

1988

## The Year That Was

Mark MacLeod

Diana Brydon

G N. Devi

Annamarie Rustom Jagose

Alamgir Hashmi

*See next page for additional authors*

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## The Year That Was

### Abstract

AUSTRALIA, CANADA, INDIA, NEW ZEALAND, PAKISTAN, SINGAPORE, SOUTH AFRICA, WEST INDIES:  
Retrospective 1986, WEST INDIES, GERMAN INTEREST IN THE NEW LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

### Authors

Mark MacLeod, Diana Brydon, G N. Devi, Annamarie Rustom Jagose, Alamgir Hashmi, Kirpal Singh, Cherry Clayton, Victor J. Ramraj, and Peter O. Stummer

# The Year That Was

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## AUSTRALIA

With a marketing opportunity like the Bicentenary to be exploited, you could bet there'd be more Australian titles in 1988 than we can talk about here.

Although the Bicentenary logo appeared obtrusively on many dustjackets (quite ludicrously in the case of John Forbes's collection of poems *The Stunned Mullet*) a strong note of literary protest heralded the year. In late 1987 Kath Walker announced that she would revert to her Aboriginal name, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, and Patrick White insisted that his *Three Uneasy Pieces* appear just before 1988, not in the Bicentenary year itself. And that's where the relevance of 1988 to White's work stops.

Inevitably, most of the other major fiction titles have been reviewed as Bicentennial books. Peter Carey says his Booker Award-winning *Oscar and Lucinda* (UQP) has nothing at all to do with the Bicentenary, but that isn't the way this novel about expatriation, God, glass and gambling has been read. Who cares! It's a wonderful achievement.

The book's failure to win any of the major literary awards in Australia is an ironic footnote. Some commentators have leapt to the good old cringing position that the British are right to give *Oscar and Lucinda* the Booker, and Australian judges wouldn't know a good 500-page novel if they fell over it. It may simply be, though, that the book's old-fashioned wordiness is not appealing to Australian readers at the moment. Or perhaps it's our culture's traditional need to cut down tall poppies. Judges of the various Australian awards may have felt that Carey has had enough publishing hype and success and other writers should be given a go. At any rate, it will be interesting to see how Australians view the book in the future, when the Booker publicity has died down.

One of those intriguing little coincidences history comes up with: Carey has a glass church floating down the Bellinger River; in her new novel, Thea Astley has a brothel, loosed from its foundations by swirling brown flood waters, drift off into the bay. *It's Raining in Mango* (Viking) is Astley at her best: both dreamlike and angry. If her feminism seems equivocal elsewhere there's no doubt about the anti-patriarchal writing here.

Like Astley, Kate Grenville takes a broad sweep of recent Australia history in *Joan Makes History* (UQP) and gives it a feminist rewriting, but it's a bit of a romp too. Grenville takes Lilian's friend Joan, a minor character in *Lilian's Story*, and lets her tell things her way: and her story is that although you wouldn't know it to read the history books, there's always been a Joan behind the events of the last 200 years. There's a slight feeling that, like most historians, the novelist is less confident as she brings the narrative up to her own period, but not enough to diminish its overall exuberance.

Frank Moorhouse's *Forty-Seventeen* (Viking) questions more tentatively the masculine mythology that Grenville simply inverts. It's a story of mid-life crisis. A 40-year-old man tries to pursue Nature in two of its most familiar constructs: a nostalgic view of the Bush; and the female as young object, 17. An uncomfortable juxtaposition: Forty-seventeen.

For those willing to read the silences in Australian literature, *Forty-Seventeen* is a stimulating short novel of ideas. An attractive minor aspect is its contribution to the mythology of the Blue Mountains in NSW: useful to put alongside, say, David Foster's *The Pure Land*.

The best new novelist in 1988 is Mark Henshaw. His *Out of the Line of Fire* (Penguin) is erotic and erudite. Like Moorhouse's *Forty-Seventeen*, it objectifies the female, but the male gaze itself is scrutinised by the presence of a second male narrator.

Slightly difficult also to get into but worth pursuing is Barry Hill's novel *The Best Picture* (McPhee Gribble). Set in a Buddhist community, it's both a novel of ideas and social satire as sharp as Jhabvala's or Rushdie's. Hill returns here to some of the concerns of *A Rim of Blue*. He's a writer of great integrity; not well known outside Australia, but *The Best Picture* should certainly change that.

With a toast to 'the Old Country, Home' on the first page, Elizabeth Jolley seems to invite an intriguing metaphorical reading of her new novel, *The Sugar Mother* (Fremantle Arts Centre Press). This wicked little fairy tale about surrogate motherhood, or academic parenting, develops some of the themes in *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* and *The Well*, but has had less attention than it might have. Perhaps its just 1988, or the tall poppy syndrome again.

Rodney Hall's *Captivity Captive* (McPhee Gribble) is a fictionalised treatment of the unsolved Gatton murders in 1898. A brother and two sisters are killed, an unlikely confession offered, and grim possibilities suggest themselves. It's a frightening portrait of the family: dark and brooding, but written in spare poetic prose that gives it a beautiful mythic quality. A striking combination in yet another novel that's been strangely underrated (and incidentally an example of Australian book design at its best).

Other fiction at the top of the list: Barbara Hanrahan's novel *A Chelsea Girl* (Grafton), Gerald Murnane's *Inland* (Heinemann) for those who like the slow pace but dry wit of *The Plains* and *Landscape with Landscape*; Tom Shapcott's *Limestone and Lemon Wine* (Chatto and Windus), and the collection Olga Masters was working on at the time of her death in 1986, *The Rose Fancier* (UQP). Although a brief and uneven collection, a handful of the stories here remind us why she is so sadly missed.

In poetry, Kevin Gilbert's long awaited anthology *Inside Black Australia* (Penguin) is the first gathering of Aboriginal poets. Despite, rather than because of, the Bicentenary's aims, 1988 in retrospect will turn out to be the best thing that ever happened to Aboriginal writing. The newly confident tone of Aboriginal writers is signalled by Oodgeroo's selection here. The first, and still the most, famous Aboriginal poem in English, 'We Are Going', which laments the passing of her people, is not included by Gilbert. Instead, Oodgeroo is represented by her later poem 'The Past', which beings:

Let no one say the past is dead.  
The past is all about us and within.

Like Oodgeroo, Colin Johnson has used 1988 to rename himself symbolically. Generally known as Australia's first Aboriginal novelist, he becomes Mudrooroo Narogin with his second collection of poems, *Dalwurra* (Fremantle Arts Centre Press): a book that persuades me, as *The Song Circle of Jacky* did, that he is also now our leading Aboriginal poet.

John Tranter's *Under Berlin* (UQP) is witty, technically assured and Tranter at his most accessible. That's not to say that sequences such as 'Sex Chemistry' are without challenges. But there's a new warmth and an impressive range in Tranter's work here, from 'The Guides', his whimsical poem about street directories, to the award-winning 'Lufthansa'.

Like Tranter, Diane Fahey seems aware that many readers are alienated by the difficulty of contemporary poetry. In *Metamorphoses* (Dangaroo Press) she gives a powerful and free reading of Euripides and Ovid from a feminist point of view. I usually hate footnotes

flyspecking the pages of poetry books but here the notes, the reproductions of paintings by Tintoretto, Titian and Rubens, and a bibliography are collated at the back, so readers who don't need this kind of help can ignore it. Others will find it liberates rather than confines their reading of the poems and will also stimulate an interest in the classical sources themselves.

Interesting to read *Metamorphoses* alongside Bruce Beaver's sequence 'Tiresias Sees' in *Charmed Lives* (UQP). This is Beaver's tenth collection and it's framed by his concern with the artist: both in the person of Tiresias and in a verse biography of Rilke.

It's good to see an updated edition of Andrew Taylor's *Selected Poems* (UQP); and Judith Rodriguez's *New and Selected Poems* (UQP) at last collects her work and show the strong growth of this underrated poet's work. And new collections by Peter Goldsworthy *This Goes With That* (ABC), Philip Hodgins *Down the Lake with Half a Chook* (ABC) and Chris Wallace-Crabbe *I'm Deadly Serious* (OUP) are worth reading.

Several collections of poems accompanied by photographs have appeared recently. The relationship between the two is literal in Mark O'Connor's *Poetry of the Mountains* but metaphorical in Mark Macleod's *Finding Echo Point* (Dangaroo Press) with its outstanding photographs by Reece Scannell.

Finally several interesting but uneven collections: postmodern theory somehow doesn't sit happily with Peter Porter in *The Automatic Oracle* (OUP); Jennifer Maiden's work is always challenging in *The Trust* (Black Lightning); and another wonderful title but a sometimes frustrating book from John Forbes: *The Stunned Mullet* (Hale & Iremonger). He's an exciting poet and this book is Forbes at his best; unfortunately, it shows him at his inaccessible worst, too.

The year's publications in drama include David Malouf's first play *Blood Relations* (Currency) and Michael Gow's *1841* (Currency). Both had a pretty rough time from the reviewers.

I wish I could report that there's more than one really outstanding Australian play this year, but the theatre is taking very few risks with new work. Anyway, that's another story ... Alma de Groen's *The Rivers of China* (Currency) is terrific! It sends us back in time to a patriarchal past with Katherine Mansfield suffering from TB and Gurdjieff, and forward to some frightening matriarchal future. De Groen's work has always been successful, but minor. *The Rivers of China* clearly distinguishes her as a major talent.

In children's literature, *Baily's Bones* (Viking), Victor Kelleher's anti-Bicentennial novel about non-Aboriginal Australia's need to confront its violent past, and Robin Klein's *Laurie Loved Me Best* (Viking) are among the best titles for older readers. Klein's feminism is sometimes compromised by humour, but less so here as she moves away from the role of stand-up comic that's made her a favourite with Australian children.

Gillian Rubinstein follows her outstanding first book *Space Demons* with two tautly written novels: *Answers to Brut* (Penguin) and *Beyond the Labyrinth* (Hyland House). And in non-fiction *The Australopedia* (Penguin) edited by Joan Grant is a dynamic compendium for 12-year-olds: beautifully designed, politically sophisticated, fun; packed with photographs, stimulating articles about the Australian way of life, and trivia, both useful and useless.

