** for serving as this year's lead judge for the Graduate Student Presentation Prize; to Mariam **Pirbhai**, our generous Local Arrangements Coordinator for the CACLALS conference in Waterloo, who has helped in countless ways, but especially with checking out conference rooms, booking hotel rooms, finding a student to help out at Congress, arranging the community dinner at Benjamin's and bus transportation to and fro, and the printing of the program and other materials; to Veronica **Austen** for all her help on the ground at the University of Waterloo, including so thoughtfully arranging access to PAS 1053, a lounge space there for CACLALS members to retreat to at Congress ; and to Heather **Smyth** for ordering pizza and drinks for the AGM. Finally my gratitude goes out to the hard-working Executive members without whom the Association—and I in particular—could not function. They have responded so helpfully to my many emails, and variously vetted papers, solicited and edited reviews for *Chimo*, encouraged graduate student participation in the Association in a number of ways, and given support and advice on a range of issues. Thank you Margery **Fee**, Philip **Mingay**, L. Camille **van der Marel**, Jessie **Forsyth**, Kofi **Campbell**, Jill **Didur**, and Gugu **Hlongwane**!

Update from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

As I reported in a multi-subject email, the CFHSS Board is moving to reduce its size and enhance its effectiveness. Over the next year, the Board will consider the degree and character of representativeness it needs to ensure optimum service to the communities it serves and the degree to which it will act as an executive body.

Under the leadership of CACLALS member (and incoming ACCUTE President) Stephen Slemon, the **ASPP** is being given new meaning. Whereas the previous name, Aid to Scholarly Publishing Program, suggested a hand-out, the new name, Awards to Scholarly Publishing more accurately

reflects the merit-based process entailed in scholars being granted a publishing subvention from this branch of the CFHSS.

Another CFHSS activity of particular concern to CACLALS' members is the Association's continued lobbying of the Federal Government in relation to planned Copyright changes. The Conservative government has reintroduced proposed legislation, Bill C-32, which died on the agenda before the last election, and the Copyright Taskforce Federation made seven recommendations for changes. Interested members can get more information at <http://www.fedcan.ca/sites/default/files/sites/default/uploads/publications/past/speaking-notes-for-jay-rahn-march2011.pdf> .

Congress and the CACLALS AGM

Of course the CFHSS's most long-standing contribution to the Humanities and Social Sciences communities of scholars is the organization of the annual Congress. I am looking forward to seeing many of you in Waterloo, where we have an exciting line-up of members' presentations; a keynote address, "Why Literature Departments Should Speak in Ordinary Language," by Leela Gandhi; a plenary, "'Reach across an ocean to find the right words': Maori-Aboriginal Literary Connections," by Alice Te Punga Somerville; a reading by M. NourbeSe Philip followed by a live interview by Veronica Austen and Phaniel Antwi; a Special Roundtable organized by Libe Garcia Zarranz, L. Camille van der Marel, and Melissa Stephens called "Stepping Forward, Looking Back: Postcolonial, Global, Transnational, and Diasporic Studies in the 21st Century" and featuring a strong line-up of panelists including Gandhi, Canada Research Chair in Social Justice, Janet Conway, and three of our members, Kit Dobson, Stephen Slemon, and Heather Smyth; and an Aboriginal Roundtable on Indigenous Languages and Indigenous Literatures organized by Michele Lacombe and with invited contributions by the impressive group of Kim Anderson and Anishinaabe Elder, poet, and visual artist Rene Meshake (don't miss the latter's exhibition with school children at Wilfrid Laurier University during Congress; see details at https://www.wlu.ca/events_detail.php?grp_id=12448&ev_id=9301); Jonathan Dewar; Jo-Ann Episkew; Heather Macfarlane; and Rick Monture. We have much to celebrate this year in our Graduate Student Presentation Prize and Book Launch session, with four strong contenders for the prize and a record seven books by members being launched or accorded notice. And please plan to attend the AGM in PAS 1241 (not PAS 1229 as previously announced in the program I circulated to members). To be strong, the Association requires your ideas and the Executive needs your support. This year in addition to the usual business, we'll elect new Executive members, discuss constitutional amendments important to CACLALS' future (see below) and a motion about Library and Archives Canada (see below). We will have a lot to cover in the meeting, so it would be helpful if members could before the meeting review the constitutional amendments and the motion in relation to Library and Archives Canada and inform themselves

