

October 2023

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# ASAA NEWSLETTER

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Association for the Study of Australasia in Asia

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Association for the Study of  
Australasia in Asia

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## Forthcoming Book Publication from Osmania-Western Australia Link

A publication arising out of the series of online lectures offered by Osmania University and the University of Western Australia held in 2020 and 2021 on topics related to language and literature in India and Australia is in preparation. With a proposed title of *Aspects of Australian and Indian Literature: Perspectives on English from Hyderabad and Perth*, it is edited by C. Muralikrishna and Kieran Dolin.

The subjects collected in this publication reflect both the postcolonial turn in English studies and the continued position of English as a world language due to economic globalisation. The issue of the politics of language comes to the fore most directly in Professor Y. L. Srinivas's paper, "The English Debate in India," while arguments for global, as well as the more expected national and regional, approaches to the study of Australian literature are analysed in

Professor Tony Hughes-d'Aeth's paper, "The Three Faces of Australian Literature." The global appeal of



Indian writing in English around the turn of the twentieth century was illustrated by Swami Vivekananda, the internationally famous guru. Professor C. Muralikrishna researches the source of his fame in "The Mystic Dimension of Vivekananda's Poems." Dr Parimala Kulkarni studies the Indian variant of the popular genre known throughout the Anglophone world as

“Chick Lit,” placing it within a history of the Indian novel in English. We are also privileged to be able to print a prize-winning short story, “The Houses That Are Left Behind,” by UWA’s Emerita Professor Brenda Walker, a leading contemporary Australian woman writer. Finally, the ongoing project of post-colonising Australian culture is explored in Kieran Dolin’s paper, “Law, Literature and Aboriginal Recognition in Australia.”

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**TRIBUTE TO THE LATE  
RICHARD WOOLCOTT**

On October 05, 2023, Richard Woolcott was remembered by his family, many friends, and admirers at his funeral in Canberra. A former Governor-General and Prime Minister were present in the large congregation, which heard tributes from his son, grandsons and granddaughter. Dick’s love of music was reflected in items for organ by Handel and Bach, and choral psalms.

Dick died on 2 February in Canberra, aged 95. Dr Cynthia vanden Driesen travelled from Perth for the occasion, to express her appreciation of Dick’s contributions over many years as a supporter of ASAA.

Among those who paid tribute to Dick, John McCarthy, another former Ambassador to Indonesia, described him as one of the last great Australian diplomats. He had an ‘outstanding capacity to engage with everybody – from the most elevated to the rest of us – and an ability to communicate, not so much as an orator but with the soft-spoken idiom of perceptions and

confidences exchanged. His charm also belied a persistence of purpose. He could bewitch a group with his ease of manner and then disappear into the night to work’.

From his many years of overseas service, Dick accumulated a wide range of experience, including in the USSR, South Africa, Ghana, (then) Malaya, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines. He headed Australia’s mission to the UN in New York for six years, including a period on the Security Council, before returning to Canberra to become Secretary of DFAT.

In his later years he lived in Sydney, where his annual birthday parties in June brought together friends from his diplomatic life and beyond. The treasures which he and Birgit collected filled his apartment overlooking the Harbour, and their house in Canberra. Another former Ambassador to Indonesia, Ric Smith, described Dick as a ‘glass half full’ kind of person, who could always find something positive even in difficult situations. Peter Woolcott, one of Dick’s two sons, said that he ‘always looked forward. He never looked back - least of all with regret or anger’.

Dick did not think he was cut out to be a diplomat, Peter said. He was neither cautious nor deferential. His talent was for making and keeping friends. He liked people with ideas, and was fascinated by different cultures and civilisations. He was an avid traveller, and in his late years he collected his photographs of exotic places in a series of books, which he

gave to friends. [See Note on Woolcott Gift Below]

Along with all that, Dick had a clear vision of Australia's integration in Asia and the Pacific, which he advocated in the face of change.

**Alison Broinowski AM**

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### **'Giant of Diplomacy': Richard Woolcott Dies, Aged 95**

One of Australia's most accomplished and respected diplomats, Richard Woolcott, has died at the age of 95.

The former Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade secretary who served as ambassador to Indonesia, The Philippines and the UN, died in Canberra ...

A respected adviser to Prime Ministers from Robert Menzies to Kevin Rudd, Mr Woolcott played a key role in Australia's shift towards Asia.

Former Prime Minister John Howard said few people had exerted 'greater influence on Australian foreign policy in the last 30 to 40 years than Richard Woolcott.'

'He personified the "don't upset Jakarta school" of thought,' Mr Howard said.