For younger readers you can't go past Paul Jennings' *The Cabbage Patch Fib* (Penguin). Chris is an 8-year-old boy whose father stupidly tells him babies come from under cabbages. It turns out to be true! Chris becomes the adoptive parent and finds out how hard it is to concentrate on a maths lesson with a hungry baby in its basket beside you.

In picture book, Graeme Base's mystery *The Eleventh Hour* (Viking Kestrel) tops the huge international success of *Animalia*, but one of my favourites is *Digging to China* (Ashton

Scholastic) by Donna Rawlins. Alexis's middle-aged friend Marj tells her that if you dig a hole straight down into your backyard, you'll reach China. Alexis does, and gets back just in time to give Marj a postcard from Beijing for her birthday. It's a friendly book, warm, unsentimental and allegorical: an unusual celebration of Australian working class life.

MARK MACLEOD

## CANADA

The death of Margaret Laurence on January 5, 1987 marked the end of an era. The tributes are still being composed and the retrospective analyses are beginning; in the meantime, the loss is still felt.

M.T. Kelly's *A Dream Like Mine* (Stoddart), a novel exploring racial violence in northwestern Ontario, won the Governor General's Award for 1987. It takes its title from the Ojibway saying 'You cannot harm me, you cannot harm one who has dreamed a dream like mine.' Sean Virgo's *Selakhi* (Exile) also explores inter-racial relations, but in a fictional South Pacific island setting where the literary context established by Rimbaud's poetry mingled with the linguistic interplay of pidgin and standard English is more important than the geographic or political. Its blurb describes it as 'a wrestling with the angel of language.' The same might be said of fellow poet Michael Ondaatje's new novel, *In the Skin of a Lion* (McClelland & Stewart). Read this book for metafictional commentary on fiction and lyrical celebrations of the sensual, but be warned that for all its emphasis on historical setting (Toronto in the 1920s and 1930s), the action is decontextualised. Like Virgo, Ondaatje writes a surreal history that delights in violence. In these writers, the exotic triumphs. Gail Scott's *Heroine* (Coach House), also an aggressively experimental and densely poetic text, tries to put metafictional awarenesses into a specifically feminist and political context – the tenth anniversary of the October Crisis.

After these different intensities, George Bowering's *Caprice* (Viking) provides the relief of the playful. A sequel to *Burning Water*, this novel continues Bowering's exploration of different ways of seeing, conceptualising and telling stories through revisionary history. Carol Shield's delightful *Swann: A Mystery* (Stoddart) satirizes academic obsessions and pretensions with a gentle touch, while insisting on the ultimate mystery of the creative process.

In a more traditionally realistic vein, Jack Hodgins' *The Honorary Patron* (McClelland & Stewart) and Jane Rule's *Memory Board* (Macmillan) explore the problems of ageing and balancing the individual's responsibilities to self and others. These are quiet novels that make subtle points about British Columbia politics and the multiple possibilities of human relations that too often we allow a deference to the conventional to limit. Katherine Govier's *Between Men* (Viking) and George Peyele's *Unknown Soldier* (Macmillan) are historical novels that stimulate thinking about public and private, past and present.

Marion Quednau's *The Butterfly Chair* (Random House), won the 1987 W.H. Smith/Books in Canada First Novel Award. Here 30 year-old Elsie attempts to come to terms with her parents' lives and their violent deaths (through murder-suicide) which she had witnessed when she was 13. Marie Moser's *Counterpoint* (Irwin), winner of the Eighth New Alberta Novelist Competition, traces the lives of three generations of French-Canadian women on the prairies.

Penguin continues to publish good new short story collections. Eric McCormack's stories in *Inspecting the Vaults* are bizarre, macabre and innovative. The interviewed author in 'Anyhow in a Corner' introduces 'some new characters into an old plot', the opening of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Rohinton Mistry, author of *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, has already been hailed as an important new talent for his sensitive stories of a Parsi apartment block in Bombay. The final story, set in Toronto, includes the reactions of the narrators' parents, still in India, to his work: Canada through the eyes of the immigrant provides 'a different viewpoint'; the only danger would be to 'lose the important difference'.

Another promising first published book of short stories, but with Canadian settings, is Cynthia Flood's *The Animals in Their Elements* (Talon). Sandra Birdshell's *Agassiz Stories* (Turnstone) collects together her linked stories previously published as *Night Travellers* and *Ladies of the House*.

*More Stories by Canadian Women*, ed. Rosemary Sullivan (Oxford), conceived as a 'reconnaissance mission' to identify important new writers, is a valuable collection and a good guide to the current scene. *A Shapely Fire: Changing the Literary Landscape*, ed. Cyril Dabydeen (Mosaic) includes drama, poetry and fiction by Caribbean-Canadian writers.

P.K. Page's *Brazilian Journal* (Lester & Orpen Denys) is based on letters and extracts from her journal written during 1957-1959, when Brazil opened up a whole new world of perception to the Canadian visitor, and includes reproductions of some of her drawings and paintings from this period. It reveals the painter's eye and the poet's fascination with language. Sylvia Fraser's *My Father's House: A Memoir of Incest and Healing* (Doubleday), in contrast, remembers a period so terrible the author repressed its memory for years. Yet she has finally triumphed over horror to write a compelling book. Gabrielle Roy's autobiography, *Enchantment and Sorrow*, translated by Patricia Claxton (Lester and Orpen Dennys) is a revealing and memorable account of a major writer's life. Adele Wiseman's *Memoirs of a Book Molesting Childhood and Other Essays* (Oxford) range widely in subject matter and tone but always work to encourage the 'book molesting' habit.

Gwendolyn MacEwan died unexpectedly in November 1987. Her last collection of poetry, *Afterworlds* (McClelland & Stewart), remains as a testament to her mythic imagination and fusion of the sensual with the dreamworlds of the visionary. 'You Can Study It If You Want' provides a kind of credo:

Poetry has got nothing to do with poetry.  
Poetry is how the air goes green before thunder,  
is the sound you make when you come, and  
why you live and how you bleed, and  
The sound you make or don't make when you die.

George Bowering, *Delayed Mercies and Other Poems* (Coach House), might not agree. With Sharon Thesen, *The Beginning of the Long Dash*, and bp nichol, Book 6 of *The Martyrology* (Coach House), he shares a passionate belief that the language and craft of poetry are primary. *The Collected Poems of Al Purdy* (McClelland & Stewart) brings together the best work of one of our most popular and important poets.

In drama, the publication of Betty Lambert's two plays, *Jeannie's Story* and *Under the Skin* (Playwrights Union), long unavailable, is welcome indeed. These horrifying tales of the effects of sexual abuse on the victim and on those who comply through silence with her victimizing are not easy reading or viewing, but they powerfully raise some of the questions we most need to ask about power and gender relations. The same publisher has brought out John Krizanc's *Prague*, dealing with a more familiar kind of politics: the Russian invasion

of 1968. On a lighter note, three of John Gray's musical plays are collected in *Local Boy Makes Good* (Talon).

In essay collections by three poets, Dennis Cooley and Steve McCaffery provide alternatives to what they see as the conservatism of Canadian criticism in *The Vernacular Muse* (Turnstone) and *North of Intention: Critical Writings 1973-1986* (Nightwood) respectively, and Eli Mandel employs a psychoanalytical metaphor for his reading of Canadian culture as *The Family Romance*.

Sandra Djwa's *The Politics of the Imagination: A Life of F.R. Scott* (McClelland & Stewart) is a thorough biography of a man who has contributed substantially not only to modern poetry but also to the legal, constitutional and political history of the country. Other important scholarly and critical contributions include: W.H. New, *Dreams of Speech and Violence: The Art of the Short Story in Canada and New Zealand*, Janice Kulyk Keefer, *Under Eastern Eyes: A Critical Reading of Maritime Fiction* (both University of Toronto); Laurie Ricou, *Everyday Magic: Child Languages in Canadian Literature*, Eva-Marie Kroller, *Canadian Travellers in Europe*, Ethel Wilson: *Stories, Essays and Letters* ed. David Stouck (all University of British Columbia); Terrence Craig, *Racial Attitudes in English-Canadian Fiction, 1905-1980* (Wilfrid Laurier University); Eugene Benson & Len Conolly, *English-Canadian Theatre*, and David Clandfield, *Canadian Film* (both Oxford in the new series, Perspectives on Canadian Culture). Also important was the publication of the first volume of the *Historical Atlas of Canada: From the Beginning to 1800*, ed. R. Cole Harris and Geoffrey J. Matthews (University of Toronto). This volume makes an important contribution to reseeing Canada. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the old-fashioned Toronto-centred view of *The Oxford Illustrated Literary Guide to Canada* by Albert and Theresa Moritz.

The Literary Press Group selected the following (the first five are collections of poetry and the sixth is of short stories) for its 1987 Writers' Choice: Frank Davey, *The Abbotsford Guide to India* (Porcepic); Gary Geddes, *Hong Kong Poems* (Oberon); J. Michael Yates, *Schedules of Silence* (Pulp); Anne Szumigalski, *Dogstones* (Fifth House); Dorothy Livesay, *The Self-Completing Tree* (Porcepic); and Janice Kulyk Keefer, *Transfigurations* (Ragweed).

DIANA BRYDON

## INDIA

These are good times for literature in India with over one hundred and thirty universities having departments of literature. Literature is taught in several languages and this all contributes to indigenous literary thought. But literature is not a solely university-based affair in India. All languages with literary traditions, some of which stretch back to over a thousand years, have their yearly literary festivals, *sahitya sammilan*, attended by the literary elite as well as by the masses. The media too have taken kindly to literature: newspapers, particularly those in regional languages (readership ranging from 10,000 to 100,000), devote considerable space to literary reporting. The radio and the television offer generous time to literary classics. For instance, Narayan's *Malgudi* featured on television, and was well received. But the event of the year, not only for literature but also for the social history of India, was the immensely popular serialisation of the *Ramayana*, viewed by a record number of 500 million viewers an episode. The television now plans to serialise the *Mahabharata*. One feels that literature is acquiring increasingly greater importance at all



levels of Indian culture – the folk, the popular and the elite. And these three meet, compliment and also thwart one another in India in an extremely complex pattern.