about the latter by visiting www.savelibraryarchives.ca. Please note that the publishers' exhibits that are part of the larger Expo will be on the Wilfrid Laurier University campus and located with the Registration and the Information Offices, not the campus where CACLALS meetings will be held. Free buses especially provided for our Association, ACCUTE, and ACQL/ALCQ will run regularly between the campuses in addition to the free transit provided for all delegates, so be sure to check out the Expo. Also this year when you pick up your CACLALS program, you'll find a conference feedback sheet prepared by Anna Guttman tucked inside, which we would very much appreciate your filling in and leaving with me at the AGM (or earlier if you are unable to attend the AGM for any reason) so that our Executive can know what kinds of events worked best to serve your needs and what speakers and events you would like us to consider in the future.

Proposed Constitutional Amendments

The following proposed amendments and the rationale for them all bear on finding the next Executive for CACLALS. You can find a copy of the CACLALS constitution under the "About Us" tab on caclals.ca. All seven of the current Executive members besides myself, namely Gugu Hlongwane, Jill Didur, Anna Guttman, Kofi Campbell, Jessie Forsyth, Philip Mingay, L. Camille van der Marel, and Margery Fee, and the immediate past President Neil ten Kortenaar support the amendments, as do long-time CACLALS members Jennifer Andrews, Terry Goldie, John Ball, and Sue Spearey, whose support I solicited in seeking the 10 signatures I needed to forward the proposed amendments to you. The amendments with related rationales were circulated by email in early April along with the requisite 10 signatures required by the constitution to put the amendments before the membership.

Proposed Amendment 1 (re: the stipulation that the President and Secretary-Treasurer come from the same region)

That Article 8a, "'The chief officers of the Association shall belong to the same region of Canada, preferably to the same or proximate institutions,'" be deleted from the constitution and the remaining sections of Article 8 be accordingly re-lettered.

Rationale:

The stipulation that "The chief officers [the President and Secretary-Treasurer] of the Association shall belong to the same region of Canada, preferably to the same or proximate institutions" is a pre-digital age one, and neither I nor the rest of the current Executive can see a reason why the stipulation should remain in force. Our bank account has single-officer signing authority, and Skype and email make communication over distances between officers so easy now. Moreover, limiting the available pool of candidates for Secretary-Treasurer to members in the same region of the country as the President makes harder the already difficult task of finding a person willing and able to take on this service to the Association.

Proposed Amendment 2 (re: change of President's and Secretary-Treasurer's terms)

That Article 10a, "The President and the Secretary-Treasurer shall be appointed for a term of three years," be amended to read "The President and the Secretary-Treasurer shall be appointed for a term of two years."

Rationale:

Because the current term of the President is 3 years, according to article 10a on "Terms of Office, "The President and the Secretary-Treasurer shall be appointed for a term of three years," and because the President serves a year as Elect and then two years as Past President according to Article 7, to serve as President, a person is currently asked to commit to being an Executive member for a total of 5 years. This expectation is unduly onerous, and therefore a serious disincentive to anyone contemplating taking on this role. Moreover, the expectation is out of line with what other related Associations meeting at Congress ask of their Presidents-- more out of line with ACCUTE than ACQL, though). The relevant part of ACCUTE's constitution says

"A. The membership of the Executive will consist of eight persons [including]:

...

(c) either a Past-President (for one year after the completion of his or her term as President) or a President-Elect (elected for the second year of the current President's term);

(d) the President of the Association, who assumes office for a two-year term by virtue of having been elected President-Elect the previous year[.]"

ACQL/ALCQ doesn't post its constitution, but I consulted with my departmental colleague Wendy Roy, who is the current President, and she has a two year term, followed by one year as Past President. She was admittedly previously a Gabrielle Roy Prize [GRP] Chair and a VP, but not every President gives so much service as Wendy has, and in ACQL/ALCQ, the anglophone and francophone VPs are conference program chairs, so the President, while overseeing all the association's activities, does not have primary responsibility for conference organizing as the CACLALS President does. With two program chairs, some of the ACQL/ALCQ organizing work can also be split in the years that some (but not all) Presidents serve as VP. Wendy described the ACQL executive terms as follows:

There really is no definitive language in our constitution about the length of terms, but our practice is to have two-year, staggered or overlapping terms. In

other words, because we have two VPs and two Gabrielle Roy jury chairs (one Anglophone and one Francophone), we try to have their terms start on alternate years so that there is always one VP and one jury chair who has some experience. But, of course, this doesn't always work, since people sometimes have unexpected needs and resign part way through a two-year term.

