CLAI Biennial International Conference at Jadavpur University, 2013

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XI CLAI Biennial International Conference: A Report

By KUNAL CHATTOPADHYAY and SUCHORITA CHATTOPADHYAY

The XI Biennial Conference of the Comparative Literature Association of India was held at Jadavpur University from January 16 to 18, 2013. It was organised by the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, and was co-sponsored by the Sahitya Akademi, the Centre of Advanced Study in Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, the National Translation Mission and the Kolkata Literary Meet. Special assistance came from University Grants Commission, the Ministry of Education, Government of West Bengal, and ITC Limited.

The theme of the Conference was The Journey of Comparative Literature: India and Beyond. The discipline of Comparative Literature in India has existed in its institutional form for over 55 years. The aim of the Conference was to take stock of pedagogical developments in Comparative Literature the world over and to map the Indian context in terms of the same. It also hoped to explore the changing contours of its relationship with other disciplines and share perspectives on the potential of Comparative Literature as an academic discipline.

In particular, the focus was on the contemporary understanding and practice of Comparative Literature. Among other things, this meant exploring how the discipline has responded to pressures of a globalised educational matrix, the competition among disciplines for resources and recognition and the pedagogical imperatives of the same.

One specific aspect of the call for papers was the stress on the use of Comparative Literature methods. This of course raises the question of whether or not ‘comparing’ is central to Comparative Literature, or whether or not, if certain methods are used, single-language literatures can also be studied from the perspective of comparatists. Equally importantly, this also raised the question of how the methods of Comparative Literature have been developed for the Indian literary scene over the last half century, and especially in the recent past.

The Inaugural Session, in particular, set the tune of the entire academic proceedings for the next three days. All the plenary sessions on the first day, including the inaugural one, took place at the Gandhi Bhavan auditorium of Jadavpur University. Professor Jancy James, Vice-chancellor of the Central University of Kerala and the President of CLAI, presided over this session and initiated the proceedings with her note on how Comparative Literature had already traversed a long path in its history within the Indian situation, and also on directions it could take in future in order to make its presence felt across other disciplinary formations. Professor Kunal Chattopadhyay, Head of the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, and Joint Coordinator of this conference along with Professor Suchorita Chattopadhyay, delivered the Welcome Address and conveyed a warm welcome to all the delegates. In his address, Professor Souvik Bhattacharya, the Vice-chancellor of Jadavpur University, made a strong case for following an essentially comparative methodology while studying many disciplines. This was followed by a speech by Dr Chandra Mohan, General Secretary of Comparative Literature Association of India, who presented the Annual Report of CLAI.

The Chief Guest, Professor Amiya Dev, former Vice-chancellor of Vidyasagar University, delivered a short and perceptive speech. Professor Dev, associated with the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, for a long time in his capacity, both as a student from the first batch of the Masters programme in Comparative Literature in India and also as a faculty member of this same department in later years, stated his own experiences and related them to the broader trajectory of this discipline. Professor Alfons Knauth, representing the International Comparative Literature Association, read out the message from the President of the International Comparative Literature Association, conveying his admiration for the crucial work Comparative Literature Association of India has been doing. Professor Jancy James subsequently delivered her Presidential Address, dealing with the future of Comparative Literature in India, and the specific organisational moves to attain that.

The Keynote Address was then delivered by Professor Indra Nath Choudhury, Tagore Chair of Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh. He stressed the concept of ‘journey’ from the key theme of the conference, ‘The Journey of Comparative Literature: India and Beyond,’ and went on to say that it was this dynamism of the ‘journey’ and ‘trajectory’ that had made Comparative Literature what it is today, and what it is going to be in the years to come.

He also specified the role Jadavpur University played, both in its present form and in its nascent form as the National Council of Education Bengal, towards the nourishment of an academic discipline called Comparative Literature. He did acknowledge what Rabindranath Tagore had postulated some hundred years ago, at the then National Council of Education Bengal, was a true direction of Comparative Literature in a proper Indian situation – a move towards Viswasahitya, world literature. He went on to discuss the role of hospitality in Indian and European cultures.

The inaugural session ended with a Vote of Thanks, delivered by Professor Suchorita Chattopadhyay, Joint Coordinator of XI CLAI Biennial International Conference.
The Conference had five plenary sessions, and among the speakers in these sessions were Professor Harish Trivedi, Professor Pratap Bandyopadhyay, Professor Tapati Mukherjee, Professor Tutun Mukherjee, Professor Jatindra Kumar Nayak, Professor Anisur Rahman, Professor Tony Afejuku, Professor E V Ramakrishnan, Professor Alfonso Knauth, Professor T S Satyanath, Dr Sayantan Dasgupta and others. There were also a number of parallel sessions, where many papers on the sub-themes of the Conference were presented. Out of the 155 papers scheduled for presentation, around 130 were presented. Among the speakers, another one who was of note was Professor Bilal Hashmi, one of the international guests.

Some of the sessions were of a special character. The International Comparative Literature Association Research Committee on Multilingualism had a workshop on the theme, "Mapping Multilingualism in World Literature", with Professor Alfonso Knauth and Professor Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta as the organisers. The workshop was designed to explore the transcontinental dynamics of literary multilingualism, including translation, while giving special attention to their imaginary and ideological configurations from different continental and cultural perspectives. Along with translational studies that saw a development of mythic, cosmic, cultural and technical patterns which in their turn were reshaped within postcolonial thought and imagination, the workshop was also meant to focus on intratextual hybridism, the suggestive co-presence of different languages sketching maps of horizontal relationships.

While the East West Indian configuration was in focus with works of Anglophone, Hispanophone and Francophone authors from the Caribbean in a richly historiographic reading, Asian-American, Afro-Asian-Canadian and Eurasian were the other intercontinental configurations that the workshop took up for analysis. Caribbean literature also figured prominently in two papers, one related to the poetries of voyage and the poetics of Creolisation, and the other to body-centric, phono-centric and scripto-centric forms in Indian literature carried over to the Caribbean. Diasporic literature and implications of multilingualism, comparisons between representations of ‘memsahibs’ in Bengal and ‘malinichistas’ of Mexico and the response of society to multilingualism and therefore to multiculturality, the polyglossia of certain Indian texts, oral-textual spaces and reception, and a paper foregrounding the complex and inclusive nature of ‘bhasha’ particularly before the advent of colonialism in India were some of the areas highlighted in the workshop. Relationships and their varied meanings and nuances emerging with different figures of multilingualism constituted the core of the workshop deliberations.