The most distinctive of last year's publications to re-emphasize the plurality of Indian literary culture was *Bahuvachana* (which means 'plural' as well as 'many-tongues'), a periodical published by Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal. This inaugural issue contains provocative ideas and experimental writings in English translation from Oriya, Hindi, Kannada and Marathi. In particular 'Why Not Worship in the Nude?' by U.R. Ananathamurthy, a celebrated novelist himself, is memorable as a critique of Kannada fiction tradition and its social concerns. *Bahuvachana* is very elegantly produced and avoids all the pitfalls and shallowness of David Ray's *Indian Literature* published five years back. The theme of plurality is at the centre of another distinctive publication, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, the first volume of which was published early this year by the Sahitya Akademi (the Indian Academy of Letters). The encyclopaedia was long in preparation and is expected to fulfil a need felt by the student of comparative Indian literature. But the few early reviews that have appeared so far have been mixed in tone. It extends the field of study opened up by the pioneering, and somewhat crude, *Comparative Indian Literature* (1984-86) volumes edited by K.M. George. The Sahitya Akademi volume is edited by a series of editors, so it is a collective work. It is easy to be critical of the work done by the Akademi, for it feels nice to be anti-establishment, but one must look at the positive contribution it makes. The Akademi and the National Book Trust of India keep publishing monographs on Indian writers, in the series 'Makers of Indian Literature', and translations of Indian classics, ancient as well as modern, in all Indian languages, including English. The Akademi also publishes a journal of translation, *Indian Literature*, six issues of which were discerningly edited by its editor Balu Rao.

Balu Rao and Mulk Raj Anand have brought out a collection of short stories, *Panorama* (Oriental University Press) which includes stories by some of the best writers in regional languages and in English. It is desirable that more translations of works in Indian languages become available to readers outside these languages, so that the unduly heavy burden of representing Indian literature will not fall on the small body of writing in English. Most literary journals in India seem to be striving towards fulfilling this need. *The Indian Literary Review*, ed. Devindra Kohli, *Pratibha India* ed. Aruna Sitiesh and Sitiesh Aloke, and *Litcrit*, ed. P.K. Rajan offer translations. *Setu* is entirely devoted to literature in translation. But these journals seem to concentrate only on the modern period. It was, therefore, very refreshing to see the translation of an obscure, that is linguistically inaccessible, Marathi classic by Anne Feldhaus, *The Deeds of God in Rddhipur* (NY, O.U.P., 1984) becoming available in Indian bookshops. The Marathi text, *Govindaprabhu Charitra*, is of pivotal importance in the evolution of Marathi literature from the thirteenth century, and can form useful background reading for students of the poetry of Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre and Nissim Ezekiel, and of the fiction of Manohar Malgaonkar and Shashi Deshpande. Mention should also be made of translations of great medieval classics from Tamil by A.K. Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War* (Delhi, O.U.P.) and from Hindi by K.S. Ram, *Dohavali: Short Poems of Kabir, Biharilal and Rahim* (Writers' Workshop).

A.K. Ramanujan is also a poet and after a gap of fifteen years he published his third volume of poems in English, *Second Sight* (O.U.P.). This third volume is as remarkable as the first two, *Striders* and *Relations*, and gives little indication of the time gap between it and the previous volumes.

The Indological work by some non-Indians has been exceptionally deep in recent years. The best example of such excellence is the series of volumes on the history of Indian

literature with Jan Gonda as general editor. The last in the series to come out is *Mimamsa Literature* by Jean-Marie Verpoorten (Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1987) as part of Vol. VI. Verpoorten's survey of Mimamsa literature from classical times to the present century gives a scholarly and balanced account of an important aspect of Indian literary history and culture.

The present decade in Indian literature has seen a steady emergence of the trend described as Nativism. One aspect of it is an attempt to create native critical thinking. Two publications of nominal importance in this direction are C.D. Narasimhaiah's *The Function of Criticism in India* (Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore) and an anthology of critical statements edited by S.K. Desai and G.N. Devi, *Critical Thought* (Sterling). Narasimhaiah established himself as a pathfinder in this field with the publication of *Towards a Common Indian Poetic* (1985). He continues that task, and also continues to edit *Literary Criterion*, which has become an important forum for debates in Indian English studies. However, the journals which appear to be making really new contributions to Indian literary thought are *Journal of Arts and Ideas*, ed. M.D. Deshpande, Delhi, and *New Quest*, edited for the Indian Association for Cultural Freedom by M.P. Rege and M.V. Namjoshi. Both are interdisciplinary. *Arts and Ideas* includes writings on all arts and literature with its focus on the issues which are currently relevant to India. *New Quest* has a Radical Humanist (or M.N. Royist) editorial policy and publishes debates on Indian problems. Both of these have been useful in shaping new ideas in India without being at any time fanatically nationalistic in outlook. Last year *New Quest* carried an important statement on Indian English Literature by Rajiv Patke, and on English-Sanskrit relations by Probal Dasgupta.

What is clear is that a distinctive 'Indian' field of literary and social knowledge has been emerging in recent years. An 'Indian' argument is developing in the fields bordering on literary studies: social-psychology by Ashish Nandi, psychology by Sudhir Kakar, political history by Partha Chatterjee, history by Romila Thaper, linguistics by Ashok Kelkar and Probal Dasgupta, aesthetics and criticism by R.B. Patankar. All these have been active last year and have published books containing their ideas. The most notable among these is, I believe Romila Thaper's booklet on 'Tradition' (Delhi, O.U.P.), which establishes from the historian's point of view the intricacies of social history and points out the existing epistemological inaccuracies in Indian studies. Partha Chatterjee's book on Indian nationalism, *Nationalism and the Colonial World* (Zed, London, 1986), has a good analysis of Bengali fiction of the nineteenth century, and it outlines the nature of colonial discourse in India. More analytical work in the field of this new Indian awareness is to be found in the exceptionally brilliant series edited by Ranajit Guha and published by the Delhi O.U.P. under the title *Subaltern Studies*, five volumes of which have been published. Students of literature will find in these volumes invaluable work by critics like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak on literary history. Chakravorty Spivak's writing on Mahasveta Devi has enhanced the interest in this great Bengali writer. Last year another of her long stories was published in English translation, *Death of Jagmohan, the Elephant, in Setu*.

With the trend of Nativism, there is a certain amount of revivalism too. M. Hiriyanna, whose commentary on Sanskrit poetics (*Art Experience*) and Indian philosophy had been out of print for a long time, has been re-discovered. His entire works are now available in five volumes. Traditional Indian narratology has started receiving the attention it deserves. Bhalchandra Nemade, the trend-setting Marathi novelist – and a professor of English – has come out with a tentative theory about traditional Indian narratology, which he proposed through a series of lectures, and which is about to be published. The Indian Languages Institute at Mysore too has shown interest in Indian narratology. It has been producing

books on critical problems. One of its publications, which is not recent but needs listing, is a check-list of Indian works in English translation; it lists near to two thousand translations of creative works. This institute and the cultural centre Bharat Bhavan at Bhopal are becoming the new centres of literary innovation in India. They have functioned as the highways of link between Indian languages and the national literary awareness.

The organisations that connect Indian English literature with the world outside are the Indian ACLALS, headed by Prof. C.D. Narasimhaiah for a quarter of a century, and the Indo-Canadian studies association headed now by O.P. Joneja. Both these have been active throughout the year. The Comparative Indian Literature Association too has been active in bringing together the national and the regional. The work of CILA is worth appreciation, for the relationship between the regional and the national in India has always been full of tensions. The literary cultural groups such as *Prakrit* (which means regional culture) and which also makes talented use of the film medium, and *Gadyaparva* (the era of prose) using fiction, are clearly against the literary establishment such as the Sahitya Akademi. The relationship is somewhat like the political relation between the Delhi government and the Akalis in Punjab.

Some years back we had a well-written, light novel on rural Punjab moving towards modernisation in *Nation of Fools* by Balaraj Khanna. Partap Sharma has now published a sequel to it, *Days of the Turban* (London, Bodley Head, 1986). It tells the story of a young man, Balbir, seeking escape from his hide-bound Hindu family. The background is of the Punjab burning in the fire of terrorism. The novel is ambitious, and could have succeeded. But Sharma is not able to manage the plot well, which he tends to handle as the plot of a thriller. The background is present too substantially, and takes charge of the entire narrative. Sharma has an impressive range of prose diction. But he has not been able to come close to the quality of *Kanthapura* or *Aazadi*. Yet, I would prefer Sharma's novel to Mulk Raj Anand's *The Road*, published by Oriental University Press, 1987. It is still the story of untouchability. The social reality in India has now gone far beyond this problem. Anand writes with his usual skill. But someday he should fear becoming tiresome to his readers. The established writers Narayan, Raja Rao and Ruth Praver Jhabvala have all published during the year. Raja Rao published a few excerpts from his forthcoming novel, Narayan brought out a selection of his personal essays during the last twenty years, and Jhabvala has published a substantial selection of stories, *Out of India* (John Murray, 1987).

But one feels that there is nothing more we can get from the established writers. The younger generation of writers are far more interesting at the moment. Of these the most distinctive are Amitav Ghosh and Vikram Seth. Ghosh's first novel, *The Circle of Reason* (Hamish Hamilton, 1986, reprint. Abacus, 1987), displays a lively style, a sense of humour and the capacity to create a variety of characters. It uses fantasy in a way reminiscent of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Seth's *The Golden Gate* (Random House – USA – 1986, reprint Faber and Faber 1986), now available in India, is a narrative in metrical verse divided in thirteen chapters. It is an interesting experiment, and displays Seth's ability to play with words and verse. It has the strength to be remembered as a curious narrative by an expatriate Indian. If less distinctive but certainly remarkable in many ways is the work by younger women writers. Bharati Mukherjee has announced herself to be 'a' writer rather than 'an Indian' writer. Such internationalism is good, for in terms of race-relations it can provide some perennial tensions for creative work. Shashi Deshpande, Dina Mehta and Namita Gokhale raise expectations. Gokhale's *Paro: Dreams of Passion* (Chatto & Windus, 1984 rep. 1986), is apparently a pot-boiler; but it has a deep irony which relates it to the Indian fiction tradition from Sharat Chandra of the last century. *Paro* shows that the

depiction of the Indian woman has at last crossed the Raja Rao spell (of Savitri in this *The Serpent and the Rope* and has arrived at a realistic phase. Both Dina Mehta and Shashi Deshpande emphasise this realism in their work. Of the expatriate Indian writers, Salman Rushdie brought out a thin volume on his Nicaragua experiences, *The Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey*.