'As such, he disagreed with the East Timor policy of my government, and the view good relations with Indonesia were the sine qua non of Australian foreign policy dominated his advice.

Mr Howard said he 'frequently disagreed' with Mr Woolcott, 'but I always respected the depth of his understanding of our near Asian neighbours, even though we sharply diverged.'

Former Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, ... Australia's 23rd ambassador to the US, said Mr Woolcott was a passionate believer in Australia's future. 'He was a diplomat's diplomat. He relished hard policy challenges,' Mr Rudd said.

Mr Woolcott saw the 'big picture' of reconciling Australia's place in Asia, while being anchored in its alliance with the US, Mr Rudd added.



Ric Smith, a former ambassador to China and Indonesia and former Defence secretary, said Mr Woolcott was a giant of Australian diplomacy. 'He was in my view the most significant Australian diplomat of the period,' Mr Smith said of his close friend and colleague. 'And he was marked by a tremendous commitment to our relationships and interest in Asia. And in that regard, he was a foreign policy reformer and was very significant in the Whitlam era for that. He was very good at articulating foreign policy.'

Mr Smith said Mr Woolcott, who also served as high commissioner to Malaysia and Singapore, 'was a great bloke, and a very clever diplomat.'

'He was always a very positive, glass-half-full guy,' he said.

'You would go to him thinking you were conveying bad news, and he would quickly see the positive side of

things. He was fantastic to work for in that way.'

Mr Woolcott led the department from 1988 to 1992 and was an influential player in the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation forum.

'He is one of the top diplomats this country has ever produced,' former diplomat and department head Dennis Richardson said.

Mr Richardson, a former Defence and DFAT head and ambassador to the US, said Mr Woolcott had 'outstanding gifts as a leader and diplomat.'

'He was consistent in his views, he was totally non-partisan in his approach to foreign policy matters,' Mr Richardson said.

In one of his last public roles, Mr Woolcott was appointed by Mr Rudd to promote a proposed Asia-Pacific community initiative modelled on the EU.

Mr Woolcott is survived by his sons Peter and Robert.

(First published in the *Australian*, February 2, 2023)

**Ben Packham**

Foreign Affairs and Defence  
Correspondent, *The Australian*

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### **Woolcott Gift to Australian Studies Centre – Osmania University Hyderabad**

This was followed recently by a gift of books from the late Richard Woolcott to the Australian Studies Centre at Osmania University. Narelle Grieve, his former staffer, who has continued to assist him on various projects, co-ordinated the sending out of three unique photographic records

of his diplomatic career in three countries, Ghana, the Philippines and Indonesia. We are much indebted to Narelle for her faithful and painstaking carrying out of this project after Richard Woolcott's death earlier this year.

The Centre was also fortunate to receive an earlier gift of several Australian books from the Australian Vice-Consul in Chennai last year.

A PDF version of *Incredible Indonesia* sent to us by Narelle enables a viewer to look through one of these unique volumes in its entirety.

[https://www.asaa.net.au/files/Incredible Indonesia Rev2.pdf](https://www.asaa.net.au/files/Incredible%20Indonesia%20Rev2.pdf)

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### **Meira Chand – Interviewed by Julie Bannerjee Mehta**

It is not often that the president of Singapore — or any country — calls and says: "Would you please write a novel about Singapore?" But it does happen to unique people, like author Meira Chand. She wrote *A Different Sky* at Singapore president S.R. Nathan's request. Now known as the national novel of Singapore, upon its publication it became Book of the Month choice by Waterstones, got into Oprah Winfrey's recommended reading list, and was long-listed for a major literary award in 2012. Chand is of Indian-Swiss parentage and was born and educated in London. In 1962 she moved to Japan with her husband, then to Mumbai in the early Seventies and now lives in Singapore. Her novel *Sacred Waters* is a somewhat fictionalised story of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment and her book of short stories



on India will be out soon. Excerpts from an interview with T2oS.

**You had once described an encounter as a child on a beach, which lit the fire in you about the issue of identity. I wonder if you could recount that incident briefly and tell us why it was such an important moment to shape your ideas as a writer about identity and belonging.**

The incident you speak of happened when I was about five years old. I was with my parents on a beach in Devon in the southwest of England. I had wandered off and was approached by a strange man who gave me a coin and asked me where I was from. I told him I was from India. My father, who had been watching from a distance, came running up. I next remember my father asking me what the man had said. "Never tell anyone you are Indian. Say you are English," my father told me angrily. He took the coin from my hand and threw it far out to sea.

In that moment my father woke me to the racial complexity of myself, that has followed me all my life. He told me quite literally to turn brown into white. He ordered me to deny him, and so to deny a whole half of myself. The very identity he had given me, and that only moments before I had voiced so easily on that beach, he told me to reject. The confusion grew in me and filled me for life. If already my cultural fragmentation was not enough, I had now been spliced through the root. [...]