Paper readers included Professor K Alfonso Knauth, Chairperson of the ICLA Research Committee on "Mapping Multilingualism in World Literature," Professor Awadhesh Kumar Singh, Professor E V Ramakrishnan, Professor T S Satyanath, Professor Tumba Shango Lokoh, Dr Nilanjana Bhattacharya, Dr Debasree Dattaray, Ramona L Ceciu and Judhajit Sarkar. The workshop was divided into two groups – one of which was a panel discussion moderated by Amiya Dev and the other, a workshop moderated by Professor K Alfonso Knauth and Professor Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta.

The National Translation Mission had also co-sponsored several panels devoted to translation issues. About twelve papers were presented in these sessions. One of these was a plenary session. Translations figured in serious discussions in other sessions as well, as parts of more general discussions on the state of Comparative Literature in India.

There were a considerable number of papers, not only by research scholars (37, including PhD as well as MPhil students), but also by postgraduate and undergraduate students (19) of various universities. This, along with some of the themes of these papers, spoke well of the growth of a new generation of comparatists. Some of the papers by younger scholars were on subjects such as “Extension of Patriarchy through Bible Translations in Malayalam,” and there were several papers that looked at the complex relationships between Comparative Literature and Culture Studies, situating it in the Indian context through readings of Indian texts and examining the claims of Culture Studies as well as papers looking at the role of translation in developing Comparative Literature in India.

A special event was the Sisir Kumar Das Memorial Lecture. This was delivered by Professor Ranjit Kumar Dev Goswami of Guwahati University, who spoke about the bhakti movement, its literary forms and manifestations, and its all-India span.

On the final day, the Vice President of CLAI, Professor Harish Trivedi gave a summing-up speech where he made an assessment of the Conference.

The Conference featured a number of cultural programmes organised almost entirely by students. They included a Nepali-language presentation, as well as a rendering of the Electric Ramayana, a twenty-first century reading that took into account Valmiki’s Ramayana as well as later texts.
Jadavpur University

A Update from the Department of Comparative Literature

The Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, has organised a number of events over the last year or so. Many projects on different areas of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies have also been undertaken as part of the activities of its UGC Centre of Advanced Study (Phase 2). Quite a few publications have also emerged from the Department in recent months.

Among the notable recent events in which the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, was involved, was a Wales-India International Translation Winter School that ran from January 29 to 31, 2015. The School was organised by the Centre of Advanced Study (Phase 2) of the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, and the Centre for Translation of Indian Literatures (CENTIL) in collaboration with Aberystwyth University. The School was aimed to expose participants to best practices of translation from different parts of the world, to introduce participants to Welsh, Scots and Bangla literature, and to produce a body of Welsh and Scots literature in Bangla and English translation as well as a body of contemporary Bangla literature in Welsh and English translation, and Nepali literature in English and Bangla translation.

The School saw a number of talks by various well-known scholars, academics and translators on different aspects of translation as well as a number of collaborative translation workshops running concurrently. Among the international delegates were Alexandra Buchler, David Greenslade, Sian Melangell Dafydd, Bill Herbert and Sampurna Chattarji. The School had around 40 participants including faculty, students and aspiring translators from various parts of India ranging from places as diverse as Hyderabad, Sikkim and West Bengal. The School was coordinated by Sayantan Dasgupta, Kunal Chattopadhyay and Suchorita Chattopadhyay. It was supported, among others, by the Sahitya Akademi and the British Council.

The School resulted in a small body of literature in translation and we expect to publish some of it in the near future.

The 2015 Wales-India School was a follow-up of a translation workshop organised at Aberystwyth by Literature Across Frontiers, University of Aberystwyth, Wales, in collaboration with the Centre for Translation of Indian Literatures (CENTIL), Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, in September, 2014. A small group representing CENTIL had gone to Aberystwyth and participated in this workshop. The group comprised Professor Suchorita Chattopadhyay, Professor Iphshita Chanda, Dr Seemantini Gupta and Dr Sayantan Dasgupta. The group had collaborated with Welsh-language experts to produce a small body of Welsh literature in Bangla translation and some of Rabindranath Tagore’s writings in Welsh translation.

The Department also witnessed an Australia-India International Translation Winter School from January 6 to 9, 2015. This, again, saw large-scale and enthusiastic participation; it featured a number of talks in addition to translation workshops that translated Bangla Dalit literature into English, Australian Aboriginal poetry into Bangla and Nepali literature simultaneously into Bangla and English. This School featured Lionel Fogarty, one of the best-known Aboriginal poets from Australia. It also saw the release of Broken by Neglect, a bilingual anthology of Ali Cobby Eckermann’s poetry edited by Mridula Nath Chakraborty and Seemantini Gupta—this volume emerged from the Australia-India Translation School organised in 2013.

The Department also hosted Professor Christi Merrill as CAS Visiting Fellow; she gave talks on “Visualising Translation” and “The Transformations of Dalit Literature.” Several Research Fellows of the Department have also been working with the People’s Linguistic Survey of India, particularly in relation to Nepali language and literature. CENTIL also collaborated with the PLSI to generate translations of a number of PLSI reports. Professor Henry Schwarz from the Department of English, Georgetown University, was also a Visiting Fellow in the Department in August, 2014. Professor Sieghild Bogumil-Notz from the University of Ruhr Bochum was also in the Department as a CAS Visiting Fellow and gave several well-received talks.

The Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, was awarded the prestigious UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) grant for research and teaching collaboration with St Andrews University on exploring the convergences and divergences in trajectories of Comparative Literature in India and the UK. Professor Suchorita Chattopadhyay is the Principal Investigator from Jadavpur University while for the St Andrews team, Professor Margaret Anne-Hutton is the Principal Investigator. The programme, titled “Comparing Comparative Literatures”, has already gleaned substantial results. A group of academics from St Andrews, comprising Dr Robin MacKenzie, Dr Emma Bond and Dr Colette Lawson, visited Jadavpur University and participated in a series of meetings and
academic sessions related to the project. Professor Suchorita Chattopadhyay, Professor Ipshita Chanda, Professor Kunal Chattopadhyay, Dr Sucheta Bhattacharya and Dr Sayantan Dasgupta from Jadavpur University visited St Andrews University in 2014 and carried these discussions on further and participated in a number of academic sessions and presented several papers related to the theme of collaboration there.