Our practice is also to alternate English- and French-speaking presidents. Although the president has usually served previously as one of the VPs, again that is not always the case; sometimes people just can't make that kind of four-year commitment. If not, we try to recruit from the executive of the previous few years (a former VP, or a former GRPrize chair, for example).

If the President's term is reduced to two years, then the Secretary-Treasurer's should also be because the President should always be free to propose the other Chief Officer of the Association. Moreover, historically, the turnover of Secretary-Treasurers within a single Executive's term has been high. A reduced term may help to keep a single person in the role for the full term.

Proposed Amendment 3 (re: change of Past President's term)

That Article 7, "The Executive Committee of the Association will consist of the President, the Secretary-Treasurer, the Past President (for two years), the President Elect (for one year), four Regional Representatives, and two Student Representatives," be amended to read "The Executive Committee of the Association will consist of the President, the Secretary-Treasurer, the Past President (for one year), the President Elect (for one year), four Regional Representatives, and two Student Representatives."

Rationale:

As argued in the rationale for amendment 2 above, the length of service currently expected from anyone who agrees to serve as President is five years, and this term is unduly onerous and therefore highly likely to be a disincentive to anyone considering taking on this service to the Association. Moreover, with one year of mentoring as President Elect, and with one additional year of having the Past-President on the Executive, the new President should be amply supported. If proposed amendment 2 passes, there will always be either a President Elect or a Past President on the Executive and the number of Executive members will remain constant.

Proposed Amendment 4 (re: term of the Regional Representatives)

That Article 10b, "The Regional Representatives of the Association shall be appointed for a term of three years," be amended to read "The Regional Representatives of the Association shall be appointed for a term of two years."

Rationale: A President should be free to assemble her or his own proposed Executive, so if amendment 2 passes, the terms of the Regional Representatives should be correspondingly reduced.

Motion re: Library and Archives Canada

Below is the wording of the motion to be moved (Margery Fee; seconded: Susan Gingell) at the AGM:

Whereas Library and Archives Canada is a crucial national institution, which acquires and preserves documents relevant to Canada’s cultural and historical heritage;

Whereas Library and Archives Canada has a mandate to collect, preserve and make public a unified national collection;

Whereas services and resources of LAC are used by a large and diverse group including the general public, librarians, historians, professional writers, students, genealogists, Aboriginal communities, and researchers and scholars from virtually every discipline;

Whereas current management at Library and Archives Canada has implemented changes that are having far-reaching implications; including reduced public access, decentralization of the national collection, elimination of specialist positions, and reduced acquisitions; and,

Whereas the Canadian Association of University Teachers has launched a campaign to “Save Library and Archives Canada” (www.savelibraryarchives.ca) which calls for clarification in the LAC mandate, adequate funding, restoration of acquisitions and public services, and the cessation of fragmentation of the national collection;

Therefore the Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (CACLALS)

- (i) endorses the Save Library and Archives Canada campaign,
- (ii) will continue via email updates and through caclals.ca to circulate materials and draw attention to the savelibraryarchives.ca website
- (iii) encourages individual members to send letters to Heritage Minister James Moore through the campaign website.

Susan Gingell, President

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Greetings! I took over as secretary-treasurer in April 2012, so this verbal report and the financial statement that follows will be brief. I would like to thank Susan Gingell for all her help in putting together this report at short notice. In the absence of records from the previous secretary-treasurer, we have done our best to reconstruct details by going back through what remained undeleted of the President's email related to the 2011 Congress conference and her saved files related to that conference, and by using the basic information we were able to get from the bank, but we can't be sure that we have attached the right descriptions to various entries or that the statement is complete.

There are currently 91 paid-up members, of whom half are regular members, 36% are graduate students or postdoctoral fellows and 14% are unwaged or sessionals. The travel grant received for Congress 2011, (\$2211.42), is significantly lower than that received for Congress 2010 (\$3480). Income from the Commonwealth Association has also dropped significantly. However, membership income has increased.