Poetry publication has been on the low side the last year. The Writers' Workshop continues to publish poetry; but it is a long time since the Workshop brought out a volume that should matter. The exception to this is P. Lal's translation of Indian classics. The other poetry publishing houses like Clearing House and New Ground have not been active recently. It was only the O.U.P. publications in poetry last year that made any contribution to this field of creative writing. Among these the most outstanding have been Jayanta Mahapatra's *Selected Poems*, Keki Daruwalla's *Landscapes*, and Ashok Mahajan's *Goan Vignettes and Other Poems*. Mahapatra's selections show in retrospect his rapid progress as a new voice in Indian English poetry in the early seventies to the position of the most impressive Indian poet in recent years. Daruwalla's consistency is reassuring for the readers who feel disappointed in the disappearance of one-time good poets like the older Parthasarathy and the younger Manohar Shetty. Ashok Mahajan is a new voice. The poems in *Goan Vignettes* are unpretentious and have a freshness in the choice of style and concerns. One feels that the literary trends in the last year show a transition in Indian English literature and literary thought, a movement towards a greater realism and nativism.

G.N. DEVI

## NEW ZEALAND

The publication of three quite different poetry anthologies in 1987 earmarks the year as a significant landmark in the history of New Zealand poetry. Ranging from innovation to orthodoxy respectively, the anthologies were *The New Poets of the '80's* (Allen and Unwin), *The Caxton Book of New Zealand Poetry 1972 – 1986* (Caxton) and the third edition of *An Anthology of Twentieth Century New Zealand Poetry* (Oxford University Press).

Edited jointly by Murry Edmond and Mary Paul, *The New Poets of the '80's* lives up to its name by collecting in one volume the work of poets largely unpublished and certainly unacknowledged before 1980. The anthology's editorial intentions are stated strongly and unambiguously by Edmond and Paul: 'The last ten years have seen an explosion in the writing of New Zealand poetry – new kinds of poetry, new kinds of publishing, new poets. This anthology celebrates their diversity and challenges old orthodoxies.' In situating *The New Poets of the '80's* within the wider context of New Zealand poetry generally, the editors reveal what they value in this collection: 'What we do believe our selection attests to is the energy, the commitment, the intensity, and, above all, the variety of the emerging scene.'

Some of the poets in this anthology are well known – Cilla McQueen, Janet Potiki, Keri Hulme – while others – Janet Charman, John Newton, Heather McPherson – are still establishing their reputations. What is interesting to note, is that of the seventeen poets represented, three are Maori and nine – over half – are women. This unusual but encouraging representation of groups more often ignored or confined to separate anthologies of their own is the result of an acknowledgement, on the part of the editors, of what they perceive to be a flourishing 'Maori cultural renaissance' and 'the changes feminism has begun to force in writing'.

Mark Williams, editor of *The Caxton Book of New Zealand Poetry 1972 – 1986* also has a definite and clearly articulated editorial intention: ‘...to show ... both the diversity of poetry written in the period and the main forces working through the field as a whole.’ Published to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Christchurch’s Caxton Press, *The Caxton Book of New Zealand Poets 1972 – 1986*, while less radical than *The New Poets of the ’80’s* both in content and direction, is a welcome addition to the ongoing discussion of poetry in New Zealand. In his well-referenced and persuasive introductory essay, Williams makes detailed reference to individual poems and situates them within their historical context. In representing both New Zealand’s literary greats – Allen Curnow, C.K. Stead, Vincent O’Sullivan – and its promising emergent talent – John Newton, Elizabeth Nannestad, Michelle Leggott – Williams is well positioned to fulfil his editorial aim.

The third anthology, *An Anthology of Twentieth Century New Zealand Poetry*, edited by Vincent O’Sullivan, appears as a slightly altered third edition. While much from the previous edition remains unaltered, what does change is significant. In his ‘Notes to the Third Edition’, O’Sullivan, while acknowledging the past critical debates surrounding New Zealand poetry, points in a new direction and in doing so allies himself more closely to Edmond and Paul: ‘It is a plurality of views and styles, an unconfined possibility of voices, which now seems to me so much more commanding than the recognizable logo in the locally patterned.’

1987 also produced a number of interesting collections of poetry. Among them was an impressive clutch from the Auckland University Press, including Elizabeth Nannestad’s *Jump*, Gregory O’Brien’s self-illustrated *Location of the Least Person*, Fiona Farrell Poole’s *Cutting Out* and Kendrick Smithyman’s tenth book of verse *Are You Going to the Pictures?*

Two very promising and well received first collections, both by women and both by university presses were Anne French’s *All Cretans Are Liars* (Auckland University Press) and Dinah Hawken’s *It Has No Sound and is Blue* (Victoria University Press). French writes deceptively accessible poetry which, on closer examination, is capable of sustaining a diversity of interpretations. Much of her first collection is personal poetry, directed to friends and family and often originating from undocumented sources. Still, she distances herself from that too common and too often disparaging critical appraisal of women poets, writing:

I tell you I do not write  
confessional poems. It is a lie  
or half-lie ... (‘Confessional’).

Dinah Hawken’s equally impressive collection, hailed as ‘one of the most significant debuts in recent New Zealand poetry’, was mainly written in New York where she lived for three years. Nevertheless it is easily recognizable as New Zealand poetry not simply because Hawken was born in Hawera or now lives in Wellington but because, while written overseas, it is directed at New Zealand either literally as in the long central sequence ‘Writing Home’ or referentially:

I can be at home for a while,  
high over the harbour, working a small  
object from native wood, or bone;  
Flaking it slowly and intently, into shape.  
(‘Winter. New York.’)

Many established poets consolidated their reputations in 1987 with the publication of their selected or collected works. Peter Bland recently back in New Zealand from England, Kevin Ireland, Sam Hunt and Ian Wedde all published their selected poems, compiled from their various past works and, without exception, including some new previously unpublished pieces. Ruth Dallas brought out *Collected Poems* (University of Otago Press), a selection from her previous half-dozen books and a useful gathering of some of her best work. Similarly, Hone Tuwhare brought together poems from his seven books and some new work in *Mihi: Collected Poems* (Penguin), a thoughtful collection of poems from one of New Zealand's foremost Maori poets with an appropriately but beautifully simple cover illustration by Ralph Hotere.

Several important collections of short stories were also published in 1987. Five years after his first collection of short stories, Michael Gifkins published his second, *Summer is the Côte d'Azur* (Penguin). Described as a 'superb literary strategist', Gifkins engages the reader with these stories which, punctuated as they are with unusual characters and unlikely sexual couplings, teeter on that knife edge where suspension of disbelief is not only essential but also almost impossible. *Summer is the Côte d'Azur* continues Gifkins' tradition of reassuringly ordinary short stories which occasionally roll to expose their bizarre underbellies.

Shonagh Koea, whose short stories are by now familiar to the wide readership of the *New Zealand Listener*, published a collection of fourteen stories, titled *The Women Who Never Went Home* (Penguin). These confident, assured stories position Koea well within the ranks of New Zealand's best short story writers and firmly establish her as mistress of the unlikely metaphor. As is by now her trademark, Koea's similes approach but never transgress that exceedingly fine line between the unusual and the ridiculous: 'Mr Ling sat on the low velvet chair, thin limbs neatly assembled like a tightly bound bundle of garden stakes' ('The Dragon Courier') or '...it echoed now in his head like the crack of his own cranium on the tide-swept rocks' ('Edmund and the Tempest').

Patricia Grace, whose novel *Potiki* won the 1987 New Zealand Book Award for fiction, also published her third short story collection, *Electric City and Other Stories* (Penguin). Grace's characteristically unpretentious, almost casual stories deal as easily with themes of racism in New Zealand – 'Going for the Bread' – as they do with seemingly less monumental subjects – taking the day off to go fishing as in 'Kahawai' or growing cabbages in 'Butterflies'. Drawing strongly on Maori custom, urban and rural living patterns, mythology, even speech patterns – '...don't you smoke while I'm out, putting the place on fire. And don't cook. You come down the marae after and have a kai down there, you hear me...' ('Waimarie') – Grace contributes to the growing field of essentially and unambiguously Maori literature written in English.

Two other collections of short stories published in 1987 are important due to their historical significance. They are Greville Texidor's *In Fifteen Minutes You Can Say A Lot* (Victoria University Press) edited by Kendrick Smithyman and *Happy Endings: Short Stories by Australian and New Zealand Women 1850's – 1930's* (Allen and Unwin/Port Nicholson) co-edited by Elizabeth Webby and Lydia Wevers. Both collections – although the latter is not solely about New Zealand literature – gather together rare and often unpublished manuscripts and help fill that gap in our literary landscape, the early work of New Zealand women writers.

The novels published in 1987 were a mixed bag. *Pulling Faces* (Hodder and Stoughton) was Marilyn Duckworth's eighth novel. Deftly written and captivating as always, the reader is presented with another cast of totally believable, frequently bizarre characters situated

in that recognisably Duckworth landscape where tenuous human relationships are played out against a backdrop of menacingly understated savagery.

Nigel Cox's second novel, *Dirty Work* (Benton/Ross), is an interesting work concerned with a novel within the novel. As the boundaries between the novels of Cox and Cox's character, Laurie, begin to shimmer and finally disappear – the erratum stuck to the publication page of *Dirty Work* refers not to *Dirty Work* but to Laurie's novel; Gina Tully, whose stories Laurie is writing into his novel, herself writes the introduction to Cox's novel – Cox continues to swing from one to the other with all the skill of his novel's unifying symbol, the trapeze artist.

*Running Away From Home* (Penguin) is another second novel and readers familiar with Rachel McAlpine's first novel *The Limits of Green* will recognise her style here. Similar to her first novel in many ways, this work tells the story of Fern who leaves home with her daughter to have many adventures and finally save the world. *Running Away From Home* revolves around such themes as the difference between men and women, the position of the Maori in New Zealand as tangata whenua [people of the land], New Zealand's position in the world generally and its anti-nuclear stance. Again, in this second novel, the fantastic plays a strong part and is a crucial factor in the novel's fast pace and almost allegorical quality.

*The Whale Rider* (Heinemann) is Witi Ihimaera's fourth novel and here he continues to display his dual skills of consummate story teller and myth maker. Ihimaera develops several different but related narratives which are all finally pulled together in the climatic scene where Kahu, the once spurned female child who broke the male line of descent, wins her great-grandfather's approval and saves her whanau's mana [family honour] by riding a beached bull whale back into the ocean and saving its life.