**Has the ethos evolved since that day at the beach?**

I should clarify that the incident recounted above took place in the 1940s, when Britain was at the height of its colonial power, when brown faces on British streets were unknown, when an interracial marriage such as my parents' was a rare occurrence that brought stigma and rejection to the couple concerned. My Swiss grandparents disowned my mother for many years. Yet, later, my pioneer father went very successfully into local politics, stood for parliament and became a well-known and much-loved figure. He paved the way for men like today's Rishi Sunak, Britain's first prime minister of Indian blood.



*Meira Chand*

**Your two most recent pieces of fiction, *Sacred Waters*, about Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's creation of the women's wing of his Indian National Army, and your about-to-be-published book of short stories, are both on India. After a cache of over 10 books written mainly on Japan and**

**Singapore, what is the impulse that draws you back to your roots?**

In the early 70s I lived in India for six years, in Mumbai. It was my first encounter with India and it deeply affected me. Just as in England I am called Indian, in India, I am called British. But I felt a sense of spiritual oneness with the land at the deepest level. Although in many ways India is much changed since the time I lived there, there is always a part of India that is unchangeable and unchanging. It is that India that these stories relate to. I am happy they will at last be collectively published.

**The concept of Sacred Waters found seed in your doctoral work — your thesis at the University of Western Australia comprised a novel entitled Brave Sisters and an accompanying essay entitled A Study of Ambivalence and Change: Indian Woman — Warrior or Victim? How did Brave Sisters transform into Sacred Waters?**

Sacred Waters began, as you rightly point out, as a doctoral thesis. Its inspiration was an old black-and-white photograph I came across, of a young Indian woman of probably humble origins, and a new recruit of the newly formed Rani of Jhansi Regiment of the INA. She is in a white sari, for, as yet, the regiment had no uniforms, and is grasping a rifle. The expression on her face is one of pride and hesitancy as she stands poised to step outside her prescribed life role of obedient female, and assert agency against an inflexible patriarchal tradition.

It was that woman's imagined journey from disempowerment to empowerment that began my own journey with the book. Once the academic novel was finished I thought I could easily get it published in the greater world, only to discover that a novel written for academic purposes is a very different creature than a novel written from a deeper source. My agent refused it. I then rewrote the book, putting in a modern timeline and modern characters, and the book became a different thing entirely; it became Sacred Waters.

**Sita, the main protagonist of the novel, is an orphaned, illiterate lower-class woman who has been a child widow in India before arriving in Singapore and remarrying. What was it that drove you to create this character?**

The book explores female disempowerment, what it does to a woman, and how agency and empowerment change her. I wished to begin the book by showing the reader the lowest points of disempowerment a woman can be subjected to, and those points were infanticide and child marriage, and Sita's life journey began at that point. Infanticide is surely the utmost level of disempowerment a female can experience — to be annihilated at first breath. [...]

**How do you see yourself today as a Singaporean writer who has an international following of readers and has written persuasively about Japanese life and India?**

I have lived for extended periods of time in so many different parts of the world, and in every place, including the land of my birth, I have been seen as an outsider. I am deeply grateful for the acceptance Singapore has offered me, even if I am still viewed essentially as an outsider. For the first time in Singapore I have a feeling of inclusion, of being able to contribute to the society I am living in. That is a very good feeling for me. But in the end, after a lifetime as an outsider, home is within myself. [...]

**Julie Banerjee Mehta** currently lives in Calcutta and teaches Master's English at Loreto College.

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### Nicholas Hasluck's New Novel

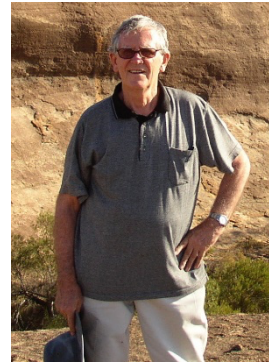


ASAA members will be interested to learn of the publication of Nicholas Hasluck's latest novel, *Che's Last Embrace*. It concerns an artist who is completing a portrait of a Ché Guevara rebel, and the artist's brother who is sceptical of the rebel's supposed heroic identity and begins to investigate him. Set in both South America and Australia, the novel explores competing ideas of truth through the framework of a postmodern thriller. It is Hasluck's fourteenth novel, and reflects his longstanding interest in stories about

Australia's international connections. *Che's Last Embrace* is published by Arcadia, an imprint of Australian Scholarly Publishing.

