

Chimo



**The Newsjournal of the Canadian Association for
Commonwealth & Language Studies**

Number 65

Spring 2013

Chimo

Spring 2013

Chimo (Chee'mo) greetings [Inuktitut]

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Chimo is published twice yearly by the Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies.

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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 REPORT

President's Report

As I prepare to hand over the leadership of CACLALS to the next President, Dorothy Lane, of Luther College, University of Regina, I want to express my thanks to the members of the association for this opportunity to give back to the Association that helped me build my career. My heart-felt gratitude goes out, too, to the wonderful executive members who have supported me through the last three years, time after time responding helpfully whenever I asked for assistance with vetting, judging the Graduate Student Presentation Prize, or making funding applications or reports, and whenever I sought feedback on draft documents or advice on a range of issues. Members have been well served by current Secretary-Treasurer Anna Guttman; *Chimo* Book Reviews Editor and BC and Territories Rep, Margery Fee; Regional Reps Philip Mingay, Kofi Campbell, Jill Didur, and Gugu Hlongwane; and Graduate Student Reps L. Camille Van der Marel and Jesse Arsenault.

Our annual conference is now about three weeks away, and we have an exciting keynote speaker in Dr. Jenny Sharpe of UCLA and an equally exciting plenary speaker in Black British Columbia writer and anthologist Wayde Compton. Another very special feature of this year's program is the morning of events related to the work of Tlicho writer Richard Van Camp, substantially subsidized by the generosity of Renate Eigenbrod through her SSHRC grant. Our annual Aboriginal Roundtable, this year organized by Daniel Heath Justice, rounds out our special events, but we also have a full, rich range of member presentations as well. I urge you to attend the AGM on June 3rd to hear University of Victoria Director of Indigenous Education Onowa Mclvor and First Nations University Academic Vice President Lynn Wells discuss how we can work together to promote Indigenous Language revitalization. As of the date of writing, our initiative to institute a Congress voluntary fee to support Indigenous language revitalization has raised \$185 from CACLALS members. This year's AGM is also important as the occasion to vote for a new executive, and the proposed slate of officers for 2013-15 can be found in this edition of *Chimo*, following the Secretary-Treasurer's report, though in accord with our constitution, nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the AGM. Also to be debated at the AGM is a motion co-sponsored by Anna Guttman urging the CFHSS to ensure childcare is provided at all future Congresses and subsidized for graduate students and the underemployed.

This August 5-9, the 16th ACLALS Triennial will be held in St. Lucia, on the theme "The current unbroken/the circuits kept open': Connecting Cultures and the Commonwealth." ACLALS President Michael Bucknor of the University of the West Indies has been working remotely and under otherwise difficult conditions to arrange a fine program. Registration is now open at <http://aclals.com/>. The St. Lucia conference will be a particularly crucial ACLALS triennial as it

will be the last that the Commonwealth Foundation (CF) will support financially. I would welcome any advice or ideas to take to the ACLALS Executive Committee meeting about how we might find substitute funding for future conferences and general organizational support.

The withdrawal of all CF support for CACLALS activities because we are an association in a so-called developed country means the next executive will face some tough decisions about future CACLALS activities, but the Association is, as you will see from Secretary-Treasurer Anna Guttman's report in the following pages, in good shape financially. However, as membership fees will become almost the sole means of support for future activities—we'll still be eligible to apply for CFHSS Aid to International Speaker's Fund and Aid to Interdisciplinary Sessions Fund—loyal members and prompt payment of dues when members get renewal notices will be increasingly important for the health of CACLALS.

I look forward to seeing old and new CACLALS members in Victoria!

Susan Gingell

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Greetings! Membership in CACLALS continues to increase and currently stands at 137 (as of April 26, 2013), of whom 75 are regular members, 12 are sessional /unwaged, and 50 are student/postdoctoral members. Most of the increase in membership can be attributed to more students joining CACLALS. I'd like to offer a warm welcome to new members, and thanks to our graduate student reps for encouraging their peers to join. Higher numbers have meant that we now pay significantly higher fees to the CFHSS, but these are offset by the increased income from membership fees, which is now our primary source of income (\$3440 in the last six months). The migration of membership to the online system is complete, and the majority of members are now joining and renewing online. You can also use the system to change your password, check your membership expiry date, update personal and contact information, and find the email addresses of other members. Any other questions about memberships or the membership system can be directed to me at aguttman@lakeheadu.ca

Our other major source of funding has remained the Commonwealth Foundation, which disbursed \$1862.93 to CACLALS in December. We will, however, no longer be receiving this funding in the future. The Commonwealth Foundation has radically restructured its grant program to focus on entrepreneurship and participatory governance; the activity of CACLALS and similar organizations no longer fall within its mandate. Fortunately, with a net income over the last six months of \$3778.64, CACLALS remains well positioned to continue current operations for the foreseeable future.

