
ASAA NEWSLETTER

Association for the Study of Australasia in Asia

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Association for the Study of
Australasia in Asia

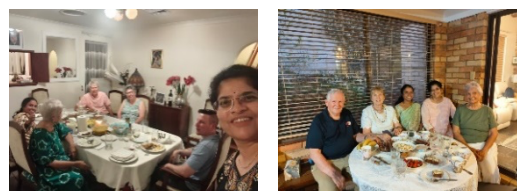
A Home Away From Home in Perth OU Visiting Fellows write of their Experience

Our recent visit in March 2025 to the University of Western Australia (UWA) in Perth as visiting fellows was made truly unforgettable, thanks to the extraordinary hospitality of Dr. Cynthia vanden Driesen, the Chair, Advisory Committee, ASAA and the astonishing generosity and kindness of Dr. Kieran Dolin, President, ASAA (Australia). For ten days, her home became our cherished "home away from home," a haven of warmth and welcome that exceeded all expectations.



Dr. vanden Driesen proved to be the quintessential hostess. From the moment we arrived, her loving and affectionate nature shone through,

making us feel instantly at ease. Her genuine care and concern for our comfort were evident in every detail. She ensured our stay was not just comfortable but genuinely memorable, anticipating our needs and going above and beyond to make us feel like part of her family.



Each evening, we were treated to delicious dinners, lovingly prepared. Beyond the wonderful meals, Dr. vanden Driesen enriched our experience with a delightful outing and engaging social gatherings. These opportunities to socialize, often with other interesting guests, added another layer of warmth and camaraderie to our visit.

Kieran Dolin was with us through the visit from our time of arrival to departure. Without him, our UWA

visit would not been what it was- academically engaging and enriching. His meticulous planning enabled us to attend lectures, access library resources, attend meetings, make seminar presentations, and explore UWA campus, all in a short span of one week.

We left Perth not only with valuable academic insights but also with hearts full of gratitude for the generosity and kindness extended to us. Our time with Cynthia vanden Driesen and Kieran Dolin was a beautiful reminder that true hospitality can transform a professional visit into a deeply personal and cherished memory.



This enriching experience in Perth reminded us of the profound connections fostered through shared academic and cultural pursuits. It was a celebration not only of intellectual exchange but also of the deeply human bonds that elevate such encounters into treasured memories. These moments resonate with the power of literature and dialogue to transcend geographical boundaries, creating bridges that unite individuals from diverse backgrounds.

STRENGTHENING GLOBAL ACADEMIC TIES: OSMANIA UNIVERSITY AT UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Professors B. Vijaya and Parimala Kulkarni from the Department of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad, India, visited the University of Western Australia (UWA), Perth, as Visiting Fellows in March 2025. The visit aimed to strengthen the existing MoU between the two institutions and explore opportunities for collaborative research, academic exchange, and joint initiatives. The visit was supported by the Chair of ASAA Advisory Committee, Dr. Cynthia vanden Driesen, who extended warm hospitality.



During the visit, the fellows were provided with office space and staff credentials, facilitating full access to UWA's extensive library resources.

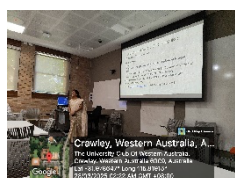
Productive meetings were held with the Chair of the Department of English and Literary Studies Prof. Tanya Dalziell, Prof. Tony Hughes-D'Aeth, Chair of Australian Literature, Dr. Kieran Dolin, Honorary Research Fellow, and Mr. Broderick Moncrieff, Global Engagement Manager, to discuss potential collaborations, including joint degrees, faculty and



student exchange, and research projects.

Prof. Kulkarni presented a talk titled “Literary Spinsters”, while Prof. Vijaya spoke on “Language and Society”.

They also attended lectures by eminent UWA faculty, including Prof. Tony Hughes-D’Aeth, Dr. Daniel Jukes, and Mr. Melville Thomas, covering topics such as Australian literature, creative writing, and Indigenous studies.



Key outcomes include a proposed International Conference at Osmania University in November 2025 (in collaboration with UWA and ASAA), a special issue of *Osmania Journal of English Studies* (OJES) on Australian literature, and proposals for internship and faculty exchange programs. UWA faculty have been invited to participate in the upcoming conference, reinforcing a growing academic partnership.

B. Vijaya
Parimala Kulkarni

DR.ALASTAIR NIVEN IN MEMORY

On 25 March 2025 I had celebrated my birthday; on 26 March I got the news that Dr Alastair Niven had passed away on the operating table in the surgical theatre of a London hospital, aged 81. A few weeks before, Alastair sent me a letter he had written

to a mutual friend, Mark O’Connor, a Canberra poet, about the ailments of aging. He was about to undergo a heart surgery to recover for a healthy life years ahead with his wife Helen. We had hoped to meet at our next biennial CISLE (Centre for the International Study of Literatures in English) conference.