A reminder to all graduate students, sessional, and unwaged members to save Congress your travel receipts. For presenters in those categories who have no, or only partial, travel funding, we will attempt to cover a portion of your travel costs but are not able to help with accommodation or meal costs. The amount that we will be able to contribute toward individuals' costs will depend on the number and needs of applicants and the amount of our SHRCC grant. Please submit by June 30, 2012 the following: 1)documentation indicating how much (if any) funding you will receive from your institution or other sources towards travel and 2)the original ticket. Please indicate if you need the latter returned to you and provide a mailing address and invoice in the total fare is not legible on the ticket. Applications for travel assistance should be sent to: Anna Guttman, Department of English, Lakehead University, 955 Oliver Rd., Thunder Bay, ON P7B 5E1.

I look forward to seeing you at Congress!

Anna Guttman, Secretary-Treasurer

Financial Report

Opening Balance (June 1, 2011): \$13,969.94

Income

ACLALS	\$4354.98
Membership:	\$3290.00
SSHRC Travel Grant:	\$2211.42
Interest:	\$1.25
Publisher contributions:	\$200.00
Other income:	\$460.00
Total Income:	\$10,517.68

Expenditures:

IATS (credit card fees re: membership):	\$216.96
CFHSS (set-up and annual fee for membership system):	\$600.00
Congress Expenses (estimate):	\$6352.04
Bank Fees (estimate):	\$57.77
Other expenses:	\$224.17
Total expenditure:	\$7450.94

Closing Balance (May 8, 2012): \$17,036.68

Net Income: \$3066.74

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Edited by Margery Fee

Jennifer Andrews, *In the Belly of a Laughing God: Humour and Irony in Native Women's Poetry*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011. 324 pp.

Reviewed by Jasmine Johnston

When I began reading *In the Belly of a Laughing God*, I expected a thoughtful analysis of the work of eight Native women poets in either historical or theoretical terms; Andrews accomplishes both. She combines ethical and aesthetic approaches to closely examine the poetry of Joy Harjo, Louise Halfe, Kimberly Blaeser, Marilyn Dumont, Diane Glancy, Jeannette Armstrong, Wendy Rose, and Marie Annharte Baker—Native women poets whose works are interconnected on personal, political, and cultural levels. These poets are either Canadian or American citizens and many of them have both Native and Euro-American backgrounds and affiliations: Andrews's cross-border, intercultural parameters both highlight and interrogate nationhood and ethnicity while uniquely integrating gender as a matrix for poetic transformation.

Harjo (Muskogee), Halfe (Cree), Blaeser (Anishinaabe), Dumont (Métis), Glancy (Cherokee), Armstrong (Okanagan), Rose (Hopi, Miwok), and Baker (Anishinaabe) are roughly contemporaries around sixty years old. Andrews reveals how their lives and work intersect through generational challenges such as the roles of women in their communities—familial, artistic, academic, political, tribal; through their visual art and academic writing as well as their poetry; and through their experiences with the Native languages and traditions with which they are connected. Gender, genre, race: all eight poets negotiate these issues using humour and irony to meditate on and mediate their identities. Andrews follows suit in a critical mode, tracing the poetic work of humour and irony in five topical chapters: spiritual transformations; generic transformations; history, memory, and the nation; “photography and representational (in)visibility”; and land and home.

In her introduction, Andrews defines humour and irony by surveying and integrating the work of several well-established Native and Euro-American theorists on both sides of the Canadian-American border (reading through the book's index and bibliography is an enlightening exercise in itself). In particular, Andrews uses Linda Hutcheon's concept of the "edge" of humour and irony—an edge somewhere between text and context, form and function—to demonstrate that shared knowledge (cultural, historical, linguistic, gendered) is instrumental to constructing and interpreting these discursive tactics. Without overdetermining the functions of humour and irony, Andrews suggests that irony often occurs "at the level of language, particularly through puns and the relationship between the denotative and connotative meanings of words," while humour "usually develops from and depends on the context of community use."