A first novel that made a great impact on the local scene was the young Wellington author Elizabeth Knox's *After Z-Hour* (Victoria University Press). Concerned with the interactions of six people stranded by a storm in an old South Island house haunted by the ghost of Mark, an ex-serviceman, *After Z-Hour* is not only well written but researched so thoroughly by Knox as to have historical significance. Hailed as a newly discovered and major New Zealand talent, Knox was awarded the ICI Writers Prize for 1987.

A very quiet year for drama publications. One publication, however, that must not pass unmentioned is the Victoria University Press New Zealand Playscripts series *The Healing Arch: Five Plays on Maori Themes* by Bruce Mason. Not only is there the obvious advantage of having the five plays – Hongi, The Pohutakawa Tree, Awatea, The Hand on the Rail, Swan Song – available in one volume but the last two are specially valuable being previously unpublished.

1987 produced two critical works on note – *Look Back Harder: Critical Writings 1935 – 84* Allen Curnow (Auckland University Press) edited by Peter Simpson, and Lawrence Jones' *Barbed Wire and Mirrors: Essays on New Zealand Prose* (University of Otago Press) – both by South Island academics. The first, as indicated by its title, is a consolidation of fifty years of Curnow's significant critical contributions to New Zealand's literary scene, while the second is a more broadly focused but equally thorough account of New Zealand prose and its relation to the literary traditions of realism and impressionism.

One of the most significant happenings in the journal and magazine scene was the merging of *Pacific Quarterly*, *Moana* and *Rimu* into a new journal called *Crosscurrent*. Its claims to be 'multicultural and multilingual' are reinforced by its solid and genuine commitment to these frequently misunderstood concepts.

In addition to Grace's win in the fiction section, the New Zealand Book Awards for 1987 were Allen Curnoe's *The Loop in Lone Kauri Road* and Elizabeth Nannestad's *Jump* jointly

for poetry and Virginia Myers' *Head and Shoulders*, a collection of some successful New Zealand women's biographies, for nonfiction.

A feast of poetry, a famine for drama – 1987 was still an exciting year for New Zealand literature.

ANNAMARIE RUSTOM JAGOSE

## PAKISTAN

In 1987, criticism, translations, and fiction fared far better than the other categories of writing. The few poetry volumes published during the year were by no means outstanding. Waqas Ahmad Khwaja's *Six Geese from a Tomb at Medum* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel), contains a mixture of old vices struggling with new strengths. Inamul Haq's first book, *Poems Persons Places* (Lahore: Vanguard), has interesting idiomatic turns and is indicative of a different strain in poetry, which has been mostly given to some aspects of the Islamic mystical tradition. Many noteworthy poems in the year appeared in magazines and journals abroad. Particular mention must be made of the poems by Ahmed Ali, Zulfikar Ghose, and Alamgir Hashmi in the special issue, *Chelsea 46: World Literature in English* (New York).

Of the two novels published, Ikram Azam's *Gossip Gulley* (Islamabad: Margalla Voices/Lahore: Mavra Publishers) is a rather flat and loose narrative of contemporary Pakistan. Adam Zameenzad, an expatriate Pakistani living in England, published his first novel *The Thirteenth House*, to much respectable notice in England. In mixing desire with horror and the lofty with the lowly life that Zahid, the central character, must live, the novel creates a couple of memorable characters and a social milieu which defines their roles. There are extraordinary determinants, which are underlined by the epigraph: 'Traditionally The Twelve Houses of the Zodiac are called mundane houses because they refer to everyday life on earth activities. Not much is said about The Thirteenth House.' The present Thirteenth House is set in Karachi, where Zahid, the author's autobiographical 'other', acts out his destiny. A hard-core analytical picture of the 1970s and 1980s Pakistan keeps breaking through the fictional plot and there is an attempt to recount all, since for Zahid 'the miseries of the present are the best cure for the miseries of the past. That is why the poor forget, or appear to forget, soon...'. In the five parts, named 'The Haunting House', 'The Haunted House', 'The House of Death', 'The House of Besieged', and 'The Thirteenth House', the life of this family and its 'house' is writ large, if spasmodically, over the city and the country; but the relationships are not explored well; and the descriptions of place or custom are rather coloured by narratorial quirk. Still, the writing is adequate, and a first-hand feel of the material is evident even when it is overworked.

Among short stories, to note are those by Zulfikar Ghose and Javaid Qazi in *Chelsea 46: World Literature in English*. The re-issue of Bapsi Sidhwa's novel, *The Bride* (1983), in a Pakistani paperback edition (Karachi: Liberty Books) will certainly help reader access, though it is not comparable in quality to – or much cheaper than – the earlier British paperback edition.

While the only and most widely used 'English' anthology, *Pakistani Literature: The Contemporary English Writers* (ed. Alamgir Hashmi; Islamabad: Gulmohar), originally published in New York in 1978, was republished, most other anthologies were of Pakistani literature in English translation. In fact, the translations both with regard to poetry and fiction in the other Pakistani languages were very distinguished in the year's work. The



work selected and the English translation both touched a high watermark of quality. The outstanding titles are: *Downfall by Degrees and Other Stories* (by Abdullah Hussain) edited and translated by Muhammad Umar Memon (Toronto: TSAR Publications), *An Unwritten Epic and Other Stories* (by Intizar Husain) edited by Muhammad Umar Memon (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel), *A Listening Game: Poems by Sagi Farooqi* translated by Frances W. Pritchett and selected and introduced by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi (London: Lokamaya Press), *The Price of Looking Back: Poems of Kishwar Naheed* edited by Baidar Bakht and Derek M. Cohen (Lahore: Book Traders), *Realms of Gold* translated by Syed Ross Masood and edited by Jalil Ahmad Kidwai (Karachi: Ross Masood Education and Culture Society of Pakistan), *This Also Happened: An Anthology of Pakistani Short Stories* translated by Enwer Enayetullah (Karachi: Saad Publications), Farooq Khalid's novel *Black Mirrors* translated by Eric Cyprian (London: Jonathan Cape), and *Kingdom's End and Other Stories* (by Saadat Hasan Manto) translated by Khalid Hasan.

In criticism, most of the writings appeared in scholarly and critical periodicals or the general press in Pakistan as well as abroad. The criticism concerned general literary topics or it focused on such authors as Ahmed Ali, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Zulfikar Ghose, Alamgir Hashmi, Abdullah Hussain, Muhammad Iqbal, Daud Kamal and Josh Malihabadi, in such places as *The Nation* (Lahore), *The Journal of the English Literary Club* (Peshawar), *Twentieth Century Literature* (New York), *CRNLE Reviews Journal* (Australia), *Asiaweek* (Hong Kong), *World Literature Today* (USA), *Annual of Urdu Studies* (Chicago), *Research in African Literatures* (USA), *Viewpoint* (Lahore), *Dawn* (Karachi), *AFRAM Newsletter* (Paris), and *Journal of South Asian Literature* (USA).

In non-fiction, biography and autobiography dominated: Mohamed Ali's *My Life, a Fragment: An Autobiographical Sketch of Maulana Mohammad Ali* edited by Afzal Iqbal (Islamabad: National Press Trust), *Street Fighting Years: An Autobiography of the Sixties* by Tariq Ali (London/Glasgow: William Collins/Fontana), *Rahmat Ali: A Biography* by K.K. Aziz (Lahore: Vanguard), and *My Brother* by Fatima Jinnah edited by Sharif al Mujahid (Karachi: Quaid-e-Azam Academy), concerning Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. *The Urdu Letters of Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib*, translated by Daud Rahbar (Albany, NY: SUNY Press), was a special delight.

Poet Daud Kamal died during a visit to New York.

The Patras Bokhari Award of the Pakistan Academy of Letters (Islamabad) was won by Muhammad Musa, for his autobiography *Jawan to General: Recollections of a Pakistani Soldier* (1984), which was judged the best English Book of the relevant year.

ALAMGIR HASHMI

## SINGAPORE

If literary achievement is to be measured by the best-seller gauge, then 1987 was, indeed, a very high point in Singapore's literary history. *First Loves*, a collection of stories by Philip Jeyaretnam, hit the bookstores in August 1987 and by the end of the year was well into its third Reprint. It is the one Singaporean book that has remained on the best-seller list as Number One for a continuous period of three months – no mean success when you realise how young prose fiction is in this tiny island. Part of the success must be due to the book's appeal to young people; it deals with the usual themes of new found love, new found freedom, and the conflicts and complications that arise from these. Two of the stories

included in the book are prize-winning stories ('Evening at Fragipani' having won first prize in the 1985 National Short Story Writing Competition) and the rest may be said to be basically one long story chopped up into 19 episodes. These recount the experiences and adventures of Ah Leong, typical young Singaporean, and of those he lives with and those he comes into contact with. All of *First Loves* makes for very interesting reading and, for the first time, perhaps, a fictional work has been written which has everyone's admiration. Part of the reason for the phenomenal success (and it is phenomenal!) could also be attributed to the name of Jeyaretnam-Jayaretnam Senior, who was for some years the sole Member of Opposition in the Singapore Parliament (1981-1984), then one of two such members (1984) until he lost his seat following legal proceedings. There was a lot of public support for Mr Jeyaretnam and gossip has it that many Singaporeans bought *First Loves* to show sympathy for the author's father. Whatever the reasons, the evidence of huge sales is indisputable, as is the young author's growing popularity and reputation. (Young Philip Jeyaretnam is a lawyer, having graduated with a Double First from Cambridge and having recently being given a coveted award by the House of Lords in Britain to write a book on *The Retreat of the Rule of Law in Singapore*). I have just one small complaint about the book: in parts the language is more of an urbane, sophisticated Cambridge undergraduate than a typical young Housing Board tenant by the name of Ah Leong. Proper editing would have cleared this up (In fact, proper editing might have helped to make the book tighter, neater, in terms of its literary merit).