The last note he wrote to me was on a poem of mine* he had enjoyed reading about the death of the last survivor of the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was published in an 800-page international anthology, edited by Professor Anurag Sharma. Like many of us, he was deeply disturbed by the current climate enveloping our vulnerable planet and the daily corrupting and corrosive comments and disrupting actions of dubiously elected autocrats emerging like horny cacti near diminishing oases of freedom. Brexit had disturbed him. Alastair was sensitively aware of its long-term consequences: he was a man of letters, an avid reader of world literature and a judge of the Booker Prize for fiction and Commonwealth writing. His insights came from the worlds in literary compositions by some of the finest minds engaged with contemporary issues.

Dr Alastair Niven’s influence extended far beyond his literary critiques. He embodied the rare ability to bridge cultural divides through literature, fostering understanding and connections among Commonwealth nations. His captivating intellect and empathetic nature made him not just a scholar but a friend to writers and

thinkers across the globe. His contributions to Commonwealth writing weren't simply academic pursuits; they were acts of devotion to the transformative power of stories. Through his discerning eye, he elevated voices from the remotest corners of the world, ensuring their perspectives found a place amidst the global literary discourse. These efforts reflected his unwavering belief that literature could serve as a unifying force in a fragmented world.

Alastair encouraged many obscure writers like me from some of the smallest Commonwealth countries and communities. No one I know was more devoted to Commonwealth Literature than this Scottish born critic and scholar who had an uncanny genius for forging friendships in faraway places. As an academic I came to know him rather late in my life, but he had liked my autobiography, *Requiem for a Rainbow*, (2001), and had given his critical imprimatur at a London conference that *Requiem* was an important document in postcolonial literatures, especially from the South Pacific. Naturally I was pleased and went on to spend a week at Cumberland Lodge in the Great Windsor Park of which he was the distinguished principal for over a dozen years.

As a guest writer at Cumberland Lodge where the magnificent ancient trees in the Great Windsor Park stood like cathedrals, I attended a Sunday church meeting in a small, old chapel with the Queen, the Duke and some selected writers from the Commonwealth. Alastair had created

a truly creative centre for writers' meetings and dialogue on many aspects of literary connections in English across the Commonwealth. After the church service, Ben Okri, originally from Nigeria, and I were 'presented' to Her Majesty. I don't think the Queen was much amused to be reminded of Fiji where the coup-colonel had removed her as Head of State on October 10, 1987, after the second coup on September 25.

The coup shattered our fool's paradise. Dr Niven was a loyal royalist while I was more a republican after the Queen was dissuaded from seeing Dr Timoci Bavadra, the deposed PM of Fiji. Dr Bavadra, the Labour PM, had travelled to London to see his Queen. We had taken the oath of allegiance in her name and imagined that she might utter a few words to restore democracy back to Fiji and ask the misguided colonel to go back to the Queen Elizabeth barracks of Royal Military Forces of Fiji. Fijian soldiers were known for their sterling peace-keeping service in many war-torn corners of the world. Presumably there some also picked up the tactics for conducting coups against defenceless people who could not even spell the word. The Pacific was shaken to the core by this brutish crime. Dr Bavadra was not allowed to see Her Majesty, his Queen. But the Queen did say 'Poor Fiji'.

Alastair with his sensitive antennae was aware of Fiji's tragedy. In fact, he had launched my first book of essays, *Fiji: Paradise in Pieces*, published in Canberra, at Cumberland Lodge. In it I'd said the only good thing our local

disloyal colonel did was to make Fiji a republic. This must have perplexed Alastair who was a devoted royalist and believed implicitly in the binding vine of British Monarchy despite its bloody games of thrones over centuries. But Alastair didn't hold that against me and we developed an affectionate friendship glued by our interest in new writings.

In the early seventies, I studied at the University of Leeds, a course in Commonwealth Literature which changed the trajectory of my life. My readings and writings, poetry and politics, came out of that creative tension that one feels when history, writing and life commingle in a heady brew of self-recognition, self-awareness and above all self-respect. Words make you discover and share other worlds. They give you an inner strength. Literature is the shield of one's imagination.

Dr Alastair Niven was fond of visiting Australia: on one of his visits he came and stayed for three days in our home in Palmerston, a new suburb of Canberra. I arranged an evening public lecture at the University of Canberra. We'd a delightful couple of days and he returned home. Later I met him at the CISLE conferences in Germany, Austria, Spain, and Slovenia. At Slovenia I gave a keynote paper on Gandhi's writings: Alastair liked my talk and we became closer than ever — I become especially fond of anyone who likes the old Mahatma.