An International Conference on the theme of the project is being organised by the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, in March, 2015.

The Centre for Canadian Studies (CCS), housed in the Department of Comparative Literature, has also been working on several projects. It is organising an International Conference on Canadian Studies entitled “Migrations, Boundaries, Transgressions: Commemorating The Komagata Maru Incident” on February 18 and 19, 2015. Among recent visitors to the Centre was Tomson Highway, who gave several talks and participated in several seminars at Jadavpur University. The CCS has published five books so far.

A Centre for Studies in Latin American Literature and Culture is also housed in the Department of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University. “Centering Borders: Narrative Explorations in South Asia and Latin America,” an international seminar, was organised jointly by the Centre for Studies in Latin American Literatures and Cultures (CSLALC) and the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata, on January 7 and 8, 2015. Professor Debra Castillo from the Department of Comparative Literature, Cornell University, participated in the seminar. It also organises a video-conferencing course on “Bodies at the Borders” with Cornell University.

A three-day International Conference entitled “Following Forkhead Paths: Discussions on the Narrative” was organised in the Department from March 5 to 7, 2014. The conference involved participants from India and abroad and generated a lot of ideas spanning a wide range of academic disciplines, cultures, and historical periods, thereby exploring aesthetics, ethics and politics of the narrative.

Several members of the Department are involved in projects under the Jadavpur University UGC University with Potential for Excellence (Phase 2). Some of these projects are Soundscapes of Kolkata, Project Palagaan and Project Anuvad.
University of Hyderabad

**A Update from the Centre for Comparative Literature**

The Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad, offers MA, MPhil and PhD courses in Comparative Literature. It focuses in particular on World Literature, Emergent Literature, Theory of Comparative Literature, Indian Literature, Translation Studies, Film Studies, Dalit Literature and Minority Discourses. Students work on varied topics related to literary and cultural studies.

CCL organises many events throughout the year—these include RAW.CON (student conference), the Sujit Mukherjee Memorial Lecture, national seminars by faculty, fortnightly research scholars’ meets and postgraduate students’ workshops. CCL also publishes the e-journal, eDhvani, twice a year; the e-journal is funded by the University.

CCL organises various programs collaboratively to promote interdisciplinarity. CCL invites scholars and writers from across the country to deliver talks on literature, history, culture and politics. It has hosted Nabaneeta Dev Sen, Partha Chatterjee, Sudipta Kaviraj, Mahesh Dattani, Temsula Ao, Gauri Viswanathan, MSS Pandian, Jawhar Sircar, Amiya Dev, Harish Trivedi, Rukmini Bhaya Nayar and many others in the recent past.

CCL organised national seminars on “Contesting Tribal Subalternity: Social and Economic Challenges in India,” (July 29-30, 2013), and “Multilingualism and the Literary Culture of India” (March 27-29, 2014). It also hosted Raw.Con 2013: a national students’ conference on “Vernacular Modernities” (September 25 -27, 2013) and Raw.Con 2014: National Students’ Conference on “Literature and Culture; Expanding Horizons: New Paradigms of Knowledge Production” (September 10-12, 2014). Other events included CCL Graduate Students’ Symposium on “Novels Modern & Postmodern” (October 29, 2014) and a national workshop on “Counter-Writing: Dalit and Other Subalterns” (October 30-31, 2014).

English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad

**An Update from the Department of Comparative Literature and India Studies**

**BY AMITH KUMAR P V**

The Department of Comparative Literature and India Studies at the English and Foreign Languages University explores new areas of research in literary studies by adopting a comparative mode of inquiry. Established in 2009, it was initially called the Department of Comparative Literature. It focused primarily on comparing Russian and Indian literary currents. It has evolved to accommodate new literary dynamics such as South Asian literatures, Indian regional literatures and comparisons of literatures by disabled writers. The Department was renamed Department of Comparative Literature and India Studies in 2013. It currently offers a PhD programme and optional courses for the MA (English) programme. The departmental faculty contribute to the teaching of undergraduate courses such as Introduction to World Literature and Introduction to Fiction.

The Department is trying to develop “Tri-continental Literary Inquiry” involving the literatures of South Asia, Africa and Latin America as against the Eurocentric approaches to comparative literatures. The Department has also been trying to involve itself in a tenacious engagement with the nativistic studies within India and to rethink India Studies as an academically fertile area of research.

The Department plans to organise a conference on “Marquez and the Literatures from India” on March 25, 2015. The conference aims to explore the relevance of the works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez to the writers of the Indian sub-continent.

A second seminar on “Polycoloniality and the Tri-continental Theory: Rethinking the Future of Comparative Studies” is being planned for September, 2015. The central tenet of the conference would be to understand coloniality and postcoloniality in multiple forms in the context of South Asia, Africa and South America.

Dr Amith Kumar P V has been awarded a project on “Towards a Methodology for Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary Inquiry into the Social Psychology and Marginalisation of Disabled in South Asia” sponsored by the Indian Council for Social Science Research. This project aims to examine “disability” (with its various implications) as portrayed in the disciplines of the Humanities especially in the South Asian scenario. One of the central concerns of the project is to look into the manner in which disability has been depicted in the literatures, arts and poetics of the countries of South Asia.
University of Delhi

An Update from Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies

By SHUBHASREE BHATTACHARYYA

The Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies (MIL&LS), University of Delhi, was established in 1961. A unique feature identifying the Department is its institutional structure that enables a dialogue among Indian literatures, languages and cultures. In times where ideas of interdisciplinarity and cross-cultural exchange are being revisited with fresh academic zeal, the department serves as a role model where such endeavours have been continuing for the last five decades.