A somewhat different kind of success was achieved by Goh Sin Tub. Anyone familiar with Singapore's literary scene will recall coming across Goh's name (and, possibly, stories), since Goh was an active writer and participant in literary affairs in the fifties. Then came career(s), family and other et ceteras of life and living. Now he's come back, put his stories together, and written many more; in 1987 he launched two collections: *The Ghost Lover of Emerald Hill & Other Stories* and *Honour & Other Stories*. The latter was, in fact, first published in 1986 under the title *The Battle of the Bands* and was a sell-out, its chief objective being to raise funds for Goh's favourite charity, the long established mission school, St. Joseph's Institution. Goh's stories depend for their appeal on his sense of humour, usually agreeable, at times rather quaint, and his grasp of Singapore's social history. Most of the stories are in fact tales, anecdotes, with their fair share of moralisms. Many of them are a delight to read, though one wishes that Goh spent more time developing his characters and situations. But it is wonderful to see his active return to the literary scene and, no doubt, more ink will flow.

There was yet another achievement: for the first time ever a book by a Singaporean writer was chosen to be put on the international 'O' level Examinations by the Cambridge authorities. This was *Or Else the Lightning God* by Catherine Lim. Lim came to public notice by her witty tale-telling in *Little Ironies* (1978) and since then has brought out several books. This year she published *The Shadow of a Shadow of a Dream – Love Stories of Singapore*. They're mainly cynical, tragic, sad stories, love that is not realised against a background which encourages tensions rather than happy solutions. Lim's is a witty, satirical rendition of love, often drawing upon Chinese beliefs and customs. *The Shadow of a Shadow of a Dream* is an interesting collection, demonstrating Lim's ability to tell a good story yet once again.

Other events in the year included the publication of *Fragrant Journeys*, a collection of poems by Sakina Kagda, one of Singapore's very successful businesswomen but one also given to writing poetry. Kagda's poetry tends to be on the sentimental side, with a wry look every now and then. But some of the poems in this collection merit a wider audience, as they reflect the author's perceptions of the many places she has visited and which inspired

the poems. Sub-titled 'Poems of Travel', *Fragrant Journeys* makes a good read without pretence. Numerous poetry readings were held, though the annual Evening of Poetry and Music organised by the Literary Society of the University was a disappointment. Wanting to move away from the usual, the organisers put on a Rock show, bringing back memories of the (mainly) American scene of the sixties, and thus depriving many young Singaporeans of a chance to share their poetry with the public. But the University of Singapore Society put on a good show with their Yin-Yang Festival which included poetry and prose readings. The Drama scene continued to flourish with new amateur and professional groups springing up and putting on a wide variety of plays. Drama with a purpose, social-realistic, seemed to gain momentum with a large number of plays dramatising easily recognisable facets of Singaporean life. But nothing outstanding was achieved. The journal *Singa* continues to appear twice a year and, as usual, contains a good mix of poetry and prose from all the four main language groups in the country.

In 1984 a Seminar had been held at the National University with the fascinating theme 'The Writer's Sense of the Past'. Selected papers presented at this Seminar and then re-written for a book appeared under the title *The Writer's Sense of the Past: Essays in Southeast Asian and Australian Literature* and published by the Singapore University Press. It is edited by Kirpal Singh and contains, apart from the Introduction, thought-provoking essays by well-known scholars from many countries as well as written statements by leading writers in the Southeast Asian region. Ranging across a wide geographic region (including a leading article by the American scholar Button Rafel), the essays in this book seek to investigate the uses of the past and the effects of the past on contemporary and not-so contemporary writers, and, in so doing, help to expand our understanding of the curious ways in which history is ever-present in literature.

In summary, then, 1987 may be said to have been one of those years in which there was one very big plus and several small pluses for the literary arts in Singapore. The year promised more good things to come

KIRPAL SINGH

## SOUTH AFRICA

1986 in South Africa marked the deaths of two considerable authors in exile, Bessie Head and Bloke Modisane. Modisane's *Blame Me on History* appeared in Ad Donker's Paper Books series, and *Bessie Head: A Bibliography* was compiled and published by Susan Gardner and Patricia E. Scott for the National English Literary Museum, so both authors are actively remembered in South Africa. The beginnings of a process of literary historiography and biographical compilation are evident in the *Companion to South African English Literature* (Ad Donker) and a spectrum of analytical material, both sociological and literary, is drawn together in the published proceedings of a colloquium held in Johannesburg in 1982, edited by Susan Gardner, *Publisher/Writer/Reader: Sociology of Southern African Literature* (University of the Witwatersrand). This conference was distinguished by a wide range of interest and speakers. 1986 also marked the centenary of Johannesburg's birth, producing a flood of publications, from the trivial to the literary. Two of the more incisive collections are Digby Ricci's wide-ranging literary views of and response to the city, collected in *Reef of Time: Johannesburg in Writing* (Ad Donker Paper Books) and Stephen Gray's *Bosman's Johannesburg* (Human & Rousseau) which includes previously uncollected material, and reveals Bosman's

interconnectedness with Johannesburg. Bosman is also remembered, and critically appraised, in the last of the Southern African Literature 'Casebooks', edited by Stephen Gray (Mc Graw-Hill).

Poetry, drama, and fiction continued to reveal a wide spectrum of responses to the sharpened political conflicts and militarisation of South African society, and the events of Soweto in 1976 remain the crucible of a shift in consciousness, partly reflected in literary projects. Poetry, for instance, includes the more crafted and contemplative work of prize-winning poets Peter Sacks (*In These Mountains*, Macmillan) and Stephen Watson (*In This City*, David Philip) as well as poetry arising out of a more immediate context of 'performance' (Essop Patel, *Fragments in the Sun*, African Cultural Centre) and workplace (an anthology, *Black Mamba Rising: South African Worker Poets in Struggle* edited by Ari Sitas, Worker Resistance and Culture Publications, Durban). Michael Chapman's *The Paperbook of South African English Poetry* (Donker Paper Books) is both historically culled and up-to-date, providing a useful text for the burgeoning university teaching of South African literature. *Voices from Within: Black Poetry from Southern Africa*, edited by Michael Chapman and Achmat Dangor in 1982, reappeared as a Donker Paper Book.

Drama, too, included the publication of a play based on Steve Biko's death in detention, *Steve Biko: The Inquest* (Upstairs Theatre) by Saira Essa and Charles Pillai, and Athol Fugard's *The Road to Mecca: A Play in Two Acts Suggested by the Life and Work of Helen Martins of New Bethesda* (Faber & Faber). Fugard's play, one of many works in 1986 which drew a focus on female relationships into the ambit of a broader political awareness, considers the plight of the artist in a conservative rural community, and the emotional catharsis and healing released by female friendship. Two drama anthologies collected the often highly politicised and lively theatre being produced in the eighties: *Market Plays* (Ad Donker) by Stephen Gray and *Woza Afrika! A Collection of Southern African Plays* edited by Duma Ndlovu (George Braziller, New York).

Fiction consisted of those texts rescued from the past, and often from censorship, by David Philip's Africasouth Paperbacks, such as Jillian Becker's *The Virgins*, (a rebellious middle-class daughter's rejection of her materialistic parents' generation), 'popular' fiction (Dalene Mathee's *Circles in a Forest* (Penguin) was a good seller), and selected anthologies of work by established writers such as Jack Cope (*Selected Stories*, David Philip, Africasouth Paperbacks). J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* is a 'metafiction' involving a revisionist restructuring of patriarchal forms of power and narration, questioning the possibilities and the limitations of authorship itself in a colonial context. John Conyngham's *The Arrowing of the Cane* (Donker Paper Books) is a vividly written first-person account of a Natal liberal farmer's consciousness in the decade of the Angolan war, though a perspective to judge his dilemma (to go or stay; to rot or burn) is lacking. Richard Rive's *Buckingham Palace, District Six* (David Philip) and Mewa Ramgobin's *Waiting to Live* (David Philip) recall lost communities. Ramgobin's 'Jim goes to Durban' story is lyrically told, and moves towards the generational conflict arising out of the politicised youth of 1976, making the sacrifices of an older generation, especially the adoptive mother, an emotional centre. Sepamla's much more racy *Third Generation* starts where Ramgobin's chronicle ends, and is a far less glamorous account of the underground liberation struggle than his earlier *Ride the Whirlwind*. This hero leaves for military training across the border 'like one going to the toilet in the backyard.' Sepamla, too, celebrates the continuity of black resistance to oppression, in a 'silence ... born generations before', and his 'Sis Vi' is a tribute to older women committed to their children's suffering. Lewis Nkosi's *Mating Birds* (St. Martin's Press, New York) strikes a strange note in the current literary configuration, not only because it has the dated

consciousness of an exile, but because its plangent and overheated fantasies seem to participate in the racist mythology it aims to attack. Mbulelo Mzamane's *Hungry Flames and Other Black African Short Stories* (Longman) is an anthology which writes up some of the continuities of black short fiction, from Peter Abrahams to Gladys Thomas.

Critically, two new volumes illustrate current trends towards historically rooted and sociologically aware analysis, Tim Couzens's *H.I.E. Dhlomo The New African* (Ravan) and Stephen R. Clingman's *The Novels of Nadine Gordimer: History from the Inside* (Ravan). Clingman's work, especially, marks a new self-consciousness and theoretical sophistication in literary studies. A higher level of politicisation, and more historical awareness, have been both causes and results of the wider literary process in the decade since Soweto 1976.

CHERRY CLAYTON

### WEST INDIES: Retrospective 1986

Two poetry publications should be mentioned at the outset: Derek Walcott's *Collected Poems* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) and *The Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse*, selected and edited by Paula Burnett. Walcott's is a massive volume of five-hundred pages – but it is not a comprehensive collection. Walcott chooses to omit about one-third of the poems from the early volumes, *In A Green Night* (1962) and *The Gulf* (1969), and several from the later books; he includes all of *Another Life* (1973), his long autobiographical poem. The omissions inevitably will generate critical speculation and second-guessing by Walcott's readers. The poems included are chronologically arranged and if read as presented allow us to trace Walcott's development towards his own distinct voice and to see how pervasive in both his early and late poems are the various dualities in his life, particularly those related to his African-European ancestry and his local-cosmopolitan education and experience.

*The Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse* anthologizes works by over one hundred poets, including anonymous work-songs, calypsos by Kitchener and Sparrow, reggae by Bob Marley and Peter Tosh, and pieces by performance poets like Louise Bennett and Linton Kwesi Johnson. The established writers are each allotted five to six pages and the newer and secondary writers a page or two. Burnett omits a few names, such as A.N. Forde and Cecil Herbert, but this remains a fairly representative and wide-ranging anthology, with works by writers resident in the Caribbean as well as in Britain, Canada, and the United States.