Alastair frequently invited Jyoti and me to stay with him and Helen in their home in London. We never made it. And that is an enduring regret. Now

that he's gone, I wish I'd known him better and understood his untiring efforts to give a voice and visibility to so many writers who today are part of our literary idiom. I was fortunate to have known him as a friend. I will miss him deeply.

Satendra Nandan

*TWICE BOMBED

On January 6, 2010, Mr Tsutomu Yamaguchi died, aged 93. He was the last survivor of the two nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I read his story in a magazine in New Delhi on 30 January 2010, after witnessing a parade of weapons on the Indian Republic Day, 26 January. Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated in New Delhi on 30 January, 1948.

I

The garden is green, beautiful,
In the leaves of trees there's peace:
The birds twitter, the caterpillars
crawl: There are butterflies
On the quiet breast of their earth —
Remain close to your home-soil.
The old man sits, crying
uncontrollably. Tears have wet his
tattered cheeks, torn shirt: His face is
leaning towards infinity.
He's past ninety, past life, past dreams.
Yet nothing is really past.
Mr Tsutomu Yamaguchi, in his hoed
garden, Died on 6 January 2010.
I'm reading about Gandhi —
The papers in New Delhi, having seen
The parade of weapons,
Are full of tributes to another life's
span. What really is the measure of
any man?
The morning in August, in January,
Had its usual brightness

The sky was blue and the birds flew In
a pattern which only they knew: It was
an ordinary day.

Yamaguchi was walking to catch a
train

From Hiroshima to Nagasaki; He'd
finished his assignment — Time to say
goodbye to friends In the offices of
Mitsubishi.

And buy a gift or two for his wife And
his only son.

Three months in Hiroshima
Was long enough—it's time to return
home. All good things have their ends.
Across the green potato fields He
walked:

Sometimes Life can be just crossing a
green field. In the clear, blue sky, a
plane hovered,

Circled the city,

A white parachute mushroomed
Yamaguchi saw them float, fall Before
he fell, face burned, Flesh a molten
monstrosity.

He remembered the flash
Its white magnesium light —
I've become Death, declared the red
sun: Krishna-Christ, Gautama-Gandhi
are One.

He lay in the burnt potato fields
Bleeding

Feeling the soft earth beneath his
melting skin. It's reported he was two
miles from

The epicenter of the first atom bomb
Dropped on the heartbeats of a city
And a very young man.

Burnt, eardrums ruptured,
He made his way to the railway
station To catch a train to Nagasaki:
How trains still ran on time.

He crossed the angry river On the raft
of human remains Floating, broken,
dead:

Corpses in the sunken Ganga.

II

Years later, he told the school children:
On the bridge of inhumanity On the
boat of bloated bodies I crossed to the
other side.

The old man wept

The children stared at his wet face.

He simply said: he reached Nagasaki,
just in time, To report to his office.

His manager at Mitsubishi

Was, as usual, incredulous, skeptical:

How can a city be killed by a single
bomb?

For a nation at war with itself

Weapons are a necessary evil.

Suddenly the same white blaze

Flashed through the office window:

The bars melted, the boss died.

Young Tsutomu was thrown again To
the ground, made of steel.

O Yama!

Close to death, he clung to life In the
reinforced bars;

His house was vaporized,

His wife, his little son survived.

His son was to die of cancer, aged 59.

At the funeral, the Father wept twice:

How the white light had darkened his
son's life.

III

Often Mr Yamaguchi would cry Long
into the midnight

When there was nothing

But the approaching silence of death,

Birds asleep in their nests

And dried leaves fluttered

On an empty path towards a garden
 Into a green potato patch.
 It's said the old man
 Painted many faces of the Buddha, He
 wrote tanka — 31-syllable poems.
 Within these acts of creation
 He summarized two nuclear bombs
 Believing in the nameless art of
 worship And small human affections.
 Peace, he often murmured, is God:
 And the blue sky, the green earth Will
 not perish.
 He became the only *nijyuuhibikusha*:
 The twice-victim of the atom bomb.
 And now he, too, is gone: Surely
 somewhere another Mahatma must be
 born?
 The Great Life
 The killing, sixty years ago,
 Was easy: in minutes he was dead.
 And there was a kind of peace
 As his heart bled pierced by lead.
 Two words escaped his lips: *He Ram*,
 Oh God.
 And his restless mind was at rest.
 It was an ordinary evening Of prayer
 and hymns
 The late mahatma was running late
 And he had no idea of his fate.
 Then a darkness fell As over an ocean:
 The dust of tombs and temples In the
 ancient stones shone
 Some old glory, remnant of a golden
 age? Might speak a word or two
 To that melancholy moth
 That spider in its savage web of
 civilization Weaving his silken thread.
 No, these stones do not speak to me
 Nor do they sing a song
 Of silent and infinite suffering.
 Every civilization is built on some
 crime Every document has its
 barbarism:

You are fortunate, to be so well-read. I
 do not praise them

Satendra Nandan

A WONDERFUL GIFT FOR FRIENDSHIP

The last time I met Alastair Niven
 was approximately two years ago at
 the British Library in London. I often
 took the opportunity to look into a
 number of research topics related to
 the New Literatures in English.
 Alastair was himself presenting a
 paper on the work of Kamala
 Markandaya at a conference on Indian
 Women novelists. He came across
 during an interval in his programme
 for a brief chat.

He and Helen had both visited my
 apartment which I had taken for a
 brief period in Bloomsbury. They had
 dropped in earlier for afternoon tea
 and in his usual way Alistair
 knowledgeably provided many
 highlights on that particularly
 interesting area in which I happened
 to be living.

They had invited me to visit their
 home in London but (sadly) I was hard
 pressed for time, so they came by
 instead. Also, they knew their way
 about London much more easily than I
 did. Another time I was passing
 through, they picked me up from one
 spot and entertained me to coffee and
 cake at a very pleasant café at
 Wellington Station. (This picture is
 from that happy encounter.)

I first met Alastair at Cumberland
 Lodge, part of the Queen's estate at
 Windsor, which entertained scores of
 writers and academics invited to the

spacious Lodge and its environs. He told me he had been to Australia many times but had not been to Perth in Western Australia nor had he been to



Fremantle the famous port in the region. He was delighted to find this was only a short distance along the railway line which ran behind my home.

They were delightful friends to entertain, so interested in everything and I was really --sorry they did not have the chance to come again, though we met several times after and I always looked forward to the meeting. As Satendra notes, Alastair had a very large group of friends drawn from varied groups and communities. I do not think that we shall see his like again or his wonderful ease with acquaintances whom he turned with such grace and good humour into valued friends.

All those who knew him should read his autobiography: *In Glad or Sorry Hours* (2021).

Cynthia vanden Driesen

ALASTAIR NIVEN

The passing of a friend is always a sad occasion and leaves one's personal world diminished. When that passing is accidental or violent or both, the shock is all the greater for its premature and unnecessary nature. A good and much-loved friend to so many people around the world, Alastair Niven's recent sudden death seems not only an unnecessary tragedy but an affront to the expected order of things.

In March of this year Alastair wrote to me in his usual patient and humorous way: You won't believe it, but I am still awaiting my heart operation. I won't bore you with the details but having been waiting for a year in the famous NHS queue I have twice spent 24 hours in St Thomas's Hospital being prepared for the operation, only for it to be called off when they ran out of time. I'd had all the preliminaries, including seeing the anaesthetist and having cannulas stuck in me. Talk about the bride left at the altar! It now looks possible I will be readmitted next week. Third time lucky, I hope!

In early April I wrote again to Alastair to enquire how he was doing after the surgery only to receive the sad and shocking news from his wife Helen, that he had died the week before on the operating table. This news will be hard not only for Alastair's bereaved family to process, but also for his hundreds of friends around the world.

There was no one quite like Alastair. His interest in and curiosity about people and life, his professional

abilities and achievements, his very deep integrity, his love of literature and the arts, and above all his overwhelming kindness and humanity, make his departure from our world a loss that cannot be easily accepted by those who had the good fortune to know him. To Helen, and to Isabella and Alex, go our deepest sympathy. To those who knew him so much more casually, a good friend is irreplaceably gone, and the world is the poorer for the loss of a most exceptional man.

Meira Chand

EUCALYPTUS YEARS (FOR GLEN PHILLIPS AT 89)

This remarkable poem sent from an old friend in China, Professor Chao of Canton's University of Foreign Studies (GIFL). Chao is a renowned poet there.

Your years bend like a river gum
 ninety winters etched in bark—
 each verse a leaf the storms let come,
 embers spark—
 Through dawns that gild the ghost-
 gum's crown,
 your pen still rasps its truth-told
 breath:
 "To live is to write the world down,
 and age is but a comma, not death."
 these decades bloom like wattle gold.
 The world's a stanza, vast, unseen...
 your story's yet to be foretold.
*With my love for you, dear Glen, and
 your household*

DOIREANN MCDERMOTT REMEMBERED

Professor Doireann MacDermott (1923-2024) was a visionary scholar, who, amongst others, pioneered the study of English language and literature in Spanish tertiary education, also being a foundational figure in the creation of the Faculty of Philology's School of Languages and in the Department of English and German Philology, both at the University of Barcelona.