Though SSHRC is no longer disbursing travel funds to associations, CACLALS is fortunate enough to have had a surplus of \$1215.59 from last year's grant, which will be used to defray travel costs for graduate students, sessional, and unwaged members who are presenting at this year's Congress. So save those receipts! The amount that we will be able to contribute toward individuals' costs will depend on the number and needs of applicants. Please submit by June 30, 2013 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 if 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.

Finally, a correction to my report of Fall 2012: I erroneously reported that University of Toronto Press contributed \$200 towards our book launch celebration at Congress 2012. In fact, UTP contributed \$100 towards the book launch. The other \$100 should have been reported as advertising revenue; UTP took out a full page ad in our program last year.

I look forward to seeing you at Congress!

Anna Guttman, Secretary-Treasurer

Financial Report

Opening Balance (Oct. 4, 2012)	\$20123.53
Income	
Membership	\$3440.00
Commonwealth Foundation	\$1862.93
Interest	\$1.19
Total	\$5304.12
Expenses	
IATS	\$126.56
CFHSS (\$150 system access + \$969.84 membership)	\$1119.84
Bank Fees	\$122.96
Congress (refund to M. NourbeSe Philip)	\$156.12
Total	\$1525.48
Closing Balance (April 5, 2013)	\$23902.17
Net Income:	\$3778.64

PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SLATE 2013-15

Dorothy Lane, President (Ex officio as President Elect)

Pamela McCallum, Secretary-Treasurer

Pamela McCallum is professor in the Department of English at the University of Calgary. Her areas of research are literary theory, British literature 1900 to the present, and literatures of globalization. She has recently published articles on Zadie Smith, Jacques Derrida and Raymond Williams, and Nancy Huston. Her 2011 book on Jane Ash Poitras is *Cultural Memories and Imagined Futures*. From 2001-2011 she was editor of the journal, *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*.

Shalini Khan, BC and Territories Representative

Shalini Khan is a Caribbeanist and World Literatures specialist. Her research and teaching interests include representations of disease, illness, and disability in literary and medical texts, post/colonial science fictions, and transdisciplinary pedagogies. She is a member of Capilano University's (North Vancouver) Department of English.

Susie O'Brien, Ontario Representative

I am an Associate Professor of English and Cultural Studies, and Director of the Cultural Studies and Critical Theory MA Program at McMaster University. I've been a member of CACLALS since 1991. My teaching and research over the last fifteen years have focussed on the intersections of postcolonial and environmental literary and cultural studies in the context of globalization. My published work includes essays in *Cultural Critique*, *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, *Postcolonial Text*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *Mosaic*, *Canadian Literature*, *Canadian Poetry* and *South Atlantic Quarterly*, and a textbook, *Popular Culture: A User's Guide* (3rd ed. 2013), co-authored with Imre Szeman. I also have a chapter co-authored with Dana Mount, "Postcolonialism and the Environment," forthcoming in the *Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Studies*. My recent and ongoing current projects focus on the postcolonial politics of local food, and the concept of resilience in ecology and culture.

David Leahey, Québec Representative

Dr. David Leahy is about to step down as the head of Études anglaises et interculturelles at the Université de Sherbrooke, and he also teaches in its Littérature canadienne comparée graduate program. He has an MA in Area Studies: the Commonwealth, from the University of London (UK); and a PhD in Humanities from Concordia University. He held a post-doctoral research fellowship on "Homosexual Panic in Postcolonial Literatures" at York University. His areas of specialization are Comparative Canadian & Quebecois literatures, and Post-colonial, Gender

and Cultural Studies. He is a member of VersUS, the Groupe de recherche en études littéraires et culturelles comparées au Canada et au Québec at the Université de Sherbrooke, and has recently been contracted to contribute a chapter on Québécois literature during the Quiet Revolution to the *Oxford Handbook to Canadian Literature* (Cynthia Sugars, editor). He is currently researching and writing primarily about the Neoliberal variant of bourgeois hegemony in Canada and Quebec from a cultural studies perspective, and just received a research grant from FQRSC (Québec) for the project: "La contre-révolution culturelle néolibérale : réarticulation de l'hégémonie bourgeoise dans les littératures du Canada et du Québec (1980-2000)."