There were several other poetry publications that should be noted: Lorna Goodison's *I Am Becoming My Mother* (New Beacon), a volume that makes us sharply aware of the narrator's psyche as it examines her relationships with family, community, and race. In *Travelling to Find a Remedy* (Fiddlehead). Claire Harris, the Trinidadian-Canadian poet, explores the individual's search for personal and racial identity in various corners of the world, including Lagos, where she is forced to acknowledge that she will be 'forever oyibo [stranger]' in Africa. Cyril Dabydeen writes fairly positively, if a bit too hortatory, about the Guyanese immigrant's experience in Canada in *Island Lovelier than a Vision* (Peepal Tree); he has some poems that evoke the narrator's moods as he recollects his life in the Caribbean, which are much more effective than those with Canadian settings. Faustin Charles, who lives in London, creates a poetry of strong emotional and spiritual attachment to his Caribbean homeland in *Days and Night in the Magic Forest* (Bogle-L'Ouverture). In *Rapso Explosion* (Karia Press), the Trinidad poet, Brother Resistance, tries to capture in print

a form of oral poetry which when accompanied by music is called *Rapso*. The poet is passionately concerned in his poems with the struggles of the common man in Trinidad. Marc Matthews's *Guyana, My Altar* (Karnak) uses the speech pattern of Guyanese and occasionally standard English to explore the poet's attachment to his homeland. Other volumes that should be mentioned are Merle Collins's *Because the Dawn Breaks: Poems Dedicated to the People of Grenada* (Karia), Morgan Dalphinis's *For Those Who Come After* (Karia), A.L. Hendriks's *To Speak Simply: Selected Poems 1961-1985* (Hippopotamus), E.A. Markham's *Living in Disguise* (Anvil), Eintou Springer's *Out of the Shadows* (Karia), and Elean Thomas's *Word Rhythms From the Life of a Woman* (Karia).

In fiction, the work that should be noted first is Olive Senior's collection of short stories set in Jamaica, *Summer Lightning and Other Stories* (Longman), which won the 10,000 Commonwealth Writers' Prize. Senior offers warm, sensitive portrayals of Jamaican rural residents, with particular emphasis on children. Written in Jamaican Standard English and Creole, the stories vividly re-create details of everyday life and evocatively convey the fears and joys, the violence and tenderness of rural life. This is Senior's first work of fiction; she previously published a collection of poems *Talking of Trees* (Calabash, 1985) and a reference text, *A-Z of Jamaican Heritage*; she is currently editor of *Jamaica Journal*.

Several of the novels published this year have politics as their theme. Caryl Phillips's second novel, *A State of Independence* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), is a bleak study of post-colonial life on a Caribbean island where there is apparently little hope for the residents other than foreign aid. A similarly pessimistic work is Ronald Dathorne's *Dele's Child* (Three Continents), which has as its setting a Caribbean island significantly called Iota; the novel has a complex structure with a disjointed narrative and an intricate pattern of flashbacks. Austin Clarke's *Proud Empires* (Gollancz) takes us back to the 1950's Barbados political scene; though it speaks of corruption and subterfuge in island politics, it ends on a positive note. Clarke's collection of stories about immigrant life in Canada, *Nine Men Who Laughed* (Penguin), in contrast, is blank, portraying men of thwarted ambitions whose dominant feelings are discontentment with themselves and their adopted home.

There were two first novels by Guyanese writers. Janice Shinebourne's *Timepiece* (Peepal Tree) portrays the maturation of a young woman against the backdrop of political tension in Guyana during the racial conflagration of the sixties; this is a commendable first novel with strong dramatic scenes, weakened here and there by the narrator's tendency to overindulge in ruminations. Harold Bascom's *Apata* (Heinemann) is a lively but at times awkwardly narrated novel about a gifted young man's progression into a life of crime in pre-independent Guyana.

Longman Caribbean Writers series continues to make early and established works available in paperbacks, such as Roger Mais's *Listen the Wind*, a collection of twenty-two stories selected and edited by Kenneth Ramchand, and Namba Roy's *Black Albino*, which, set in Jamaica's Maroon society, tells of the freak birth of an Albino child and the child's subjection to cruel colour prejudice. Other Longman's reissues include *The Jumbie Bird*, Ismith Khan's depiction of the life of a young Trinidad Indian caught between Indian and Western cultures; *In The Castle of My skin*, George Lamming's novel about growing up in Barbados; *The Dragon Can't Dance*, Earl Lovelace's portrayal of the dehumanizing world of Calvary Hill, a fictional town in Trinidad; *My Bones and My Flute*, Edgar Mittelholzer's gripping novel about the supernatural in Guyana; and *The Children of Sisyphus*, Orlando Patterson's fictional account of life in Jamaica's Dungle. Grafton re-issued Mittelholzer's historical-romance Kaywana trilogy in separate volumes.

Derek Walcott published *Three Plays* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux): 'The Last Carnival' is a tragic portrayal of two Trinidadians with antithetical views: one adheres to and the other rejects European culture; 'Beef, No Chicken' is a zestful comedy about the consequences of modernization in rural Trinidad; and 'A Branch of the Nile' dramatizes the conflicts of a small group of theatrical figures who have to choose between staying in or leaving Trinidad. Walcott's *Ti-Jean and His Brothers*, which he considers 'his most West Indian play', was re-published in *Plays for Today* (Longman), edited by Errol Hill, who includes two other plays: Dennis Scott's *An Echo in the Bone*, and his own *Men Better Man*.

Shiva Naipaul's *An Unfinished Journey* (Hamish Hamilton) contains six previously published articles and the start of his book on Australia, on which he was working when he died. There were two interviews that should be noted: Wilson Harris in *Wasafiri* (5: Autumn) and Austin Clarke in *WLWE* (26:1). Harris has an article, 'Adversarial Contexts and Creativity' in *New Left Review* (November 1985); Sam Selvon has a memoir piece, 'Three Into One Can't Go – East Indian, Trinidadian or West Indian', in *Wasafiri* (5: Autumn); and Jan Carew wrote 'The First Great African Explorer in the Columbian Era,' in *BIM* (18:69).

In criticism, there were Theresa O'Connor's *Jean Rhys* (New York University Press) and C.L.R. James; *His Life and Work* (Allison & Busby), a collection of essays on James, edited by Paul Buhle. Daryl Dance's *Fifty Caribbean Writers* (Greenwood) provides biographical and bibliographical information and critical commentary by various hands on fifty Caribbean writers. Though the quality of the entries, which range from six to fourteen pages, varies considerably, this book is a very useful reference text.

Three journals brought out special Caribbean issues: *Wasafiri* (5: Autumn), *Kunapi* (3:2), and *The Toronto South Asian Review* (5:1), a number devoted to Indo-Caribbean writings. I should note in closing that the Departments of English of the three campuses of the University of the West Indies have started a new journal, *Journal of West Indian Literature*; the first number, with essays on Martin Carter, Lorna Goodison, Mervyn Morris, St. Lucian writers, and white Creole women novelists, was published in October 1986.

## WEST INDIES

The year saw several significant books of fiction and poetry published by established writers: novels by V.S. Naipaul and Wilson Harris and volumes of poems by Derek Walcott and Edward Brathwaite. There were in addition a few worthwhile works of fiction and poetry by newer hands. In criticism, three full-length studies were published: two on V.S. Naipaul and one on Wilson Harris.

V.S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival* and Wilson Harris's *The Infinite Rehearsal* share a common concern with exploring the writer's psyche and the process of artistic creation. Naipaul's novel has a strong autobiographical feel that the author attempts to disclaim in a subtitle, 'A Novel in Five Parts.' This disclaimer notwithstanding, it is difficult not to approach the novel – whose unnamed narrator-protagonist's experiences parallel most closely Naipaul's – as memoir or autobiography. This is one of a handful of novels – *The Great Gatsby* is another – that incorporate meaningfully paintings displayed on their dustjackets. The painting here is Giorgio de Chirico's 'The Enigma of Arrival', which becomes the major metaphor in a work that explores 'the writer's journey, the writer defined by his writing discoveries, his way of seeing, rather than by his personal adventures'. The novel has very little narrative pace and no characters defined beyond their roles in delineating the preoccupation of the mellow, reflective protagonist, who seeks to reconcile

his dual selves as artist and man as he confronts his own mortality and the changing ethos of his former and adopted homes, Trinidad and England. Like *A Bend in the River* (1979), this novel-memoir shows Naipaul increasingly shifting his interest from the external to the internal landscape.

The first sentence of Harris's novel is a declaration by the narrator Robin Redbreast Glass that his alter ego, identified only by the initials W.H., has 'put his name to my fictional autobiography'. Through this alter-ego technique and a reinterpretation of the Faust legend adapted to the 'non-European standpoint', Harris explores man's efforts at integration of his fragmented selves, perceived as an 'impossible quest for wholeness'. This is not an unfamiliar theme for Harris, but it is explored in fresh contexts with different emphases here. And, though the dense, richly-textured style of the novel – a slim one of eighty-eight pages – demands, as usual, much of the reader, it is of Harris's recent novels perhaps the most accessible to the reader who is not necessarily a committed Harris scholar.

Women's Press (London) brought out three novels that should be noted: the Jamaican Joan Riley's *Waiting in the Twilight*, the Guyanese Joan Cambridge's *Clarise Cumberbatch Wants to go Home*, and Merle Collins's *Angel*, a work which relates the lives of three Grenadian women, spanning the years from the 1950's to the American invasion of 1983. The novel explores the attempts of these women to ease away from European influences and find their own forms of identity and expression. Other novels that should be mentioned are Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven* (N.Y., Dutton), Michael Humfrey's *No Tears for Massa's Day* (Murray), the Trinidadian Amryl Johnson's *Sequins for a Ragged Hen* (Virago). John Agard brought out a collection of children's stories, *Lend Me Your Wings* (Hodder & Stoughton). Betty Wilson translated the Guadeloupean Myriam Warner-Vieyra's *Juletane* (Heinemann), a novel of just eighty-four pages, which employs two parallel narratives to examine incisively and dispassionately the experiences of two French Caribbean women in West African Islamic society.

Those seeking texts for courses may want to know that there were several notable reissues: Michael Anthony's *Green Days by the River* (Heinemann), Neil Bissoondath's *Digging Up the Mountain* (Penguin), Harold Sonny Ladoo's *No Pain Like This Body* (Heinemann), Andrew Salkey's *The One* (Bogle L'Ouverture). Sam Selvon's *Moses Ascending* was translated by Helene Devaux-Minie and published as *L'Ascension de Moïse* (Paris, Editions Caribéennes), the film rights to which were recently acquired by La Société Paris Motion.