The Department is identified with the research, creative works and academic excellence of many scholars and creative writers like Professor R K Dasgupta, Professor Sisir Kumar Das, Professor Indira Goswami, Professor Chandrakant Mehta, Professor Harbhajan Singh and Professor Indira Parthasarathy. MIL&LS has proved its uniqueness in the Indian academia and has been recognised at both the national and international levels. It has been recognised by the University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi, for the grant of SAP and has been adjudged as the ‘Centre of Excellence’ in a report prepared for the Research Council, United Kingdom, in 2011. Recently, it has been identified as the centre for the e-content development for Comparative Literature under the e-Pathshala programme of MHRD and UGC.

The Department of MIL&LS offers PhD, MPhil and MA courses in Comparative Indian Literature (CIL). MA is also offered in Bangla and Tamil languages. This apart, the Department currently offers Advanced Diploma, Diploma, and Certificate courses in nine Indian languages including Assamese, Bangla, Gujarati, Malayalam, Manipuri, Odia, Sindhi, Tamil and Telugu. The CIL Masters programme also offers interdisciplinary courses for students from other departments of the University of Delhi.

Comparative Indian Literature, Intermediality, Translation and Cultures, Folklore, and Tribal Lore have remained some of the specialised areas of research in this Department. The students are pursuing or have submitted their PhD, MPhil, and MA dissertations in these and other diverse research areas related to different Indian language cultures.

A number of national and international conferences have been held in the Department. These include the International Seminar on History and Sociology of Bengali Studies and Special Sessions on History and Sociology of Indian Literary Studies in 2014. The International Conference on Bengal Studies was also held here in 2009.

The e-content development for Comparative Literature is the most recent and significant addition to the research projects conducted by the faculty members of the Department. Under the able guidance of Professor P C Pattanaik as the Principal Investigator, this landmark project sanctioned by the UGC as part of the e-Pathshahala programme of MHRD under National Mission of Education ICT is currently engaged in developing e-content materials for Comparative Literature in India for the first time.
Visva-Bharati

*An Update from the Centre for Comparative Literature*

**By TAPATI MUKHERJEE**

Comparative Literature started its voyage in Visva-Bharati since 2011 when the subject was introduced as part of compulsory language courses at the undergraduate level. Dr Nilanjana Bhattacharya and Dr Soma Mukherjee joined as Assistant Professors in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Subsequently in 2011, Comparative Literature as a subsidiary subject was introduced in Bhasha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati.

However, a new Centre for Comparative Literature was soon established in Bhasha Bhavana in 2013. Professor Tapati Mukherjee was appointed as Adjunct Professor and Chairperson of Comparative Literature. Simultaneously, an MPhil course was introduced in 2013. The intake capacity for this course is currently seven. A PhD course has also been running successfully since 2014. As Visva-Bharati has a number of language departments (both Indian and non-Indian), it can be a fertile ground for nurturing Comparative Literature. We are offering a full-fledged postgraduate course in Comparative Literature from the next academic year, i.e., from the 2015-16 session. The recent joining of Sri Dheeman Bhattacharyya, Joint Treasurer, CLAI, has augmented our faculty strength.

The Centre is organising a two-day International Conference on "Exploring the Home and the World: Rabindranath and Comparative Literature" on February 6 and 7, 2015. It also plans to organise another day-long seminar on the illustrious author, Ismat Chughtai, in March, 2015. We expect a full-fledged Comparative Literature Department to come up at Visva-Bharati very shortly.

**Visva-Bharati: Documents**

**MPhil/ PhD Course Structure (Centre for Comparative Literature)**

**Semester I**

**Course 1a** (50 Marks): Research Methodology  
[Compulsory]

**Course 1b** (50 Marks): Comparative Literature Methodology  
[Compulsory]

**Course 2** (100 Marks): Approaches to Literature: (Any 2/3 will be offered each year)  
[Optional]

- a) Indian aesthetics
- b) Structuralism and Post-Structuralism
- c) Discourse Analysis
- d) Feminist Literary Criticism
- e) Marxist Literary Criticism
- f) Psychoanalysis

**Semester II**

**Course 3** (100 Marks): Literature Review & Synopsis

**Semester III**: (100 Marks)  
[Optional]

*(Any 1 and seminar presentation)*

- a) Reception Studies
- b) Translation Studies
- c) Indian Literatures
- d) Latin American Literatures
- e) African Literatures
- f) Narratology

**Semester IV**

**Course 4** (200 Marks): Dissertation & Viva (150+50)
### Visva-Bharati: Documents

**MA Course Structure (Centre for Comparative Literature)**

Comparative Literature offers a holistic approach of studying literary and cultural texts. It aims at facilitating the ways of studying literature not only across linguistic and cultural borders, but also in relation to other art forms and social sciences. Keeping this goal in mind the following courses have been designed.

A student who opts for an MA degree in Comparative Literature will take sixteen courses across four semesters. Assuming that most of our students will come from Single Literature or Social Science disciplines without any prior knowledge of CL, the first two semesters have been structured to expose the students to certain basic concepts essential to study literature, CL methodology and contemporary approaches to literature. Each of these semesters comprises of four core courses. The third and fourth semesters will have two core and two optional courses each. Four or five optional courses will be offered each semester from a pool of twenty courses listed below. In the fourth semester they will write a term paper where they will be expected to apply comparative literature methodology learnt in the first three semesters.

#### Semester I

- Core 1: Introducing Literary Studies: Concepts and Events
- Core 2: Language Course I
- Core 3: Comparative Literature Methodology I
- Core 4: Approaches to Literature I

#### Semester II

- Core 5: Language Course II
- Core 6: Comparative Literature Methodology II
- Core 7: Approaches to literature II
- Core 8: Translation Studies

#### Semester III

- Core 9: Language Course III
- Core 10: Comparative Aesthetics
- Optional course
- Optional course

#### Semester IV

- Core 11: Language Course IV
- Core 12: Term paper
- Optional course
- Optional course

#### List of Optional Courses:

1. Rabindranath and the World
2. Rabindranath and Translation
3. Rabindranath and Pedagogy
4. Rabindranath and Pālīsāmaṅ
5. Rabindranath and Development Studies
6. Indian Literatures
7. Literature and Gender
8. Literature and the Other Arts
9. Media Studies
10. Literature and New Media
11. Cultural Studies
12. Indigenous Studies
13. Latin American Literatures
14. Canadian Literatures
15. African Literatures
16. Literatures of Bangladesh
17. Literatures of Asia
18. Proof reading and editing
19. History of Books
20. Performance Studies
Central University of Punjab (Bathinda)

An Update from the Centre for Comparative Literature

By AMANDEEP BRAR

The Centre for Comparative Literature is a relatively new centre established at the Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, in 2010. The Centre offers MPhil and PhD programmes in Comparative Literature and plans to offer MA English (Comparative Literature and Translation Studies) from the next academic session. Faculty and students of the Centre are involved in interdisciplinary research on different topics coming under the purview of Comparative Literature.