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### *Sotto Voce: New and Selected Poems* in a Multilingual Edition by Glen Phillips



*Sotto Voce: New and Selected Poems* 2023 was launched on 8 June 2023 in the State Library of Western Australia by fellow-poet Rose Van Son.

Internationalist in conception and large in scope, the book contains poems by Glen set in Australia, Europe and China, along with translations of some works into Chinese, Italian, Montenegrin, French, Spanish, Macedonian, Slovenian and Arabic. The translations were selected and edited by Yin Xiaoyuan of the World Encyclopedic Poetry School, Beijing. Some of the poems are translated into several languages, making this, as Glen states in his preface, 'a unique multilingual volume.' The book may be purchased from Crow Books or New Edition Bookshop.

In addition to this achievement, Glen has recently been made Patron of the Perth Poetry Festival and Judge of this year's Australian Poetry d'Amour competition for love poems (both in September).

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**TRIBUTE TO THE LATE  
JOHN BARNES**

As I have said elsewhere, there comes a time in one's life when writing obituaries becomes more commonplace than one would like. Each one tells of a loss to the wider community and to the author.

Although I knew that John was elderly, 92, and had not been very well in recent months, I was totally unprepared for his friend John Pietka's early morning call to tell me that he had died suddenly, hopefully in his sleep. I had spoken to him only a short time before his death.

I would like to recall that, at some stage, I heard or read a description of John as a "Gentle Gentleman" which is exactly how I knew him. Whether in class or outside he was gentle and courteous but firm.

John was and will remain internationally well-known as a scholar of Australian Studies. He had a true Renaissance intellect; an avid reader across a wide number of fields, his interests were many ranging from gardening, and the Australian countryside to fine food and wines, from all genres of English literature to Australian, from Chinese authors to Indian, philosophy, theology, Australian and International Politics. I can remember being amazed that on a visit to Barcelona, he read *Tirant lo*

Blanc in Valenciano. His curiosity was unbounded and led him in many different directions as he explored new avenues of thought.


 THE BARCELONA  
 AUSTRALIAN  
 Nº1. May 1999 Free Copy



**CONTRIBUTORS :**

COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE I CLASS AT THE UNIVERSIDAD DE BARCELONA.

*Left to Right:* Eva Campaña Pizarro, Cristina López Santamaría, Susana Miquel Bonquets, Laila Núñez, Prof. John Barnes, Cristina Duman Ayra, Cristian Vitecova, Fabián Domínguez, Amaya Wehrli, Gisela Roccia, Emma Houghton.

*Absent:* Dr. Susan Ballyn, Sheila Normandy, Lucía Rodríguez, Josh Vazquez.

Edited by Emma Houghton with the assistance of Eva Campaña Pizarro & Josh Vazquez.

John was internationally well-known as a highly gifted and generous scholar of Australian Studies. Some of his outstanding works include *The Order of Things: A Life of Joseph Furphy* (1990) and *La Trobe: Traveller, Writer, Governor* (2017), a remarkable biography of Charles Joseph La Trobe. One of his earlier works, *The Penguin Henry Lawson short stories* (1986), has become a classic and is still set on curriculums both within Australia and abroad. I would encourage readers to look at the range of work covered by John during his career.

I would now like to turn to a lesser-known but nonetheless noteworthy side of John's work. It was thanks to John and Lucy Frost that an exchange agreement was set up between our two institutions: La Trobe University



and the University of Barcelona. This was one of the first agreements with an Australian University for our university. It was a resounding success. John came to Barcelona on several occasions to teach at both Undergraduate and Masters levels. I used to sit in on all his classes and the energy generated in the classroom was extraordinary.

He worked on many levels with the students encouraging them to do extracurricular activities which they found very rewarding. It was in this way that the newspaper *The Barcelona Australian* was founded. As we had both La Trobe exchange students in the class and Erasmus students from all over Europe, the students contributed an article on something which had attracted their attention about Australia or Barcelona.

John also inaugurated two publications called *In Conversation With*. He was generous with his time and inspired his students to move forward into their futures. He worked with the outgoing students to La Trobe giving them the possibility to interview important writers with whom he maintained close contact. One was Dorothy Hewett and the other Ruby Langford Ginibi. He gave the students who wished to participate access to reading lists and any video material which he had. As a result of this, the two numbers published were *Dorothy Hewett in conversation with Cecilia Montesinos & Sonia Rigola* and *Ruby Langford Ginibi in conversation with Blanca Fullana*. He made all the necessary arrangements for the

students to meet the authors and edited their interviews with great care.

As a result of this work by John, I got to meet and become friends with Ruby Langford Ginibi which was to turn out to be fundamental to my teaching of her work and other Indigenous writers.