In the chapters that follow, Andrews shows how poetic irony often has a bitter edge, for these poets are grappling with histories of genocide as well as the intimate complexities of belonging. Hard truths are spoken and written; linguistic gaps widen and shrink, for example, in the poets' many instances of code-switching, where poems alternate between English and Native languages. The Muskogee, Hopi, Miwok, Anishinaabe, Okanagan, Cherokee, Métis, and Cree words and phrases employed are both—and sometimes simultaneously—earthy (bodily and bawdy) and spiritual (mythic and transformative). In contrast to the dividing edge of irony, humour unites reader and poet by sharing the joke—whether of religious or spiritual incongruities, as in chapter one; or of generic play, as in chapter two; or, as in chapter three, of the power of imagination to affect bodies—women's bodies, political bodies, and the ever-shifting textual corpus of Native and Euro-American histories; or, as in chapter four, of the ways that photography haunts memory to evoke stereotypes of Natives or to "reframe" the poet and her community; or, as in chapter five, of the wild cityscapes and complicated rural places that are and are not the poets' homes.

Andrews uses the critical metaphor of the "belly of the laughing god" to encompass these manifold topics. The phrase is drawn from a 1996 interview with Joy Harjo. Harjo states, "We are in the belly of a laughing god. . . . I think that Indian people have one of the most developed senses of humor." But the phrase goes back even further, to a poem by Harjo titled

“Fury of Rain” (1990). The poem begins, “Thunder beings dance the flooding streets / of this city,” fusing traditional and contemporary “ritual” in a “broken mask of change,” and suggests that “We are all in the belly of a laughing god / swimming the heavens.” The world, “swimming through the heavens,” is construed by Andrews to represent both the “legacy of colonization”—often a patriarchal, all-consuming force—but also a “distinctly female vision of god, birth, and the power of humour.” The poem concludes, “What we haven’t imagined will one day / spit us out / magnificent and simple.” So the belly is also a womb: poetic identity gestates and gives birth to an intertextually-defined community of Native women poets whose work uses humour and irony to engender “alterna(rra)tives”—echoing Drew Hayden Taylor’s *alterNatives*, Andrews creates this visual pun to signify the way that humour and irony proliferate between double meanings.

Reviews often conclude with reasons why the book in question is a welcome addition to the field. But in the case of Andrews’s *In the Belly of a Laughing God*, the book is more than merely welcome, for the field is desperately in need of her thoughtful and detailed contribution. While Harjo, Halfe, Blaeser, Dumont, Glancy, Armstrong, Rose, and Baker are well-established and widely published, there have been few book-length critical works on their poetry, and none that interlink all these poets in thematic, formal, visual, and historical ways through gender. Stylistically, too, Andrews’s book has great value: even as she combines multiple theorists with well-researched details of Muskogee, Hopi, Miwok, Anishinaabe, Okanagan, Cherokee, Métis, and Cree culture to produce new critical links, she always remains focussed on the power and beauty of the poetry itself. Readers will find cogent, well-developed sections analysing individual poems, publications, and poets throughout every chapter. In these “celebrations of influence,” Andrews both reveals and reinforces the creative and critical “common ground” in Native women’s poetry.

Horace I. Goddard, *The Journey Home*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2010.

---. *Child of the Jaguar Spirit*. Dorval, Qc.: AFO Enterprises, 2009.

Reviewed by Angelika Maeser Lemieux

“Time is longer than twine” is a recurring line in Horace Goddard’s book of poems, *The Journey Home*, which seems to be an apt metaphor for his ability to bind together many strands of experience ranging over several lands, and diverse geographical settings and cultures. The text is organized into three parts: *In Search of Africa*, *Caribbean Rhythms*, *Canada in We*, comprising 12, 59, and 5 poems respectively. The truism, “Home is where the heart is” might well apply to the poet’s search for the place of love, security, comfort, and acceptance, a search which is often symbolized by a mother’s unconditional love and feeling of heartfelt connection to her offspring. Indeed, many poems focus upon the mother, both personal and geographical, as that center of imagined and sometimes experienced place in time where home is. However, the loss of that central home space, and of the sense of belonging and joy that accompany it, is an elegiac *leitmotif* that runs through the collection; there is the longing for return, the search, the loss and sufferings of the journey, and then the tying together of these strands to craft a statement about the process of birth, death, and rebirth.