John C. Ball, Atlantic/Maritimes Representative

John C. Ball is a Professor of English and Associate Dean of Arts at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. A CACLALS member since 1991 and a past executive member, he is the author of two books, including *Imagining London: Postcolonial Literature and the Transnational Metropolis* (UTP 2004). He is a co-editor of *Studies in Canadian Literature* and editor of the World Fiction volume of the *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Fiction* (Wiley-Blackwell 2011).

Brenna Clarke Gray, Douglas College, Colleges Representative

Brenna Clarke Gray holds a PhD from the University of New Brunswick and has been a member of the English Department at Douglas College since 2010. She specializes in contemporary Canadian literature, comics, and 9/11 and pop culture studies. Brenna is currently at work on her first book, a comprehensive study of the work of Douglas Coupland.

Jesse Arsenault, Grad Student Representative 2012-14 (Elected 2012)

Susan Gingell, Past President (Ex officio, as President 2010-13)

BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by Margery Fee

Bill Ashcroft, Ranjini Mendis, Julie McGonegal, and Arun Mukherjee, eds., *Literature for Our Times: Postcolonial Studies in the Twenty-First Century*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012.

Reviewed by Alessandra Capperdoni

Born out of the 14th international Triennial Conference of ACLALS held in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 2007, *Literature for Our Times* is an ambitious volume in scope and breath of literatures and methodologies. As Ranjini Mendis notes in the preface, the conference theme was prompted by the desire to invite discussion about “the role of literature in our troubled time” (xi), and the range of essays comprising the volume speaks to the urgency that writers and critics still feel about the function of writing in the social world. But this collection also has a second, and equally important, mandate. In the introduction, Bill Ashcroft reminds the readers that the volume appears about twenty years after the groundbreaking publication of *The Empire Writes Back*, a key text in bringing together the “textual attentiveness of Commonwealth literature and sophisticated approaches to contemporary theory” (xv) and facilitating the emergence of postcolonial studies. Time has come, Ashcroft notes, to bring the “radical reflexivity of the field” to the contemporary moment: “What exactly are postcolonial studies? Does this field remain within observable or even locatable boundaries?” (xv). At a time when the institutionalization of world literature, globalization studies, and interdisciplinarity may seem to overlap with or confine postcolonial analysis to a historical, and thus passé, category, Ashcroft is keen to remind us that the “supplementarity” (xx) and “boundary-crossing” (xxi) of postcolonial studies is also what guarantees its dynamic nature and always contemporary thrust.

The collection is comprised of nine sections and an afterword that together illuminate the range of concerns and geographies attended to. Questions of method are at the forefront and

make up Section I of the collection through the analysis of works spanning from the Caribbean to Canada and Australia. Of particular interest is Lincoln Z. Shlensky's discussion of the politics of speech in Jamaica Kincaid's work—especially in view of the fact that Kincaid herself has never embraced this descriptor—and the way in which her writing “helps to recontextualize postcoloniality as a performative rhetorical mode” (38). Orientalism and Said's critique of imperial scholarship informs the discussion of Daniel Roberts' essay on Thomas De Quincey's writing in light of Indomania and Indophobia, while Satish C. Aikant revisits the complexity of the history and discourse of the Indian rebellion of 1857 in a novella by Ruskin Bond.

Translation as a site of contestation, healing, and social bonding is at the heart of the essays of Section III. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o points out the need to shift the relation between dominant and subjugated language to a notion of translation that counters “the dictatorship of monolingualism” and creates “a commonwealth of letters to feed the commonwealth of the human spirit” (122). Ngũgĩ's own work is discussed in relation to translation in essays by John C. Hawley and Mumia G. Osaaji, while Robert Young engages with Ngũgĩ's conceptualization of translation by drawing attention to the many languages that comprise ‘English’ literature and the shifting roles of English across local, national, and transnational communities. A highlight of this section is Elena Basile's discussion of Hong-Kong born Canadian Jam Ismail's poetry, which, Basile notes, recasts translation as the sign of the “internal dissonance of languages at play within the subject herself” and a position that “inhabits the very constitution of the subject” (161). Here translation is poetic choice in order to heal the wound left on language by colonial cultural violence.