As lecturers both of us knew that teaching Australian history, culture, geography and literature to students whose mother tongue was not English was a huge challenge both for them and for us. Over innumerable cups of coffee and lunches, we suddenly realised that it was up to us to remedy the situation in so far as we could. It was thus that our handbook came into being, BALLYN JENNEY, S.P. y BARNES, J., 1998. *Imagining Australia: a handbook for European students*.

Co-editing with John was an experience like no other. He was meticulous to a degree. It is thanks to working with him that I have been able to become an editor in my own right. His sense of humour was phenomenal. When we were working on the penultimate copy of proofs for the book, I got a call and heard John saying: "You know Sue, I am so disappointed in your editing." The floor collapsed under my feet. "Please look at the glossary again." I went over and over the extensive glossary but could find nothing. Another call: "May I suggest you look at the entries under B." I did, and again found nothing. Another call: "Perhaps we should look at the B entries together" We did and there was my massive error. Under B, John had written, "Ballyn a migratory bird often seen in New South Wales

and Victoria in winter!" At that time I was out in Australia every winter! ..

John was a regular visitor to Barcelona until travelling became impossible due to his arthritis and age. Nonetheless, I used to ring him regularly and there was always a lot of laughter. I continued to see him every winter until health got at me as well and I could no longer do a yearly trip out. We always enjoyed each other's company and I miss him very much as I know so many people do. His memory will be perpetuated in his work which is unlikely to gather dust on library bookshelves.

**Sue Ballyn**

University of Barcelona

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***TRIBUTE TO THE LATE  
JAYANTHA DHANAPALA***

Former Sri Lankan diplomat Jayantha Dhanapala, aged 85, passed away while receiving treatment at the Kandy General Hospital.

The news was confirmed by the Kandy Hospital Director, who expressed deep sorrow over the loss of a distinguished statesman and diplomat.

Throughout his illustrious career, Dhanapala held several high-ranking positions, leaving an indelible mark on Sri Lankan diplomacy. Notably, he served as the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs at the United Nations from 1998 to 2003, where he played a pivotal role in shaping disarmament policies and initiatives on a global scale.



Dhanapala's diplomatic prowess earned him widespread recognition and accolades. In 2007, he was appointed as the Secretary-General of the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP) in Sri Lanka, where he actively worked towards finding a peaceful resolution to the longstanding civil conflict in the country.

Dhanapala also served as a member of the Constitutional Council of Sri Lanka from 2018-2020.

[Newswire] May 27, 2023 at 5:15 PM

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***TRIBUTE TO THE LATE  
ALF TAYLOR***



It is with great sadness that we report the death of Western Australian writer, Alf Taylor, on the 29th July 2023. Born to a Nyoongar family in 1945, Alf was a member of the Stolen Generation who grew up in New Norcia Aboriginal Mission. He

published a shocking but also humorous account of this experience in his memoir, *God, the Devil and Me* (Magabala Books, 2021). Alf was also the author of two books of poetry, *Singer Songwriter* (1992) and *Winds* (1994), and a collection of short fiction, *Long Time Now: Stories of the Dreamtime, the Here and Now* (2001). His most recent book was *Cartwarra or What* (2022), a selection of his poetry and short stories, which was highly commended in the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards this year. Alf gave readings of his work at literary festivals and universities in Chennai (2002) and Hyderabad (2020), in England, Germany, France, Spain, China, and at various locations in Australia. In an obituary published in *Mascara Literary Review*, Anne Brewster, one of the leading experts on Australian Indigenous writing, wrote that Alf Taylor was 'a master storyteller ... His passing makes the gift of his writing all the more precious and pressing.' (Photo by Dennis Haskell)

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### **Mahatma: Shaping the Soul of a Nation**

This evening we celebrate the life of the most remarkable person of the 20th century: a man without an army, armed with a frayed book and a wooden walking stick. And a soul more embracing than any ocean, who valued the little things of life and cultivated a soaring vision of the sacred and divine around him.

While Robert Oppenheimer was splitting the atom, ushering in the Atomic age, Mohandas Karamchand

Gandhi was showing us the moral power hidden in the atman, the human soul, that which makes us more than human and connects the light in our eyes to the glimmering stars. [...]

Today the quest for peace by ahimsa, nonviolence, remains the most urgent issue of our times.

The clock of doom is barely two minutes away from Midnight. The current climate crisis is also the crisis of our conscience in creating a planetary consciousness. Covid-19 pandemic has taught us: there are no safe or secure borders for catastrophes.

Our world is inter-connected; we're wired and mired, even fired, on our one and only life-giving planet, Mother Earth, our most uncommon common home. [...]