Special lectures, extension lectures and literary programmes in recent years:

- Sh Bal Anand (IFS), a renowned Indian diplomat, delivered a special lecture on “Biography, Autobiography and Translation” on April 25, 2012.
- A special lecture on “Remembering Ghadar Party Hero Kartar Singh Sarabha in Centenary Year” was delivered on November 13, 2013, by Dr Chaman Lal, former professor, JNU, New Delhi.
- A special lecture on “Reading Film” was delivered by Dr Prabhjot Parmar, Centre for Indo Canadian Studies, University of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford, Canada, on May 27, 2014.
- Lectures by experts in history, economics, science and linguistics to celebrate International Mother Tongue Day on February 21, 2014. Speakers: Padma Shree and Jnanpith awardee famous Punjabi novelist Sh Gurdial Singh, Professor Prithipal Singh Kapur, former Pro-Vice Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar; Professor Surjit Singh Dhillon, Professor Ramesh Kuntal Megh, Professor Gian Singh and Professor Paramjit Singh Dhingra.
- A number of literary programmes dedicated to renowned writers of the region like playwright Balwant Gargi, poet Shiv Kumar Batalvi, writer and thinker Professor Pritam Singh, playwright Gursharan Singh, Sikh scholar Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha and revolutionary poet Avtar Singh Sandhu ‘Pash’ were organized, in which scholars discussed life and works of these eminent personalities.

Current Research Projects of Faculty:

Dr Zameerpal Kaur is working as Co-Principal Investigator in a Major Research Project entitled “Tracing Evolutionary Heritage of Indian Languages Using Computational Phylogenetics,” funded by the Indian Council for Social Science Research, Government of India, New Delhi, with Dr Felix Bast (PI), Centre for Biosciences. Dr Zameerpal Kaur is also working as PI on UGC-Funded Major Research Project on “Ecocriticism and Modern Punjabi Poetry.” Dr Rajinder Kumar is working as PI on UGC-Funded Major Research Project “Grammatical Structure of Bagri Dialect.” Dr Alpana Saini completed UGC-funded Minor Research Project on “Taboo issues in Contemporary Indian Cinema and Theatre and their treatment with special focus on the Theories of Subjectivity.” Dr Amandeep Singh is working on “Ecological Concerns in Contemporary Punjabi Fiction: Native and Diasporic Writing,” a project funded by Research Seed Money Programme, Central University of Punjab.
West Bengal State University

An Update from the Department of Comparative Literature

By MOHUA CHATTERJEE

Comparative Literature was introduced at West Bengal State University, Barasat, in 2009. Ours is thus one of the newest departments of Comparative Literature in India.

The Department offers a two-year MA in Comparative Literature spread over four semesters. It covers a wide range of literatures from various parts of the world and has a special focus on Indian literatures. The special areas are: post-colonial literature (Indian, African, Latin American and Asian), literary theories (pre-modern, modern and post-modern), translation studies, literary history from across the world with special emphasis on Indian literatures, study of genres and different methods of Comparative Literature, the relationship between literature and other arts, practical applications of literary methodology, culture studies and media applications.

The Department organised an International Seminar on “The Methodology of Comparative Literature” in 2009 in collaboration with Pashchimbanga Bangla Akademi. It has also recently organised two workshops on “Greek Aesthetics and Dramaturgy” and “Bharata and the Natyashastra.” It has organised several lectures by Professor Amiya Dev as well as a number of screenings.

Among its recent seminars were one on “Teaching Indian Literatures,” and another on “Rabindranath’s 150th Anniversary.”

The Department organised a “Comparative Literature Awareness Programme” in 2014 to disseminate information about Comparative Literature among undergraduate college teachers and students from various disciplines. This event was a great success and a second Awareness Programme is scheduled for January, 2015.
Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, Surat

An Update from the Department of Comparative Literature

By DAMAYANTI PARMAR

The Department of Comparative Literature has been active since 1991-92. It has a K M Munshi Prakalp Chair and also runs a PG Centre for MA in Hindi, in collaboration with which many activities are organised.

A workshop was organised in the 2012-2013 session and featured lectures by Dr Ashwin Desai and Dr Savita Gaud. Professor Bharat Mehta (MS University, Vadodara) delivered a lecture on “Bhartiya Navalkathamā Strī-Purushā Sambandho” on August 9, 2012. Professor Bipin Ashar (Saurashtra University, Rajkot) delivered a lecture on “Angreji Gujarati Navalkathama Nari” on September 5, 2012. Professor Ushabhen Upadhyay (Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad) delivered a special lecture on “Gujarati anī Bhartiya Tunki Varta” on June 4, 2013. Professor Param Pathak (Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar), gave a talk on “Bhartiya Navalkathama Dampatyajivan” on January 6, 2014.

The Department of Comparative Literature organised a one-day seminar on “Hindi Bhasha Sahitya: Bharatme aur Videshme” on September 14, 2012. A similar seminar was organised on September 14, 2013, on “Hindi Bhasha aur Sahitya ki Dasha aur Disha.” The Department also organised a workshop on “Sahitya ane Film” on September 9, 2013, with Dr Mahipat Siha Raoji as Keynote Speaker. Another workshop on “Sahitya ane Cinema” was organised on December 15, 2014. On September 23, 2014, the Department organised a special lecture on “Vibhajan” by Dr Sharifa Vijliwala.