The transformative power of translation is effectively followed by discussions of diaspora and migrancy in texts spanning the Caribbean, Canada, India, and Fiji in Section IV. Crossings and intersections are the focus of Dorothy Lane's analysis of two contemporary travel narratives from Canada and Australia. In these texts, the pilgrimage paradigm is particularly interesting in relation to the Orientalizing of the space of “Sacred India” in Western scholarship. But pilgrimages, Lane notes, are also based on a kind of “‘thinking across’—a visible grappling with

translation and cross-cultural dialogue” (247). John Clement Ball attends to Jamaica Kincaid’s work in relation to the “Oceanic imaginary” of the Caribbean and the legacy of the Middle Passage, which he reads in conversation with the tension within Caribbean criticism between location and dislocation, or nationalism and diaspora. While at play in Kincaid’s *Mr. Potter*, these oppositions, Ball notes, are invoked only to be simultaneously broken down. Wounds and oceans reemerge in Kavita Ivy Nandan’s account of the indentured labourers’ journey from India to Fiji in 1879, which the author reads in relation to the political rifts of contemporary Fiji, and the power of writing in healing the effects of racist policies in diasporas and migration throughout the world.

While many essays focus on gender and sexuality, only two make up Section V on gendered bodies—Feroza Jussawalla’s discussion of “differential cultural rights” in texts by women from the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East addressing the practice of the veil, and Cheryl Stobie’s analysis of the effects of the patriarchal nuclear family on the female body in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*.

The following three sections address questions of space and subjectivity in different critical areas—Indigenous literature, Dalit literature, and The City. Jeannette Armstrong’s essay, “Literature of the Land: An Ethos for These Times,” aptly foregrounds the concerns of this rich section in relation to land and ethics. Chelva Kanaganayakam provides a sophisticated discussion of the often invisible Filipino postcolonial writing in English and the specificity of a culture marked by the intersection with oral vernacular, Spanish, and English, as well as the relation with the American diaspora, while Stephen Ney also addresses the literature of the Philippines as the ground for the postcolonization of Christianity. Sam McKegney discusses two novels by Canadian First Nations writers Joseph Boyden and Richard Van Camp, using Indigenous principles of kinship to address the thorny question of masculinity—i.e., “the anxiety about the lack of healthy models of masculine behaviours available to Indigenous youth” (360) and the danger of individualist, violent mentor figures. While the section on Dalit literature is a fresh and welcome contribution to a literature that has gained little critical

attention, the work of a much acclaimed “multicultural” writer, Zadie Smith, is revisited by Pamela McCallum, who refocuses the critical gaze on the intersection of ideologies of nation, ethnicity, and class with the subject positions fashioned and refashioned on contemporary streets. Powerful essays that centre on terrorism, grief, and trauma conclude the volume in critical studies ranging from Fred Ribkoff’s examination of the politics of mourning in the aftermath of the Air India bombing; Summer Pervez’ discussion of Hanif Kureishi’s work on terrorism, racism, and Islamophobia; and Susan Spearey’s sophisticated analysis of two post-conflict memoirs on South Africa and Rwanda by Antjie Krog and Philip Gourevitch. In raising questions about the role of writings of “witnessing” and the conditions of uncertainty produced by the unassimilable traumatic event, Spearey convincingly shows that ethical action can only be situated, contextual, embodied, and intersubjective—a collaborative process that the memoirs also demand of their readers.

Henry Giroux’ Afterword on youth, education, and the post-9/11 condition is an apt conclusion to a volume that bespeaks the contemporaneity of a field of studies that keeps producing fresh and wide-ranging contributions to the critique of old and new colonialisms, but also reclaiming the performative power of writing to reinvent the world.

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Eli MacLaren, *Dominion and Agency: Copyright and the Structuring of the Canadian Book Trade 1867-1918*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2011.