I wish to make a few connections with our meeting here tonight and the two civilizations of which we are citizens and share certain aspects of an evolving heritage on which a new international community is possible. [...]

The original architect of Canberra, Walter Burley Griffin, is buried in Lucknow. He died there in 1937. Around 1897 my grandparents were transported from two villages from near Lucknow to a ceded archipelago in the South Pacific to work for the CSR company of Australia.

Few know about those 87 ships over forty years across the Seven Seas to Fiji. History is often hidden in the hinges of our inhumanity and indifference. Sugar was sweet for some, bitter for many, uprooted from their humble villages on a subjugated

subcontinent to protect the indigenous way of life: a unique page in colonial history.

Mohandas Gandhi, attorney, found his Light, satyagraha, among the indentured and small merchants fighting discrimination and disenfranchisement in the 'Dark Continent'.

The struggle he started in 1893 in South Africa found some fulfilment a century later, in 1993. [...]

In 1939 my favourite Australian writer Patrick White published his first novel, *Happy Valley*, and went on to win the Nobel prize for Literature in 1973—the first, and so far, the only literary Nobel laureate from our region.

The epigraph of the novel is a quote from Mahatma Gandhi's essay on suffering: the purer the suffering, the greater is the progress.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote and spoke the most indelible messages: he lived his words and showed the infinite possibilities of friendship and human decency even when you are rebelling against the mightiest Empire.

As Albert Einstein remarked: only Gandhi brought a higher ethical conduct in our political life. [...] Freedom for Gandhi was indivisible and peace was the unassailable weapon to achieve it: he called it Satyagraha, the unshakable firmness in Truth. It required immense courage of that still small voice within each of us. [...]

[...] On 7 June 1893, at Pietermaritzburg, Durban, Mohandas Gandhi is thrown out of the train's first-class compartment.

That cold, dark night the world changed for the British trained lawyer; after that transformative experience, he tried to change the world. He certainly changed the Empire.

That he succeeded so radically at a time when the world was subjected to the most genocidal fifty years — with bloody revolutions, World Wars, the Holocaust and Hiroshima, Partitions, racism, religious bigotry — is an incredible story.



*Nandan outside Patrick White's residence at Centennial Park in Sydney*

Here was a man who often walked barefooted in his loincloth with his hand uplifted over hate and a heart full of love for the lost, the lowest and the loneliest.

But when he turned the searchlight inwards, he was killed. It's too early to know the effects of that martyrdom for he set standards by which many still measure themselves whenever and wherever darkness descends and the virus of violence erupts with volcanic fury. [...]

Gandhiji was and is that extraordinary light on the mountain, a lighthouse in today's nuclear-powered seas.

Patrick White in his essays puts



Mohandas Gandhi in the company of Gautama Buddha and Jesus Christ.

[...] Like the sea Gandhi touches islands and continents; the waves of his thoughts, actions, and writings seem to inspire generations towards freedom and a sense of true independence: to be able to think for ourselves, individually and collectively, sharing one world and walking with our heads held high without fear and in freedom building a just world.

Nothing was too small for him: from sanitation to salvation, from our daily diet to the ultimate meaning of life and death. [...]

Gandhiji is the only Indian leader I feel who had the experience of three continents. That shaped his worldview and the ceaseless search for the immense strength intrinsic in every human being. On every continent he encountered the kindness of strangers of every faith who enlightened his own faith in the essential, unfinished humanity of our multiple journeys [...].

At times he failed but even his failures saved more lives than the armies of the night that marched and massacred on the subcontinent and beyond.

The soul force—love-in-action—was his weapon. And he attempted to give it a new definition in the independent soul of the country of his birth, in the very idea of India that transcends the shackles of history and the groans of our inhuman past.

But what constitutes the soul of a nation?

President Joe Biden's slogan is:

Saving the Soul of America; in Australia a book, recently published, is titled *The Idea of Australia: A Search for the Soul of a Nation*.

In India thinking people are questing for the soul of a profoundly multitudinous subcontinent in which the Ganges flows from the Himalayas towards an open ocean that washes the shores of Australia [...].

The idea of a soul, like Love or God, may be invisible, but Gandhiji showed us its real presence and power through his heroic actions and the holiness of our hearts' affections. [...]

Ngunnawal, Nandi, New Delhi, Lucknow, have a lot in common, if only we can connect, with healing and humility in our hearts and the freedom of our imagination. The possibilities of peace, especially in our region, are endless like Life itself.