Doireann MacDermott was born in Dublin and served in the Royal Navy in World War II before studying for a degree in English at the University of London and going on to pursue further studies in literature and language across the Channel. It was in Geneva where she met her husband-to-be, the writer Ramón Carnicer. Once in Barcelona, together with her spouse, she was instrumental in the creation of the *Escuela de Idiomas Modernos* in the Faculty of Philology. It was the decade of the 1950s, and, as she would explain, the colourful presence of foreign students in the Faculty signified a breath of fresh air in the grey atmosphere of the time. In the 1960s, she completed her PhD and witnessed the publication of *La otra*

cara de la justicia (1966), based on her thesis, which was awarded the *Ciudad de Barcelona* prize. As a promoter of the Fulbright Commission in Spain, she was also indefatigable.

In 1967, the then Dr. Doireann MacDermott became the first woman to obtain a professorship in English at the Universidad de Zaragoza, where she lectured for some years before returning to the Universidad de Barcelona as professor to chair the Department of English and German Philology until her retirement. Towards the end of the 1970s and following a period of research in California, her study Aldous Huxley. *Anticipación y retorno* (1978) appeared whilst in the 1980s she devoted much of her energy to the study of writing in English around the globe, becoming one of the foundational figures in Postcolonial Studies in Europe. Besides carrying out relevant research in the field, still cited today, she was one of the early Chairs of the European Association for the Study of Commonwealth Literatures, EACLALS, following Anna Rutherford and Geoffrey Davis, and organized several international conferences in Barcelona and Sitges, attended by writers and scholars from around the world.

Isabel Alonso Breto

**VALE PROFESSOR DOIREANN
MACDERMOTT,
UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA**

Last year on November 14 2024, I received from Doireann's son Alonso Carnicer a message which filled me

with considerable sadness: that his wonderful mother Doireann Macdermott, who for so many years had graced the stage of European academia, had passed on after a long life marked with numerous achievements. I felt the academic world – and not just that of Europe – would truly miss her gracious and distinguished presence.

Doireann had first come to Australia in 1980, visiting several Australian universities. I met Doireann for the first time when she presented the plenary address at an impressive conference of diplomats, academics and writers organised by Curtin University and staged at the prestigious Hyatt Hotel in Perth in 1997. The conference was titled “Outside Images of Australia,” and invitees were challenged to present a view of an Australia that was no longer to be regarded as ‘white,’ and was part of a world that had an Indigenous component and was carving out an independent heritage from that of Europe. Doireann was completely taken with developments in Australia at the time and full of questions and observations. She visited our home twice on that occasion. She enjoyed quizzing my husband Ian (an economist) on his insights into Australia's economic challenges.

She had an avid interest in Asia and a particular fondness for Sri Lanka. This fascination was so great that she was moved to book her passage to the island and explore it with the help of an excellent English-speaking driver. Subsequently she contrived to arrange

that the Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies (ACLALS) of which she was then President should hold its Biennial Conference in Sri Lanka. That year in Colombo Satendra Nandan helped me establish ASAA.

Over the years I met her often and never missed seeing her if ever I went to Barcelona. I have visited her lovely apartment set high over the rooftops of Barcelona, and noted that the pigeons who built their homes on her balcony, each of whom was named Mustapha, continued to maintain a gentle presence there.

I also met her husband Ramon Carnicer, then the national poet of Spain, an immensely tall and distinguished-looking man for whom Doireann from time to time asked me to send a Moslem cap (from Sri Lanka), which he liked to wear. I believe Doireann travelled with him to several places in Spain on days of festival.

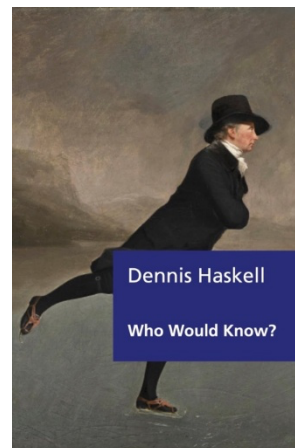
I still retain a card she sent to me, acknowledging a little silk scarf I had sent her, affirming, "I shall wear it thinking of you, elephants and my beloved Sri Lanka." She states with delicate nostalgia, "I am now 91½, which is really a great age and sometimes I feel the weight of so many years, so many friends and family gone is too much." She immediately reminds herself of her "lovely son Alonso ... who looks after me so lovingly and good friends like Jacky and Kathy." This was so characteristic of Doireann especially as she stops to comment on "the terrible state of migrants desperate to find a place in

the world," but also pauses to enquire after my own children and grandchildren.