Reviewed by Heather McFarlane

If Canada's authors are indeed our movie stars, as people are fond of saying, why is it that last October 2012 saw the closure of yet another independent Canadian publisher, Douglas & McIntyre? How is it that a nation capable of producing such exceptional literature seems unable to support a healthy and productive book trade? *Dominion and Agency* argues that the Canadian Copyright Act of 1875 is at the root of the nation's inability to create and sustain an original publishing industry. Through the detailed examination of archival documents, specific cases, statutes, and correspondence, Eli MacLaren, a book historian from McGill University manages to demonstrate how copyright law impeded Canadian publishing. To non-specialists of

book history such as myself, the task of weeding through so much historical data seems dauntingly laborious, and I am happy that someone else has proven willing to take up the task. It is ultimately MacLaren's ability to demonstrate the broader implications of his research, particularly in relation to contemporary culture, that makes this book relevant for general as well as specialized readers.

As the book outlines, imperial copyright forbade reprints in the colonies. After the American Revolution, however, the U.S. started illegally reprinting editions of British works, and because they were inexpensive, Canadian publishers began importing them. The Canadian Copyright Act of 1875 sought to liberalize ownership to allow printing and publication in Canada, but, as MacLaren very deftly and thoroughly demonstrates, the act did the opposite, and galvanized London as the centre of publishing. This meant that Canada became first and foremost an importer and distributor of books, and was never able to successfully develop an original publishing industry, in spite of periodic inroads by individuals such as William Briggs and Jack McClelland.

My heart sank, it is true, when the book came through my mailbox. U of T Press's conservative packaging is true to its serious reputation, and the full title, *Dominion and Agency: Copyright and the Structuring of the Canadian Book Trade 1867-1918*, does not promise action and adventure. At times the archival detail does prove to be overwhelming—a more thorough index would have helped me to keep the various legal cases, acts, and statutes straight—but MacLaren is aware of the potential for dullness, and defends his subject good-naturedly, describing his material as “anything but bland” (15). He details historical publishing events that cause intrigue, tension, and “furore” (34). MacLaren can only be characterized as “on fire” when he describes the Belford Brothers as ultimately “combust[ing] in the inferno of reprinting” (70). The author's writing really does keep the material smoldering, however, and his voice—the one that questions the ethics of copyright and the broad implications of publishing on Canadian literary history and identity—not only makes the work accessible, but also promotes engagement.

If, to the book historian, McLaren's text provides invaluable archival information, how might it impact the research and teaching of the CACLALS scholar? *Dominion and Agency*, as the dual meaning of its title indicates, proves to be a powerful reminder of Canada's enduring colonial status, and McLaren alludes to this in his concluding sentence when he states, "As we approach the challenge of reforming copyright for each new generation of media technology, let us avoid repeating the mistake [...] of protecting ourselves to death" (169). On top of its value as historical documentation, this book provides a valuable introduction to the lessons of book history in Canada, and underlines the importance of questioning the ethics of intellectual ownership.

Sophie McCall, *First Person Plural: Aboriginal Storytelling and the Ethics of Collaborative Authorship*. Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 2011.

Reviewed by Jasmine Johnston

Voice, genre, and mediation are three of the key questions regarding Indigenous literatures that Sophie McCall addresses in *First Person Plural*. McCall's title indicates the argument advanced in this work, which is, in essence, that the first person plural subject, we—i.e., orators and those who work with them—co-create meaning in certain Indigenous texts, including ethnography, "(auto)biography," "testimonial life narrative," documentary, myth, legend, and song. Collaborators in the production of such texts include editors, translators, narrators, and "documentarians." Told-to narratives constitute a major body of work in North America, one that is valuable aesthetically and ethically in contexts as diverse as public forums, land claims court cases, commissioners' reports, media representations, and films both documentary and fictional. Each told-to narrative intermingles traditional and contemporary material; that is, each text belonging to this genre bears influences from the cultural archives of the co-creators while offering illuminating interpretive possibilities for the future of Indigenous voices and

representations of voice in Canada. Told-to narratives, then, are especially relevant to both literary and political Indigenous sovereignty.