**Satendra Nandan**

Emeritus Professor Satendra Nandan delivered the Gandhi Oration at the ACT Assembly

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**TRIBUTE TO THE LATE**

**PROF. NAYAN BYRAPPA**

Ph.D. (Moscow), FRSC (London), FWAC (Italy), FAPAM (Japan)

Former Vice Chancellor, Mangalore University

Pro Vice Chancellor, Adichunchanagiri University

Prof. K. Byrappa obtained his Masters degree from the University of Mysore with Distinction, Rank and Medals. Then his Ph.D. degree and Post-Doctoral training both from Moscow State University, Russia (one of the Top Ten Universities in the

world during that time). He spent 31 years at the University of Mysore in different capacities before becoming the Vice Chancellor of Mangalore University, Karnataka (June 2014 to June 2018). From July 2018, he was the Pro-Vice Chancellor & Dean Research of Adichunchanagiri University. He was specialized in Materials Science, Nanotechnology, Nanobiotechnology, Crystal Growth, Crystal Structures, Crystal Engineering and Chemistry of Materials, and Environmental Engineering. For his outstanding contribution to the field of **Materials Science**, especially on Hydrothermal Processing of Advanced Functional Materials, Prof. Byrappa was recognized as one of the Top 2% Scientists in the World as per the recent survey conducted by the prestigious Stanford University, USA.



*Prof. K. Byrappa receiving Sir C.V. Raman Gold Medal for the year 2016-17 by Hon. Prime Minister of India Sri Narendra Modi in recognition of his contribution to Science and Technology in India*

His interests did not ignore the Humanities, for which ASAA specially valued his contribution. Below is an account of the GIAN project he initiated at Mangalore University in 2018.



GIAN (Global Initiative of Academic Networks) is an Indian Government initiative which enables Indian universities to bring experts from diverse disciplines from abroad to teach on their campuses for a limited period. Lectures are beamed throughout India, and the recordings remain as part of an archival resource in New Delhi.



Professor Byrappa, a friend from earlier ASAA programmes held at Mysore University, where his wife Sunitha was Professor of English, invited Cynthia vanden Driesen to Mangalore to shape a course entitled 'Affirmations of Female Strength in Selected Writings from West Africa, India and Australia.' GIAN awards to the Humanities are rare, but Professor Byrappa's influence must certainly have helped.

Attendees were postgraduates and teachers of English Literature from Mangalore and Bangalore Universities. Some travelled distances – from

Kerala, Hyderabad, New Delhi and even Sri Lanka – to participate.

Professor Byrappa showed consistent interest by dropping in at sessions and making arrangements to help those experiencing difficulties with illness or travel.

His remarkable generosity, far-sightedness as an educationist, brilliant scholarship and greatness as a human being will always be remembered.

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### New ASAA Representative for South Korea

Professor Hyung Shik Kim (Chung Ang University, Seoul, South Korea) has been succeeded by Seulkee Nam of Ewha Woman's University, Seoul. Prof. Kim was a long-time contributor to Australian Studies. He taught for several years at Edith Cowan University and contributed an introduction in Korean translation for Cynthia vanden Driesen's Anthology

of Australian Literature for Korean Readers supported by the Literature Board of Australia in 1995.



Seulkee Nam is working for her PhD at SOAS University of London. Her research which she is pursuing at SOAS (School of Oriental and Asian Studies) and which will shortly be completed, explores the impact of Christian education on South Korean culture and education. She has been recruited to the position by Cynthia. They became acquainted while staying together at the same accommodation in London last year.

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## ASAA TEAM

**Meira Chand** [www.meirachand.com](http://www.meirachand.com) – is currently Patron of the Association and has been associated with ASAA for several years. She is a novelist with an international profile and the author of twelve novels (see her website). She is domiciled in Singapore as well as the UK and occupies a special position in the Singaporean literary and cultural milieu. She writes a regular column for *The Straits Times*, the national newspaper of Singapore.

**Stephen Alomes – President, ASAA (Australia)** Adjunct Professor at RMIT University, Melbourne. He is possibly one of the longest-standing members of the Association and has made a distinctive contribution to all our conferences and publications over many years. He has a particular interest in the national and the colonial in a globalising world. Email: [stephen.alomes@rmit.edu.au](mailto:stephen.alomes@rmit.edu.au)

**Kieran Dolin – Vice-President, ASAA (Australia)** has been a representative for WA with ASAA and has visited Hyderabad for an ASAA Conference. He is a Senior Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia. He worked to assist the ASAA group attend the Hyderabad Literary Festival 2020: besides presentations at the festival, he also met with officials of Osmania University to initiate official discussions on the possibility

of establishing a formal link with the University of Western Australia. (See the annotations in this Newsletter) Email: kieran.dolin@uwa.edu.au