I reflected that last time I saw her in Barcelona that, as always, she was wearing a beautiful dress with her long hair piled up and her gentle calm smile that she retained a truly regal look. The memory of the person she was and her impressive achievements will not be easily forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to have known her.

Cynthia vanden Driesen

NEW VOLUME OF POETRY BY DENNIS HASKELL



Dennis Haskell's tenth collection of poems, *Who Would Know?* (WA Poets Publishing, 2024) was launched by John Kinsella in August last year. Well known as a

scholar of Australian Literature and keen proponent of Australian-Asian links, Haskell is also an admired and loved poet. This new book illustrates his ability to find beauty and insight in ordinary life, and equally to ponder unexpected or devastating events. Scottish artist Henry Raeburn's eighteenth-century painting, *The Skating Minister*, inspires a poem of that name in which Haskell reflects on time within the painted image and beyond it, in the eyes and minds of viewers ever after. Several of the

poems are elegies, including tributes to fellow Australian poets such as Les Murray, Alf Taylor and William Grono. Each of these is in a different key that reflects the individual and his relationship with the poet. Haskell's longstanding interest in other cultures and landscapes has given rise to lyrical evocations of places from Paris to the Philippines. The book also provides a unique witness to the experience of COVID-19 quarantine on a ship and subsequently on Rottnest Island, off the coast of Perth, via a personal essay that includes poems written during that time. Like many Haskell collections, there are also satires and comic works, including 'The Ballad of Vlad the Impaler,' about the death of the Russian opposition leader, Alexei Navalny. In his introduction to the volume, Dennis Haskell hopes 'the poems demonstrate a love of language, a humane voice and a generosity of spirit.' They undoubtedly do so. In the December 2024 issue of *Australian Book Review*, *Who Would Know?* was nominated as a Book of the Year by John Kinsella, who called it 'a vade mecum of different poetic modes, "conversational voice," and formal control.'

Kieran Dolin

**9th AEEII INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE
FRACTURED BODIES, BODY
HEALINGS: CRISIS AND
RESTORATION PROCESSES AND
NARRATIVES IN THE
SUBCONTINENT AND ITS
DIASPORAS**

26-28 November 2025 | Universitat de
Barcelona

New abstract submission deadline:
25 June 2025

Notification of acceptance: 15 July 2025



In our times, two seemingly contradictory narratives coexist: one of decline, decadence and imminent collapse, and another of healing and resilience. Nowadays, we are confronted with ecological, political, social, community, family, individual, health, and psychological issues that are often perceived as extremely urgent, destabilizing any attempt to find reliable and lasting solutions, and causing serious concern in various spheres. Simultaneously, however, the present moment witnesses numerous initiatives and gestures aimed at restoring and strengthening structures and bodies affected by such problems. These arise from multiple locations; from individuals—including writers and other public figures—to communities, institutions of all kinds, governments, and transnational bodies. They're all investing great efforts in repairing, restoring, reuniting and healing all those fractured frameworks and bodies.

This conference invites exploration of this paradoxical reality, namely, the coexistence, the frictions and/or the alternation between experiences and narratives of decline and collapse and

experiences and narratives of restitution, healing and resilience, and the specific forms these processes take in the South Asian subcontinent and its multifarious diasporas.

Thus, we invite proposals to present communications in English or Spanish that address the decline/collapse-restoration/healing segment, where the emphasis can be placed on either end or on both, in South Asian cultures and their diasporas, from any discipline or point of view, and with a special interest in inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches. Here are some possibilities that would be interesting to explore, although they are not the only ones:

- ❖ Ecological narratives of decadence/collapse and/or recovery/recuperation in the Subcontinent or its diasporas.
- ❖ Healing initiatives related to the environment and its peremptory problems in the Subcontinent or its diasporas.
- ❖ Ecological experiences of caring for the land and the agricultural and first sector communities in the Subcontinent or its diasporas.
- ❖ Crises in the more-than-human spectrum and restoration experiences in the Subcontinent or its diasporas.
- ❖ Intra-human violence due to caste, class, origin, gender, age, sexuality, or religion and processes of neutralization and healing in the Subcontinent or its diasporas.
- ❖ Processes and narratives of individual and collective memory of events involving cycles of decline/collapse and

restoration/healing, and their forms of memorialization in the Subcontinent or its diasporas.

- ❖ Human and more-than-human bodies as receptacles of processes of decline/collapse and/or restoration/healing in the Subcontinent or its diasporas.
- ❖ The literary, artistic, and scientific representation of processes of decline/collapse and/or restoration/healing in the Subcontinent or its diasporas.