Part I pays homage to the Africans forced into slavery and taken by the British to the Caribbean to work: “He knew the New World destiny of the ships / Long before they set sail for African ports.” Cudjoe, the protagonist of the poem of that title, is perhaps named after the cudjoewood tree or a fugitive slave or free Negro prior to 1849, and a symbolic representation of that part of present identity that cannot be forgotten because it is part of the ancestral memory, even though parts of it have been lost:

Cudjoe mingles present thoughts with memories....

Cudjoe travels in search of a new place to call home.

The rin-tin-tin of the steel pan ignites his passion still,

This northern land becomes the source of his restoration. (14)

At the end of his epic travels, Cudjoe is compared to “a sapling in the dark for too long” who “has lost the sinews of bravery” as he tries to survive in “this new geography” (15). He sits in a contemplative pose, recalling the African heritage and language: “Between thoughts and action, sitting on a hill, / Cudjoe looks out to the sea and traces / A long, billowy trail back to Africa”(15). In “I Surrender All,” “The cracks on his heels reveal / Dark days bruised by memories of time past. / Cudjoe relives the journey from Africa” (8). Interestingly, the last poem in the collection returns to the African motif; in “Echoes of the Past,” Goddard recalls the sufferings of the West African tribes crossing the ocean on the slave ships: “Secrets on the waves / Connecting slaves / To warrior spear” and the mythological figure of the spider king, telling the stories:

Of tales upon his bed.
He spoke of births
Below, in the surfs
Of black blood;
Of children crying.
Longing for food. (104)

Hunger—both physical and spiritual—is expressed in a lyrical and passionate tone, sometimes angry, sarcastic, ironic, tender, celebratory and mournful, depending upon the occasion. Goddard often focuses upon the bitter-sweetness of human relationships, sexual and friendly, which frequently seem to promise more than they can deliver and in which communication plays a large role in their success or failure; for example, “Connubial Bliss “ (“Jah have mercy on John. / Cut him from this cross”); “The Marriage Bed Unfolds” (“The marriage bed unfolds / Into layers of lustful pain / It ceases its motion again / Until two hearts grow cold”); “Longing” (“Must I with my might / Seek to brace you with / Shattered dreams of wholeness?”); “Summertime,” “Soul in Silence,” “Matrimony,” “Foreday Morning,” and “Give Me Time” (“But time’s dams along the way / Drained love’s electricity”) alternate between

pleasure and disappointment. In “The Growth of Friendship,” a hopeful tone is struck as the speaker realizes it will take time to break down the barriers to communication, but each day it gets easier as “words of brick crumble” and ideas are clarified and “true friendship” comes within reach. There are also poems about religion, refugees, village and urban life, ageing, death, social injustice, racism, and loss of culture. Overall, the language is a combination of patois with standard English effortlessly and naturally spoken throughout the collection, displaying a gift for evocative imagery, lyricism, and a variety of descriptive forms suited to the subject. Readers will find much to enjoy and to reflect upon in this collection.

In his novel, *Child of the Jaguar Spirit*, some of the ideas that Goddard raised in his poetry are worked out in narrative form; for example: loss of culture, power, the bitter struggle to survive, violence, racism, inter-ethnic conflict, the situation of immigrants, the hardships of life in the old county characterized by agrarian poverty and the new life in North America where urban poverty also stalks many, the longing to find a place to feel at home and to belong, social acceptance, affluence, friendship, justice, confusion over religious affiliation, gender roles, and family bonds and conflicts.

The novel is written in the third-person and revolves around the life of a young boy Sokoo Ramadan, the only child of Moslem parents, Peshwar and Indira, who finds himself caught in the middle of a bitter custody battle between the estranged parents, who eventually divorce and remarry or re-partner. Set in the imaginary South American locale of Sudiamo, where labourers from India and Africa were brought in by the British to work, the story reveals many social fissures and economic hardships that have not been properly addressed and repaired; as well, there are the cultural differences that divide people from diverse backgrounds. These tend to be focused upon religious practices and gender roles: the old African spiritual practices (obeah), the Indigenous forest animism of animal cults, and the Christian and Islamic faiths vie for the souls of people; men and women have specific roles to fulfill, and if they are unable to perform their duties, they are cursed and rejected. Such cultural norms and practices are very central to the plot of the novel because Peshwar and Indira’s marriage falls apart when she is unable to bear more sons. He leaves her with Sokoo to till the land while he goes into the depths of the forest to earn money. During his absence, Indira