Assam University: An Update

The Department of Indian Comparative Literature of Assam University (a central university), starts functioning from this year (2015) with the objective of making a significant contribution to the discipline in India. The UGC-approved Department offers MA, MPhil and PhD programmes of study. The major focus of the teaching and research programmes in the Department is on areas such as Inter-Indian Relations, Bhakti literature, Indian Regional Literature, History of Indian Literature and Culture, Epic Literature, Impact of Sanskrit and European literature on literature in Indian Languages. Professor Suman Gun has been appointed Head of the Department.

Rabindra Bharati University

An Update on the MPhil Course in Comparative Literature

By SUBIR DHAR

Rabindra Bharati University has been offering an MPhil in Comparative Literature for the last five years. The course is offered under the aegis of the School of Languages and Culture Studies, Rabindra Bharati University.

The course has a special focus on foreign languages. It focuses extensively on the study of three literatures—Bangla, Hindi and English. The MPhil course has six students in the current session. A symposium on “Comparative Literature and Translation” is scheduled for February 20, 2015.

University of Calcutta

An Update on PG course on Comparative Indian Language & Literature

By BISWANATH ROY

The University of Calcutta has been offering a PG course in Comparative Indian Language and Literature from the 2005-2006 session. The Department of Bengali has been functioning as the nodal department for the same. The focus of the course has been on the study of Bangla literature in relation to other Indian literatures. A full-fledged Department of Comparative Indian Language and Literature will become operational from the 2015-2016 session.
Bakhtin in India: Exploring the Dialogic Potential in Self, Culture and History

A Report on an International Conference organised by the Central University of Gujarat at INFLIBNET, Gandhinagar

By E V RAMAKRISHNAN

Dates: 19 – 21 August 2013

This conference was organised with the objective of exploring the relevance of Mikhail Bakhtin’s aesthetic ideas and philosophical concepts to Indian society and culture. The three-day conference comprised twelve parallel sessions, five plenary addresses and around forty-five paper presentations. It was organised by the Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semiotics in collaboration with the Forum on Contemporary Theory and the Central University of Gujarat (CUG). Professor Lakshmi Bandlamudi was convener of the conference.

In his Welcome Address, Professor E V Ramakrishnan highlighted succinctly and critically the relevance of Bakhtin’s ideas to heterogenous India and urged experts from different disciplines to ponder the implications of Bakhtin’s thought for the Humanities and the Social Sciences.

Professor Prafulla Kar from the Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semiotics spoke about the relevance of dialogue and dialogism in India and in today’s world, where technology tends to outstrip the human pace of communication and in the process erodes the scope for dialogues and critical discussions to take place inside and outside of forums such as those that this conference offered.

The Inaugural Address by Professor Y K Alagh, Chancellor of CUG, on the grassroots histories of Gujarat was followed by a thematic introduction by Professor Lakshmi Bandlamudi from LaGuardia Community College, City University of New York, who discussed the relevance of Bakhtinian concepts in a globalized world. She pointed out that this was perhaps the first full-fledged conference engaging with the systematic exploration of Indian thought and culture from a Bakhtinian perspective.

The Inaugural Session ended with the concluding remarks of the Chair, Professor R K Kale, Vice-Chancellor of CUG.

Professor Sunther Visuvalingam’s Keynote Address on “Tradition, Transgression and Liberty” explored the dialogic potential in the culture and thought of India in its medieval canonical and non-canonical traditions and pointed to how a comparative study of Bakhtin and Abhinavagupta could yield productive insights on aesthetics.

The Plenary Address of Professor Sura Rath from the University of North Texas, Dallas, examined the deployment of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque as a principle of rejuvenation in the main characters in the two Bollywood films, Salaam Bombay and Kahaani. Professor Elizabeth Chaliar-Visuvalingam from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, gave a talk on “The Rule of Freedom: Rabelais, Bakhtin and Abhinavagupta,” where she argued that the principle of freedom or svatantrya, the central concern of Rabelais, Bakhtin, and Abhinavagupta, was the best vantage point for understanding transgressive laughter.


The conference also saw the release of Interdisciplinary Alter-Natives in Comparative Literature (Sage Publication), edited by E V Ramakrishnan, Harish Trivedi and Chandra Mohan. The book examines the directions taken by Comparative Literature in recent years and charts the shifts that are taking place in our field.
Literary Historiography in India: Contemporary Perspectives

By E V RAMAKRISHNAN

A Report on a Symposium organised at the Central University of Gujarat
Date: January 10, 2014

This symposium was organised by CUG in association with the Sahitya Akademi. It consisted of four sessions and featured distinguished speakers such as Professor Ganesh Devy, Professor Chelva Kanaganayakam, Professor Avadhesh Kumar Singh, Professor Milind Malshe, Professor Ranjit Deb Goswami, Professor T S Satyanath and Professor Ajay Dandekar.

Each of the speakers addressed key issues within literary historiography as they pertain to current scholarship in the field. The Symposium was hosted by the Central University of Gujarat at their Sector 30, Gandhinagar campus. The Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor R K Kale, extended whole-hearted support to the Symposium. Students and faculty from different departments and schools of the university attended the sessions and participated in the discussions that followed.

In his opening remarks, Professor E V Ramakrishnan called for a reconsideration of trends in literary historiography that are not yet reflected in curricula. The idea of history as shaped by a limited disciplinary conception now needs to address the history of the institutionalisation of literature and the ensuing processes of canon formation need to be challenged, he argued.

In his Keynote Address, Professor Ganesh Devy elaborated on why he felt the project of literary historiography has remained inadequate in India. He examined the ways in which memory and forms of recording the past operate in different political ideologies and sought to show how mythology and history operate interchangeably in the present.

Professor Chelva Kanaganayakam from the University of Toronto elaborated on the idea of South Asian Literature as a more enabling category than that of national literatures. He made a distinction between history of literature and literary history and stated that the latter allowed for a nuanced exposition of the processes of canon formation. He proposed an approach that allowed for understanding the genealogy of English writing in South Asia outside of the notion of influence and a singular model of modernity.

Professor Ranjit Dev Goswami’s presentation focused on the shortcomings of colonial historiography and on the impact of the Bengali renaissance on Assamese culture. The presentation provided a comprehensive overview of the Bhakti movement and highlighted how colonial historiography sidelined the works of Sankaradeva, a 16th century neo-Vaishnavite Bhakti poet from Assam.