Organized from the *Observatory: UB Centre for Australian and Transnational Studies* and the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and English Studies at the Faculty of Philology and Communication of the University of Barcelona, the conference will be held on November 26, 27 and 28, 2025. Please send 250-word abstracts, along with a 50-word biographical note, to aeiiconference2025@gmail.com by June 25, 2025 (extended deadline).

Proposals for full panels, round tables, workshops, book presentations and creative or artistic interventions are also welcome, either on the conference topics or on other issues related to the Subcontinent or its diasporas. A selection of papers will be published in *Indialogs: Spanish Journal of India Studies* in 2027, after a blind review process by external evaluators.

A conference website for registration and updates in progress is available at 9thaeiiconference25.wordpress.com.

Barcelona, 16 June 2025

Isabel Alonso Breto and Dolors Ortega
Arévalo



**Three-day International Conference
on
Plural Pasts, Shared Futures: Global
Literary Interconnections
25-27 November 2025 (Tuesday-
Thursday)
Organized by
Department of English, Osmania
University
Hyderabad, Telangana, India
in collaboration with
University of Western Australia, Perth,
WA
&
Association for the Study of Australasia in
Asia (ASAA)**

In an increasingly interconnected world, literature serves as a crucial medium for understanding diverse cultural experiences, historical narratives, and future aspirations. The theme "**Plural Pasts, Shared Futures**" invites an exploration of the complex relationships between literary traditions across time and space. It emphasizes the multiplicity of historical experiences ("plural pasts") and the possibilities for collective imagination and solidarity in shaping inclusive global futures.

Global literature is not a monolithic body but a vibrant network of voices—some dominant, others marginalized—interacting across boundaries of nation, language, class, caste, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. Colonial legacies, diasporic movements, and

digital globalization have all contributed to a reshaping of literary and cultural landscapes. Jointly organised from India and Australia, this conference aims to consider the functions of writing and reading beyond the confines of the single nation state, and the connections between past and future, as they are presented in the literatures of the world.

Drawing inspiration from the spirit of critical hopefulness that underpins postcolonialism, ecocriticism and other critical theories, this conference seeks to advance study of: the dialogue between indigenous, colonial, and postcolonial narratives; the role of translation, adaptation, and re-interpretation in sustaining literary and cultural memory; the emergence of transnational themes such as migration, climate change, human rights, and identity; and the imagination of transformed futures.

Key Themes

- ❖ Memory and historical reconstruction in literature
- ❖ Migration, exile, and diaspora as literary motifs
- ❖ Postcolonial, decolonial, and indigenous perspectives
- ❖ Feminist, queer, and subaltern literary voices
- ❖ Environmental narratives and ecological interconnectedness
- ❖ Speculative fiction and imagined worlds
- ❖ Decentring canons to highlight marginalized, underrepresented literary traditions
- ❖ Impact of technology and digital media on global storytelling

- ❖ Social transformation in popular genres and cultural studies
- ❖ Language, multilingualism, translation and linguistic innovation in literature
- ❖ Role of anthologies, literary festivals, and awards in shaping global literary canons

The conference hopes to achieve an enriched understanding of literature as a global, collaborative archive, development of inclusive pedagogies and curricula for literary studies, encouragement of cross-cultural literary scholarship and translation practices and building networks for future collaboration among writers, scholars, and students worldwide. “Plural Pasts, Shared Futures” is a call to recognize both the uniqueness and the commonalities of human experience as captured through literature. It invites scholars, educators, and creators to move beyond silos of language, region, and discipline—toward a truly interconnected literary future rooted in shared humanity.

Research papers are invited on any of the above or related themes. A 250-word abstract together with a biographical note of 100 words should be submitted by 20 September 2025 along with the information in this order: a) title of the abstract (b) author note (c) affiliation (d) email address. Abstracts may be sent to: ou-uwaconf2025@gmail.com

Acceptance

Acceptance will be intimated by the **30 September 2025** and payment of registration fee and travel bookings may follow.

Important Dates

Abstract Submission: 20 September 2025

Acceptance: 30 September 2025

Registration Fee

Includes Conference kit, lunch and tea for the conference dates.

Rs. 3000/- For Faculty Members

Rs. 2000/- For Research Scholars

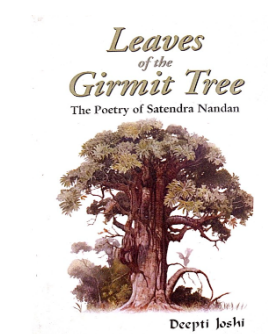
50 USD For Foreign Delegates

Last Date for Payment of Registration Fee: **25 October 2025**

Accommodation

On prior intimation, assistance can be provided to the delegates for accommodation at their own personal cost.