decides to take her life into her own hands and apply to England to become a nurse's helper and eventually bring the family together in a place of opportunity. Such hopes are dashed after Sokoo is abducted from her parents' home by Peshwar and taken to his parents' house to be cared for. Grandmother Ramadan, however, is a witch and follows the magical rites of the forest; she gives Sokoo an amulet of the jaguar spirit, and he, like her son, is destined to carry this spirit forward so that it will not die out; she prepares him to survive in this way, for in the cult what matters is that men survive with craftiness and skill. Meanwhile, the confused little boy, age 5, just wants his parents to come for him, but nonetheless he proves to be a good grandson and a bright student. Indeed, his growing intelligence and resourcefulness help him to survive in the jungle of life, so to say.

This growing, intelligent boy's painful odyssey from Sudiano to Montreal, Canada, is suspensefully developed by Goddard who manages to create believable, if sometimes fantastic, characters and situations across cultural and geographic lines. There is psychological depth in the way the parents are shown, each caring for the boy in a uniquely gendered way—the father showing his concern by strict, paternal authority and violence (based on cultural norms) and the mother trying obsessively to seduce her son with feminine softness and gifts of money. Each one is a study in dysfunctionality when it comes to childcare. But as one of the drunken dominoes players says, "There ain't no book to teach a man or woman how to be a parent." One adult who exhibits a normal personality and helps the boy to survive elementary school until age 12 is a teacher named Mr. Evans. Through this supportive relationship, Sokoo is able to thrive and develop, despite all the pressures at home and the psychological stress he feels. It would be spoiling the suspense of the novel to say what happens to the protagonist and to the jaguar spirit who makes his appearance every so often. Undoubtedly, the jaguar spirit gets his claws into the reader and refuses to let him or her go until the end! Read it and you too will be gripped by Goddard's tale.

Book Notice: *Literature for Our Times: Postcolonial Studies in the Twenty-first Century*. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Ranjini Mendis, Julie McGonegal, and Arun Mukherjee. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012. Cross Cultures 145.

This is an edited collection of essays from the 14th International Triennial conference of the Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, held in Vancouver in August 2007. The hefty volume contains essays by scholars from all over the world, including 10 essays by CACLALS' members: Lincoln Z. Shelensky's "Not Yet Speaking to Each Other: The Politics of Speech in Jamaica Kincaid's Postcolonialism," Elena Basile's "Scars of Language in Translation: The 'Itchy' Poetics of Jam Ismail," John Clement Ball's "Drickie Potter and the Annihilating Sea: Reading Jamaica Kincaid's Waves of Nothingness," Dorothy Lane's "'Trading Places in the Promised Lands': Indian Pilgrimage Paradigms in Postcolonial Travel Narratives," Sam McKegney's "Masculindians: The Violence and Voyeurism of Male Sibling Relationships in Recent First-Nations Fiction," Chelva Kanaganayakam's "*A Native Clearing* Revisited: Positioning Philippine Literature," Stephen Ney's "Asia's Christian-Latin Nation? Postcolonial Reconfigurations in the Literature of the Philippines," Pamela McCallum, "Streets and Transformation in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and "Stuart," Susan Spearey's, "Affect and the Ethics of Reading 'Post-Conflict' Memoirs: Revisiting Antje Krog's *Country of My Skull* and Philip Gourevitch's *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*," and Summer Pervez's "Literature as Arduous Conversation: Terrorism and Radical Politics in Hanif Kureishi's *Borderline*, "My Son the Fanatic," and *The Black Album*." The introduction by Bill Ashcroft provides a useful overview of the various approaches to postcolonialism, defining it flexibly as "not a Grand Theory of Everything but a range of interests and approaches living together in what Amartya Sen might call an argumentative democracy." –Margery Fee

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Chandrima Chakraborty has recently guest-edited a feature section of *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 27 (Spring 2012) on the Air India bombings. The feature is titled "Air India Flight 182: A Canadian Tragedy?"

Helen Hoy, University of Guelph, will be taking an early-retirement package for August 1, 2012. She has two articles forthcoming: "'Never Meant To Be': Porcupines and China Dolls as a Fetal-Alcohol Narrative." *Mosaic* 45.2 (June 2012) and "The Truth about Thomas." *Thomas King: Works and Impact*. Ed. Eva Gruber. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2012.

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