In this book, McCall focuses on relatively contemporary narratives mostly published between 1990 and 1999, including *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel* by Lee Maracle; *Life Lived Like a Story* by Julie Cruikshank, Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith, and Annie Ned; and *Write It on Your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller* by Harry Robinson and Wendy Wickwire. McCall suggests that the 1990s are an important era for the emergence of told-to narratives that are sensitive to the social contexts from which they emerge. Literary studies concurrently developed analytical approaches to questions of form and content for orature that has been recorded by writing. McCall's Introduction contains an overview of recent contributions from literary and Native studies in Canada and the United States to the work of interpreting told-to narratives. Susan Gingell's concept of "textualised orature" has helped to redefine European genre criticism, while Craig Womack and Jace Weaver have called for a more nuanced approach to the coeval work of the oral and the written. McCall incorporates these and others' contributions into her claim that "there is always a gap between recorder and storyteller," and that, at the same time, a great deal of the discourse surrounding narratives that emerge from storyteller-recorder collaborations affirms "friendship, trust, mutual responsibility, shared agendas, and the relinquishing of authorial control." She accepts these claims as definitional of the unique told-to genre and then proceeds to analyse the ethics and aesthetics of individual texts within the genre in juxtaposition with the political contexts from which these texts emerge and to which they are applied.

Chapter one includes an overview of twentieth-century forces that helped to produce told-to narratives, including Romantic nationalism, salvage ethnography, and the resurgence of Indigenous sovereignty in the 1960s. Chapter two focuses on the late 1960s and the 1970s, especially on the influence of Trudeau's White Paper and the Berger Inquiry. Indigenous voices and assertions of sovereignty then remain intensely relevant now in the context of Prime Minister Harper's omnibus bills and the Idle No More movement. Chapter three examines

media representations of the Kanehsatake standoff by Indigenous artists Alanis Obomsawin and Lee Maracle. Chapter four uses the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) and editorial agendas shaping told-to narratives in the context of attempts at reconciliation. Chapter five considers recent renewed interest in orality in land claims court cases; McCall suggests that the social contexts of oral testimonies demand thoughtful responses from the audiences witnessing these accounts. In chapter six, McCall emphasises that some ideas remain untranslatable—in, for example, the Inuit film *Atanarjuat, the Fast Runner*—and she suggests that when ideas in Indigenous languages resist translation in the told-to genre, the gap between the storyteller and the recorder is made especially visible. These translation-resistant moments command an ethical response at the level of interpretation: watchers, listeners, and readers are forced to acknowledge that some things cannot be known without deeper apprenticeship into the linguistic, artistic, and political milieus of the orators.

Because the degrees of separation between storyteller and recorder can be few or very many, told-to narratives defy easy interpretation, offering instead richly-nuanced perspectives on Indigenous identities. McCall concludes by suggesting that a polyphonic approach to literary sovereignty can reveal in clear, although complex, ways who the “first person plural” is by analysing how the voices of Indigenous orators have been rendered to signify intended meanings. *First Person Plural* ends with a detailed and well-organised notes section, bibliography, and index. I believe the book is an indispensable resource for scholars and activists alike.

Diana Brydon and Marta Dvořák, eds., *Crosstalk: Canadian and Global Imaginaries in Dialogue*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier UP, 2012.

Reviewed by Sarah Waisvisz

“The struggle is always to place words on the page and release the whirlwinds coiled at their heart.” Olive Senior (35)

Diana Brydon and Marta Dvořák's *Crosstalk: Canadian and Global Imaginaries in Dialogue* presents "an international exchange of views among scholars who interpret Canadian literature from within different geopolitical and theoretical locations" (1). The anthology's writers contend that the "previously assumed autonomies of literature and the nation, and the assumed relation of the one to the other, have come into question" (1). The image and framing device of "crosstalk" represents "the ways in which audial and visual imaginaries interact to create complex forms of interference" (1) and is used to question how "the creative sphere . . . is tied to the national" and whether or not, and to what extent, it "[forms] an autonomous global system" (2). The volume is structured to show its emphasis on the concept of "crosstalk" between scholars and artists in various academic disciplines who are informed by diverse cultural traditions, ethnicities, racial identification, and nationalities. Each chapter deals with the spaces of interaction, conflict, and negotiation in our contemporary world; contends with the challenging questions and situations that exist in the uneasy relation between aesthetics and politics; and reveals a core interest in debate and productive discourse.