Derek Walcott's *The Arkansas Testament* (Faber & Faber) provides further justification for seeing him as one of the finest contemporary poets. The book has two parts, 'Here' and 'Elsewhere', 'Here' being the Caribbean and 'Elsewhere' the United States, where Walcott is currently residing. The implication of these headings is that 'here' is the centre of his life, but this is not unambiguously so since the poet at times responds ambivalently to both the Caribbean and the United States. The long title poem examines his mixed relationship with the United States, but it goes beyond this cultural response to envision the nature of man, concluding that 'What we know of evil/ is that it will never end'. Walcott is not pessimistic; he pragmatically accepts the reality of evil. The poems are characteristically textured with abundant metaphors and Classical, Christian, British, and Caribbean allusions that reflect his multiple antithetical heritages and so enrich and impart tension to his poetry.

In his volume of poems, *X/Self*, Edward Brathwaite refers to 'Derek Walcott's pitcher of clear metaphors'. This clear, simple, undecorated style Brathwaite employs and advocates in his poems. He believes that 'the dialect of the tribes will come beating up/ against the crack/ foundation stones of latin...' *X/Self* is the third book of Brathwaite's second trilogy



(the first was *The Arrivants*) which began with *Mother Poem* (1977) and *Sun Poem* (1982). While these early volumes examine the poet's growing awareness of himself and his people in a restrictively Barbadian setting, *X/Self* ranges widely from Britain, USA, South Africa to ancient Rome. The first poem draws attention to blacks who have had significant roles in history, beginning with Severus, the African-born Roman Emperor. The volume won the Canada-Caribbean Regional Award in the Commonwealth Poetry Prize competition.

Two other poetry volumes that should be mentioned are Arnold Itwaru's *Entombed Survival* (Williams-Wallace) and Milton Williams's *Years of Fighting Exile* (Peepal Tree). Itwaru, a Guyanese-Canadian, is absorbed with individuals isolated in 'rooms' and 'tombs' who struggle in vain to have more than encounters with others. He plays down their ethnicity and nationality, and in doing so universalizes their experiences but at the same time diminishes the poems' intensity and concreteness. Williams's volume is a collection of his poems – forty-six in all – about how faith and hope sustain him as a migrant in Britain. Other volumes include John Agard's lively *Say It Again Granny: Twenty Poems from Caribbean Proverbs* (Bodley Head), Ayanna Black's *No Contingencies* (Williams-Wallace), Anum Iyapo's *Man of the Living, Woman of Life* (Akira), Rooplal Monar's *Koker* (Peepal Tree), Grace Nichols's *Come Into My Tropical Garden* (Black), Kenneth Parmasad *Child of the Storms* (New Voices), Milton Smalling's *The Battlefield* (First Class), and Frederick Williams's *Leggo de Pen* (Akira).

Among non-fiction pieces by the creative writers are interviews with Jan Carew in *Journal of West Indian Literature* (2:1), and with Wilson Harris in *Commonwealth* (9). V.S. Naipaul has an article on Shiva Naipaul, 'My Brother's Tragic Sense' in *Spectator* (24 January), Vic Reid writes on 'The Writer and His Work' in *Journal of West Indian Literature* (2), and Sam Selvon has an essay on life in London during the 1950's, 'Finding West Indian Identity in London,' *Kunapipi* (9:3).

Critical pieces in periodicals and journals are increasing by leaps and bounds. At least fifty articles were published in various journals, particularly in *WLWE*, *Journal of West Indian Literature*, *Kunapipi*, *JCL*, and *Third World Quarterly*. Over half a dozen doctoral theses were completed in universities around the world. There were two book-length studies on V.S. Naipaul: John Thieme's *The Web of Tradition* (Dangaroo/Hansib), a perceptive and thorough study of literary allusion in V.S. Naipaul's fiction; and Peggy Nightingale's *Journey Through Darkness: The Writing of V.S. Naipaul*, which provides an illuminating commentary on Naipaul's dark vision of ex-colonial societies. Sandra Drake's *Wilson Harris and the Modern Tradition: A New Architecture of the World* (Greenwood Press), examines Harris in terms of modernism, focusing on *Palace of the Peacock*, *Ascent to Omai*, *Tumatumari*, and *Genesis of Clowns*. Amon Saba Saakana published *The Colonial Legacy in Caribbean Literature* (Karnak House). David Dabydeen and Brinsley Samaroo's *India in the Caribbean* (Hansib), a collection of essays by various hands, has a sociohistorical bent, but there is a handful of literary pieces. Another collection of essays is David Sutcliffe and Ansel Wing's *The Language of the Black Experience: Cultural Expression Through Word and Sound in the Caribbean and Black Britain* (Blackwell).

Finally, I should draw attention to a relatively new annual bibliography of Caribbean Literature in *Callaloo* (10), which annotates both critical and creative works. David Dabydeen and N. Wilson-Tagoe have an annotated bibliography on selected themes in West Indian literature in *Third World Quarterly* (9; July). A useful serially published bibliography is *The Caricom Bibliography* put out by the Caribbean Community Secretariat, Georgetown, Guyana. Half-yearly with annual cumulation, it has a fairly comprehensive and up-to-date literary section.

VICTOR J. RAMRAJ

## GERMAN INTEREST IN THE NEW LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

- Gerhard Stilz, *Grundlagen zur Literatur in englischer Sprache: Indien*. München: Fink, 1982. 195 pp., DM 28,-
- Dieter Riemenschneider, *Grundlagen zur Literatur in englischer Sprache: West- und Ostafrika*. München: Fink, 1983. 265pp., DM 48,-
- Konrad Gross und Walter Pache, *Grundlagen zur Literatur in englischer Sprache: Kanada*. München: Fink, 1987. 244 pp., DM 48,-
- Gerhard Stilz (Hrsg.), *Drama im Commonwealth*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1981. 154 pp.
- Konrad Gross und Wolfgang Kloos (eds), *Voices from Distant Lands, Poetry in the Commonwealth*. Würzburg: Koningshausen + Neumann, 1983. 172 pp.
- Dieter Riemenschneider (ed.), *The History and Historiography of Commonwealth Literature*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1983. 250 pp.
- Eckard Breitingner und Reinhard Sander (eds.), *Studies in Commonwealth Literature*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1985. 195 pp.
- Peter O. Stummer (ed.), *The Story Must Be Told, Short Narrative Prose in the New English Literatures*. Würzburg: Koningshausen + Neumann, 1986. 197 pp.

Mid-June saw the event of the Eleventh Annual Conference on Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies in German-speaking countries as a joint venture at Aachen and Liège. The conference had as its theme 'Crisis and Conflict in the New Literatures in English'. Its dimensions of scope and the number of its participants are ample proof of a bustling activity in the field in Germany (and, of course, of the untiring temperaments of Hena Maes-Jelinek and Geoffrey Davis who shouldered the organisational burden) and provide a good opportunity for a brief review of related material available in print.

Endeavours to delve critically into the German colonial past are sparse and fairly recent.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, as early as the mid-seventies that a handful of younger German scholars took the initiative to cross the boundaries of established ENG. LIT.; some of them had considerable first-hand experience of the countries concerned. The positive outlook of the outsider led to the objective project of *Grundlagen zur Literatur in englischer Sprache* conceptualized by Werner Arens, Dieter Riemenschneider and Gerhard Stilz as general editors.

Following the model of the branching off of the USA, the editors discern four main areas: Canada, Australia, New Zealand/ India, Pakistan, Bangla Desh, Sri Lanka/ West, East, and Southern Africa/ the Caribbean. They want to offer 'means of orientation' not only for students of (English) literature but also for those whose attention focuses on economical, political, or sociological perspectives in some kind of cultural approach. The original plan comprised seven volumes: 1. Kanada 2. Australien 3. Newseeland 4. Indien 5. West- und Ostafrika 6. Südafrika 7. Westindien. These books are written in English. Three out of the planned seven have so far been realized, India, West and East Africa, Canada, in that order, and with the one on Australia forthcoming.<sup>2</sup>

The de facto sequence of publication is preferable to the one originally intended. By persistently applying one and the same pattern of presentation, the authors facilitate comparability and encourage actual comparison by equally emphasizing 'factors of integration' as well as 'development of differentiation'. Each volume begins with an introduction of about twenty pages that very reliably maps out the field, from its historical beginnings to its contemporary diversifications. In an analogous way the documentary part brings

together about fifty longer passages taken from important texts. It thereby equally represents the then and now of each area. All these texts are widely annotated and are extensively commented upon. Equal emphasis is laid on 'regional tendencies' on the one side and on more 'internationalist' outlooks on the other. Next, an exhaustive compilation gives details about the important writers and their works in a comprehensive overview, which, then, is followed by a structured bibliography of useful material. The function of reference work is greatly enhanced by the inclusion of a threefold register, i.e. names, titles, subjects. Thus the volumes certainly make good complementary reading alongside their respective counterparts in the Longmans Literature in English series; also those who do not know any German can be sure to put these carefully written and diligently edited volumes to good and profitable use.

Even more accessible are the five published volumes presently available of German conference proceedings, since they are – the first excepted – all in English. The majority are genre-oriented, from drama, to poetry, and short story, or focus on a general theme, like tension, or examine a theoretical problem, like historiography. All contain between fifteen and twenty contributions that cover partly the 'national' outlook, partly the comparative angle, partly deal with individual authors and occasionally include one or the other original text by younger writers; in this way they provide a welcome experimental platform.

## NOTES

1. E.g. the film-maker Peter Heller, director of films like *Usambara - Das Land wo Glaube Bäume versetzen soll* (1980) or the historian Horst Gründer who is the author of *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien* (1985).
2. Three books are not intended as substitutes for areas which have not yet been covered, but they definitely deserve to be mentioned in this context: Geoffrey Davis and Michael Senior (eds.) *Texts for English and American Studies 12: South Africa – the Privileged and the Dispossessed*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1983. and *Matatu, Zeitschrift für afrikanische Kultur und Gesellschaft* (1988), *Towards Liberation: Culture and Resistance in South Africa*. edited by Geoffrey Davis, Matsemela Manaka and Jürgen Jansen

PETER O. STUMMER