**Kavita Ivy Nandan—Secretary, ASAA (Australia)** co-edited several literary works from 1998-2007. Her first novel *Home after Dark* was published in 2015. She completed her PhD in Literature at the Australian National University and has lectured in Creative Writing and Literature at the University of Canberra and other Australian universities. Kavita was born in New Delhi, grew up in Suva and moved to Canberra in 1987. Email: nandan.kavita@gmail.com

**Parimala Kulkarni—President, ASAA (Asia)** is Associate Professor in the Department of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad. Her area of specialization is Women's Writing. Her research interests include Indian Literature, Gender Studies, and English Language Pedagogy. She has co-edited a book, *Contemporary British Literature - Post 1990s: A Critical Study* (2013). She is a recipient of a UGC Research Award 2014-2016. She was previously Secretary (Asia) and has had crucial responsibilities for the production of the ASAA Newsletter. Email: paripavan@gmail.com

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

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

**David Mathews – Secretary, ASAA (Asia)** teaches in the English Department at Nizam College and is also a Research Scholar at Department of English, Osmania University. working in the broad area of Nationalism, Ireland, and Poetry. He has been associated with the Department of English, OU for the past ten years in various teaching and research capacities. Prior to beginning his work in academia, he was employed in the IT industry.

#### ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Greg Battye** is Adjunct Professor in Design and Creative Practice at the University of Canberra. His research includes photography, narrative theory and new writing technologies and new media forms. Greg's works are held by the National Gallery of Australia, the National Library of Australia and other national institutions. Greg was vice-president of ASAA for several years (2007-2013) Email: Greg.Battye@canberra.edu.au

**Tony Simoes da Silva** was Professor and Associate Dean of International Programmes with responsibility for South Asia at Wollongong University till he took up the position of Head, School of Humanities at the University of Tasmania. Tony co-edited the *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature (JASAL)* and *La Questione Meridionale (The Southern Question.)* He attended the ASAA conference at Osmania University and is well-



known to many of our Asian colleagues. Email: Tony.SimoesdaSilva@utas.edu.au (Note: TBC).

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

**Anjali Gera Roy** is Professor in the Department of Humanities of Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. She has published essays in literature, film and cultural studies on India as well as on African culture. She is now researching the transnational flows of Bollywood cinema and has recently co-edited several volumes in this field. She was President of ASAA (Asia) for several years and has remained an active member of ASAA for many years. Email: agera\_99@yahoo.com

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

**Cynthia vanden Driesen** is currently Chair of the Advisory Council and also Treasurer of the Association. Her teaching and research career was mainly based at Edith Cowan University and she was subsequently a Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia. She has taught at Universities in Sri Lanka, India, W. Africa and South Korea. With Satendra Nandan she set up ASAA at a meeting of international academics in Colombo (ACLALS 1997) and served for several years as President (Australia). Her research and publications are mainly in the area of Australian literature and other New Literatures in English. E-mail: cynthia.v@westnet.com.au

#### **Additional Committee Members in the Region**

##### **India**

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

##### **Australia**

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

**New Zealand** Professor Mark Williams, Victoria University of Canterbury.

**Singapore** Professor Kirpal Singh, Singapore Management University.

**Sri Lanka** Frances Bulathsinghala, Open University of Sri Lanka. Writer, Journalist, Academic. Professor Harshana Rambukwella, Open University of Sri Lanka.

**Malaysia** A/Professor Carol Leon, University of Malaysia.

**S. Korea** Seulkee Nam, Ewha Woman's University, Seoul.

- China** Professor Lu Le, Australian Studies Center, University of Shanghai for Science and Technology.  
Professor Liang Zhong, Mudangiang, Australian Studies Center.
- Japan** Professor Yasue Amritsu, Doshisa University, Kyoto.
- Philippines** Professor Marjorie Evanescio-Pernia, De La Salle University.
- Bangladesh** Dr. Mashrur Hosain, Jhanaginagar University.
- West Africa** Professor Karen King-Aribisala, University of Lagos.
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Professor Antonella Riem, University of Udine.
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- Germany** Dr. Sissy Helff, Universitat Darmstadt;  
Prof. Dr. Brigitte Johanna Glaser, University of Gottingen.
- U.S.A** Dr. Nathanael O'Reilly, Texas Christian University.  
Assoc. Professor Pavithra Narayanan, Washington State University, Vancouver.
- U.K.** Professor Janet Wilson, University of Northampton.
- Canada** Dr. Aparna Halpe, University of Toronto.
- South Africa** Dr. Bridget Grogan, University of Johannesburg.

**Application for Membership of ASAA**

**Name (in capital letters) Prof./Dr./Mr./Ms.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Institutional Affiliation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone No** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail Address** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Date**

**Signature**

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