Overall the volume attempts to enact through its structure the very thematic mission it contends with: the chapters are written by a diverse group of scholars and artists, and their subjects are vast. Yet only two of the chapters, including the introduction by the co-editors, are co-authored, despite the editors' statement in the first chapter that collaborative authorship would benefit crosstalk (8). Perhaps this is one area in which academics in the humanities still fear to tread, despite some intrepid partnerships. Yet it seems like co-authorship would be the natural progression of the spirit of discourse and debate that "crosstalk" envisions and inspires. Nevertheless, a notable characteristic of *Crosstalk* is the frequency with which the authors invoke each other's work from within the volume, not only in footnotes or passing references but also as more engaged conversation. This nod of appreciation, comparison, respect, and solidarity is effective in giving the volume coherence, gravitas, and the chance to formally engage in its thematic priorities.

A notable and even remarkable core concern among the writers of *Crosstalk* is a call to turn to indigenous knowledge and life ways as a legitimate and worthwhile paradigm with

which to approach questions of Canadian art and culture, especially and specifically when dealing with indigenous art or indigenous artists, rather than perpetuating a traditional reliance on Western or European scholarship. The volume's fourth chapter, by Daniel Coleman, exemplifies this mission. Entitled "Epistemological Crosstalk: Between Melancholia and Spiritual Cosmology in David Chariandy's *Soucouyant* and Lee Maracle's *Daughters Are Forever*," the author reads these two Canadian novels against European trauma theory and according to the spiritual frameworks at work in the writers' cultures of origin: in the case of David Chariandy, the mythology surrounding the figure of the vampire-like soucouyant in Trinidadian culture, and for Maracle, the spiritual importance of Westwind in Salish culture.

In fact, this attention to plural world-views and epistemologies is a current that runs through the volume, both in the critical chapters and in the literature they discuss. Olive Senior, whose piece about her writing practice opens the volume, admits to her own duality: "As a writer I feel privileged to have access to two worlds. One of them is an oral culture that is not ossified by tradition but which has a life of its own and continues to thrive apart from the scribal. But I am also a scribal person. What I do is mediate between the two worlds" (28). For Senior, and for many writers and artists, the conflict between cultures is the space of suffering as well as the space of creation and production. Monique Mojica says her theatrical work "has always derived from her embodied life as a mixed-race, indigenous performer, from her 'blood memory', and from the history of indigenous women on the continent" (qtd. in Knowles 74). In his essay, Knowles traces Mojica's development of her play *Chocolate Woman Dreams the Milky Way* out of a desire to create something about indigenous resilience rather than indigenous victimhood (74). Most fascinating about Knowles' chapter is his attention to the indigenous crosstalk, or "transindigenous crosstalk" (80) among the creative team, which included collaborators from several different indigenous cultures, crosstalk that occurred naturally in the creation process of *Chocolate Woman*. Knowles' concern with the creative process and the role of the artist is also taken up in "Portraits of the Artist" by Pilar Cuder-Dominguez, who charts the artist-figures in Dionne Brand's *What We All Long For* (Tuyen) and Madeleine Thien's *Certainty* (Gail). Cuder-Dominguez sees the meta-fictional activity of

portraying an artist as a veritable preoccupation in Canadian literature and as a method for the writer to comment on the role of the diasporic artist in contemporary society.

Crosstalk is, in general, concerned with the present moment in Canadian politics and our response, through literature and scholarly writing, to the trends of globalization, migration, diaspora, and cosmopolitanism that could be seen as unsettling to “Canadian Literature” and the “Canadian Nation.” While Sandra Regina Goulart Almeida argues that Dionne Brand’s vision of Toronto is inspired by her radical “cosmopoetics,” namely her concern with the dislocations and disenfranchisement of diasporic subjects, Charlotte Sturgess discusses how Larissa Lai’s and Hiromi Goto’s fictional works simultaneously engage in “strategies of textual hybridization” and “[split] open epistemological assumptions of cohesive nationhood” in order to question citizenship, belonging, and Asian-Canadian-ness (185). Similarly Diana Brydon’s piece on the media and political controversy inspired by the “Publication of Standards” in 2007 by the Municipality of Hérouxville, Quebec, “provides an instructive case study in the changing dynamics of multicultural engagement and democratic practice” (263).¹