Professor A K Singh problematised the canonisation of certain historiographies. His paper used the notion of the Hindi Bhashakshetra and stressed the importance of defining Hindi literature in a more inclusive manner.

Professor Satyanath argued for a framework of historiography different from the Western framework. The new framework would need to accommodate ‘pluralistic epistemologies’, ‘margino-centricity’, ‘transmediality’ and ‘localization,’ he stated. Dr Rajesh’s presentation was predicated upon a critique of Sheldon Pollock’s well-known essay, “Future Philology? The Fate of a Soft Science in a Hard World” (2009).

Professor Milind Malshe discussed, among other texts, the Marathi Vaangmayaacha Itihaas (1950-2000) and discerned a spirit of inclusion in the way the volume conceptualized literature. However, while it covered Feminist Literature, Muslim Literature, Jan Sahitya and the arts, it lacked proper theorisation regarding historiography, he concluded.

Professor Dandekar, on his part, focused on Bheeli Mahabharat and its relation to the critical edition of the Mahabharat and ended up effectively highlighting important questions regarding the categories of ‘great’ and ‘little’ traditions.

The symposium ended with Professor E V Ramakrishnan outlining possible future directions of enquiry in the area.
Exploring the Home and the World: Rabindranath and Comparative Literature

A Report on an International Conference organised by the Centre for Comparative Literature, Visva-Bharati

By TAPATI MUKHERJEE

Dates: 6 – 7 February 2015

The newly established Centre for Comparative Literature, Visva-Bharati, organised its first academic conference—an international conference exploring the contours of Comparative Literature and the contribution of Rabindranath Tagore to it. It was held at the newly constructed Bhasa Bhavana.

The seminar began with the Welcome Address by Dr Tapati Mukherjee (Chairperson, Centre for Comparative Literature, Visva-Bharati). Dr Mukherjee, who is also Director of Rabindra Bhavana, delivered an extremely motivating address and reminded the audience about how Tagore had brought into focus the concept of ‘Vishwa Sahitya.’ Tagore could justifiably be called the founder of Comparative Literature in India, she stated.

Tagore’s interdisciplinary engagements and social discourses provide a road map for Comparative Literature scholars and in a linguistically divided country like India, he was a pioneer in the way he understood and brought to light the interfaces of the local and the global on one hand, and the national and the global on the other. Dr Tapati Mukherjee labelled as pioneering his series of lectures at the National Council for Education—they captured the essence of literature, literary criticism and his philosophy of universality.

The Inaugural Address was delivered by Professor Sushanta Duttagupta, the Vice-chancellor of Visva-Bharati. He added another dimension to the discussions already initiated by Dr Tapati Mukherjee by invoking another doyen of Comparative Literature—Meenakshi Mukherjee. He acknowledged her role in enlightening him about Comparative Literature. Professor Duttagupta argued that Goethe might have been an influence on Tagore. He spoke at length about the essential interconnectedness of literatures and literary forms.

Professor Amiya Dev began his address by remembering Professor Swapan Majumdar, who has been ailing for some time now. Professor Majumdar is one of the pioneering comparatists and has been associated with Visva-Bharati for many years.

He spoke at length about the history of Comparative literature, Goethe’s Weltliteratur, Mathew Arnold’s concept of Comparative Literature, Alexander Veselovsky’s definition of literary scholarship as a social science. He also spoke about the recurring debates about the French School of Comparative Literature.
Literature and the US American School of Comparative literature and discussed issues related to influence and impact on one hand and polygenesis on the other.

Professor Ipshita Chanda then spoke on “Acceptance of Difference—The Attempts to Approach the Difference.” She argued that humanity itself is an abstract category and literature tries to unravel or break that abstraction.

Professor Himani Banerjee from York University, Canada, spoke about hospitality as a key concept within the discipline of Comparative Literature. Her talk explored concepts of the self, subject and identity and argued that the baggage of colonialism stays on, and manifests itself in various forms, including in literature, even after decolonisation. Professor Banerjee opined that attempts to study bhasa literature and comparative discourses from various indigenous backgrounds could be a viable way to regain the ground lost due to unnecessary adherence to the established white European canon.

The final session of the first day was a Panel Discussion on "The Journey of Comparative Literature." Speakers included Professor Suchorita Chattopadhyay, Professor Tapati Mukherjee and Aveek Majumdar. The Panel Discussion was coordinated by Dr Sayantan Dasgupta. The discussion traced the history of Comparative Literature in India and sought to understand the present status of Comparative Literature in India and the directions it may take in the future.

The second day’s deliberations included a number of papers presented by students and scholars of Comparative Literature from various parts of India. Gayathri M, from the University of Hyderabad, spoke on “Translation and ‘Indian Literature’: A Study of Vyasanum Vighneswaram.” She argued how Anand’s Malayalam text was remarkable in the way it seemed to consciously eschew all markers of region and the specific. Dr Sayantan Dasgupta was Discussant for her paper.

Rajasi Chakrabarti and Sareen Chatla from English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, presented their paper on Telugu translations of Rabindranath Tagore’s Gitanjali. They highlighted the fact that the work existed in many different translations and that on many occasions, the Source Text was not the Bangla Gitanjali, but the English Song Offerings. Professor Abhijit Sen functioned as Discussant for this paper.

Finally, Janashruti Chandra from Jawaharlal Nehru University read her paper titled “Sage-like Poet—Japan’s Impressions of Tagore.” She analysed the ambiguous response Tagore met with in Japan and tried to explore the dynamics of this response. Her paper had Professor Tapati Mukherjee as discussant.

The final session was in the form of an adda led by Dr Seemantini Gupta. The session focused on questions related to Comparative Literature and in particular the role and importance of translations in it. Many members of the audience and student community participated actively in this session.
Book Notes


This collection of essays engages with notions of minority and uses various kinds of texts to interrogate existing stereotypes. It emerges from the conference of the Comparative Literature Association of India on "Minority Discourses across Cultures" at the University of Rajasthan in February 2012. It carries essays on topics as diverse as 20th century constructions of Indian Muslims, the trope of spokespersonship vis-à-vis Dalit literature, and the relationship between minority discourse and translation.