NEW CRITICAL WORK PUBLISHED



We congratulate Dr Deepti Joshi on her new publication, *Leaves of the Girmīt Tree*, a critical study of the poetry of Satendra Nandan.

Dr Joshi gained her PhD from M.D.S. University, Ajmer, for a thesis on this subject, supervised by Dr Anuraag Sharma.

ASAA TEAM

Meira Chand — is currently Patron of the Association and has been associated with ASAA for several years. Meira is a novelist with an international profile and the author of twelve novels (website: www.meirachand.com). Domiciled in Singapore; she also has a home in London, the UK. She writes a regular column for *The Straits Times*, the national newspaper of Singapore, and occupies a special position in the Singaporean literary and cultural milieu. In December 2023 Meira was awarded the Singapore Cultural Medallion, Singapore's highest Award for cultural achievement.

Kieran Dolin --President, ASAA (Australia) has been a representative for WA with ASAA and has visited Hyderabad for an ASAA Conference. He helped organise the ASAA group which attended the Hyderabad Literary Festival 2020. He is a Senior Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia. the ASAA group which attended the Hyderabad Literary Festival 2020; besides making his own presentation at the festival. Subsequently he met with, with officials of Osmania University to initiate discussions on the possibility of establishing a formal link with UWA. He was an Associate Professor in the Dept. of English with research interests in Australian literature.

Email: kieran.dolin@uwa.edu.au

Glen Phillips — Vice-President, ASAA (Australia) is Director of the Landscape and Language Centre at Edith Cowan University, and adjunct professor at ECU. He is a well-known Australian poet whose work is well-known internationally. He serves on numerous literary boards and Foundations, and he has published more than 20 anthologies and is author/editor of 20 books. Glen has been a long-time supporter of ASAA initiatives since its inception in 1995. He has recently accepted the office of Vice-President of ASAA (Australia)

Email: glenlyp@bigpond.com

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

Email: nandan.kavita@gmail.com

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

Email: paripavan@gmail.com

K.T. Sunitha—Vice-President, ASAA (Asia) was formerly Professor of English at the University of Mysore. She organised the ASAA Conference in Mysore in July 2010, bringing together other institutions besides the University of Mysore: Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah's Dhvanyaloka as well as Professor Anniah Gowda's International Centre for Commonwealth and American Literature and Language Studies. She has presented research papers on

Indian writers at Australian university conferences and taught Australian literature at Mysore University, Email: kt_sunitha@yahoo.co.in

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

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

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Stephen Alomes is Adjunct Professor at RMIT University, Melbourne. He is possibly one of the longest-standing members of the Association and has made a distinctive contribution to all our conferences and publications over many years. He has a particular interest in the national and the colonial in a globalising world Till recently, he served as ASAA President (Australia).

Email: stephen.alomes@rmit.edu.au

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

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

Anjali Gera Roy is Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. She has published essays in literature, film and cultural studies on India as well as on African culture. She is now researching the transnational flows of Bollywood cinema and has recently co-edited several volumes in this field. She was President of ASAA (Asia) for several years. Email: agera_99@yahoo.com;

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

Cynthia vanden Driesen is currently Chair of the Advisory Council and Treasurer of the Association. Her teaching and research career was mainly based at Edith Cowan University, and she was subsequently a Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia. She has taught at Universities in Sri Lanka, India, W. Africa and South Korea.

With Satendra Nandan she set up ASAA at a meeting of international academics in Colombo (ACLALS 1997) and served for several years as President (Australia). Her research and publications are mainly in the area of Australian literature and New Literatures in English.

E-mail: cynthia.v@westnet.com.au

Additional Committee Members

India -	Dr. N. Bindu (Madras) Dr. Suneetha Rani (Hyderabad), Dr. Keya Majumdar (Jamshedpur); Dr. Julie Mehta (Kolkata); Dr Suman Bala (Delhi); Prof. R.K. Dhawan (Delhi); A/Prof. Pavan B P (Mysore); Dr. Neeta Sashidharan (Kerala); Prof. Ravishankar Rao (Mangalore
Australia -	A/Prof. Abu Siddique, UWA; Dr. Ameer Ali, Murdoch University; A/Prof Michael Gillan, UWA; Prof. Stephen Alomes, RMIT.
New Zealand - TBA	
Singapore - TBA	
Sri Lanka -	Frances Bulathsinghala, Lecturer, Open University of Sri Lanka. Professor Harshana Rambukwella, Open University of Sri Lanka.
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Bangladesh -	Dr. Mashrur Hosain, Jhanaginagar University.
West Africa -	Professor Karen King-Aribisala, University of Lagos.

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Name (in capital letters) Prof./Dr./Mr./Ms. _____

Institutional Affiliation _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone No _____

E-mail Address _____

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

Date

Signature

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