¹ In 2007 the Quebec village of Hérouxville adopted a set of municipal "Standards" that dictated societal norms for the citizens to follow. Amazingly, though the village's 1,300 inhabitants are white and of Catholic heritage, its "Standards" were concerned with informing immigrants of appropriate societal norms and, in the mean time, underlining unacceptable ones. Tim Nieguth and Aurelie Lacassagne explain in "Contesting the Nation: Reasonable Accommodation in Rural Quebec" (*Canadian Political Science Review* 3.1 (March 2009): 1-16) that "the Hérouxville document collapsed the heterogenous category of immigrants into a uniformly problematic and exoticized group. The document suggested that this group was marked by discrimination against women, violence against children, and an emphasis on religious norms and beliefs" (1). The "Standards" articulated a stark difference between the village's unimpeachable "norms" and the less appealing attitudes of non-francophone and non-Catholic immigrant groups including Muslims, Jews, and Hindus. The document, its adoption, and its broader provincial and national media response are related to concurrent debates about multiculturalism, "reasonable accommodation," national identity, and immigration policies, both in Quebec as well as in Canada more generally.

Brydon's piece closes the volume, and she uses her chapter on Hérouxville to underscore the aims of the larger project: "With decolonization, Western norms can no longer be assumed to be universal. . . . Through this volume's focus on the crosstalk of visual and verbal imaginings, we have begun to place these co-constituting imaginaries in productive dialogue" (270).

Brydon's concluding essay reminds the reader of the still-arduous work of contending with racism, prejudice, and the legacy of colonialism in this country.

So what is a critic to do? Significantly, in addition to prioritizing dialogue and discourse, *Crosstalk* also, though perhaps more subtly, promotes a project of ethical witnessing. In "Portraits of the Artist" Cuder-Dominguez writes that both Tuyen and Gail "are engaged in a postmemory project that relies most of all on listening to the Other. . . . Both are compassionate listeners for the diasporic trauma of the previous generation, empathic conduits and translators for the lives and experiences surrounding them" (164). Indeed, several writers in this volume promote the importance of listening in order to properly respect and learn from the knowledge of another person or tradition.

In fact, if *Crosstalk* is successful, it is so because it encourages and enables debate and discourse without, at its conclusion, privileging one voice over another. Perhaps Brand's artist-figure Tuyen, who dreams of creating a three-room art installation to hold "the longings of the city" in which the third room is "empty, the room silent" (309), understands instinctively that the practice of "crosstalk," like "standing under," involves confronting the emptiness and the silence of our own knowledge and therefore admitting what we don't know; listening to that silence, and waiting, in order to learn from one another.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Brenda Carr Vellino, in addition to publishing two co-authored articles with Sarah Waiswiz noted below has the following essay about to appear: "'History's Pulse Measured with Another Hand': Precarity Archives and Translocal Citizen Witness in Dionne Brand's *Inventory*." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 82.2 (Spring 2013).

Christina Cooke reports that she has published a short story, "Me Nuh Choose None," that engages with Caribbean postcoloniality in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Society and Education*: <http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/view/18711>. The story works in the mode of Miss Lou's (Louise Bennett's) print textualized oral folktales.

David Leahy was recently awarded a three-year research grant from Québec's FQRSC for a project entitled *The Neo-Liberal Cultural Counter-Revolution: Rearticulating Bourgeois Hegemony in the Literatures of Canada and Québec (1980-2000)*.

Philip Mingay notes that the Canadian Historical and the Canadian Sociological Associations are hosting a tribute to acclaimed historian of First Peoples in Canada, Olive Dickason, at Congress on Wed., June 5, First Peoples House 6:30-10:00 that might interest CACLALS members . <http://www.csa-scs.ca/files/webapps/csapress/annual-conferences/2013/02/03/tribute-to-olive-dickason/>. It is meant in part to coincide with a special *Native Studies Review* issue about her. Philip has, with his historian colleague William Van Arragon, contributed to the issue an article entitled "In Appreciation of Olive P. Dickason's *The Myth of the Savage*."

Uma Parameswaran has published two new books: *Pinto Sees the Light* (Larkuma, 2013), a collection of stories on the lighter side, and *Early Indo-English Fictionists of South India* (Larkuma, 2013), a critical work that covers the period 1890 to 1960.

Sarah Waiswiz and **Brenda Carr Vellino** have two jointly authored articles coming out: "*The Gull: The Steveston Noh Project as Intercultural Redress Theatre*," *Canadian Literature* 216 (Spring 2013), and "Yael Farber's *Molara* and Colleen Wagner's *Monument* as Post-Conflict Redress Theatre," *College Literature* 40.3 (Summer 2013).

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