The People's Linguistic Survey of India was undertaken to provide an overview of extant and dead languages of India as perceived by their speakers. This volume introduces the work done under the project to document languages spoken in some of the most remote parts of India and carries a number of useful appendices on "Some Growing Non-Scheduled Languages," "The UNESCO List of Languages in Danger," "The Undlassified 'Mother Tongues' in the 1961 Census" and "Languages Known to the Country." It is the first of a projected 50-volume set.


The Companion brings together a wide range of essays that address the current state of affairs of scholarship in comparative humanities with a focus on the discipline of comparative literature and the fields of world literature and comparative cultural studies. The anthology is divided into three main sections—"Theories of Comparative Literature, World Literatures and Comparative Cultural Studies," "Comparative Literature in World Languages" and "Examples of New Work in Comparative Literature, World Literatures and Comparative Cultural Studies." It also carries a useful "Multilingual Bibliography of Books in Comparative Literature, World Literatures and Comparative Cultural Studies."


This volume features Rabindranath Tagore's lectures on Jesus Christ and Christianity for the first time ever in English translation. The earliest of these dates to 1910 while the last one is from 1936. The essays highlight the development over these years in Tagore's ideas on religion in general and on Christ in particular. The anthology emerges from a collaboration between the Centre for Translation of Indian Literatures (CENTIL), Jadavpur University, and Rabindra Bhavana, Visva-Bharati.

This is a bilingual anthology featuring the poetry of Ali Cobby Eckermann, one of the most prominent Australian Aboriginal Yankunytjatjara writers. It carries some of her most important English-language poems with their corresponding Bangla translations. It also has one short story and critical material on Australian Aboriginal writing. This volume is the result of a collaboration between the University of Western Sydney, the Centre for Translation of Indian Literatures (CENTIL), Jadavpur University and the CAS in Comparative Literature (Phase 2), Jadavpur University, and was supported by the UGC UPE 2 Programme.


This is a collection of the Nepali-language Tamang Selo songs in a bilingual edition. It features the original Nepali songs collected from various places of north Bengal and their corresponding English translations and also carries a set of critical essays exploring the genre of the Tamang Selo. This is the first time the Nepali-language songs of the Tamang people are appearing in English translation in a volume like this. The anthology emerges out of Project Anuvad, undertaken by CENTIL, Jadavpur University, under the UGC UPE 2 (Cultural Resources and Social Sciences) Programme.


Magnificently produced and thoughtfully researched, this volume is a collector’s item. It carries the original Bangla poems from Gitanjali, Gitimalya, Naibeda, Kheya, Shishu, Kalpana, Chaitali, Utsarga, Smaran and Achalayatan that were translated as Song Offering, as well as the English translations themselves. In addition to these, the volume carries facsimile copies of several of the original manuscripts, a number of rare photographs, Rabindranath Tagore’s Nobel Prize acceptance speech as well as reproductions of newspaper reports of the Nobel award to Tagore.


Dipannita Datta’s book explores the correspondence, essays and interviews in its attempt to add a new dimension to the understanding of Ashapurna Devi (1909-1995), one of the most important writers of her times. It also comes with several useful annexures such as a chronological biography of Ashapurna Devi’s works, extracts from her diary and a list of translated works of Ashapurna Devi in English.
Recherche Littéraire/ Literary Research: An Update

Issue 30.59-60 (Summer 2014)

Recherche Littéraire/ Literary Research is published by the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) and has the objective of informing comparatists across the world of recent developments in Comparative Literature.

The Summer 2014 issue of Literary Research, edited by Dorothy M Figueira, carried a special section that focused on reviews of books related to Comparative Literature from India.

The books reviewed in this issue included Interdisciplinary Alter-natives in Comparative Literature (E V Ramakrishnan, Harish Trivedi and Chandra Mohan, eds.), Locating Indian Literature: Texts, Traditions, Translations (E V Ramakrishnan), Revisiting Literature, Criticism and Aesthetics in India (Avadhesh Kumar Singh), Comparative Literature: Where Have We Been, Where Are We Now, Where Are We Going, And Do We Want To Go There? (Dorothy Figueira), Medieval Indian Legacy: Linguistic and Literary (Indra Nath Choudhuri), Working Through Experience: Writing, reception and Evaluation (Jasbir Jain), Cultural Narratives: Hybridity and Other Spaces (Jasbir Jain, ed.), Literatures and Oratures as Knowledge Systems: Texts from Northeast India (Subha C Dasgupta, Goutam Biswas and Samantak Das, eds.), Retelling as Interpretation: An Essay on Sarala Mahabharata (B N Patnaik), The Journey of the Namah: A Case Study (Ipsita Chanda), Translation: Roles, Responsibilities and Boundaries (Lakshmi Holmstrom, Sanjukta Dasgupta and Sayantan Dasgupta), Tulnatmak Sahitya aur Anuvad (B Y Lalithamba), Tulnatmak Sahitya aur Saidhantik Preprakesh (H P Shukla, ed.), Adi Parva: Churning of the Ocean (Amruta Patil), Ghumantoos: The Roadies of India and Canada (Dheeman Bhattacharyya and Suchorita Chattopadhyay), Muslim Culture in Indian Cinema (Jasbir Jain, ed.), Young Tagore: the Making of a Genius (Sudhir Kakar) and World Literature and the Politics of the Minority (Jihee Han).

The list of reviewers included E V Ramakrishnan, Harish Trivedi, Avadhesh Kumar Singh, Chandra Mohan, Manorama Trikha, Kavita A Sharma, Soma Mukherjee, Tanvi Sharma, Bhaskarjit Neog, Esra Mirza Santesso, Mini Nanda and Sayantan Dasgupta.

ICLA CONGRESS 2016

The 21st World Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) is scheduled for July 21-27, 2016. It will be held at the University of Vienna, Austria. The Congress Theme for 2016 is The Many Languages of Comparative Literature. The Call for Papers is now online at http://icla2016.univie.ac.at. CLAI members are urged to take ICLA membership and to see the website for details of the congress. Individual proposal submissions for congress sessions are due by August 31, 2015.
IN MEMORIAM

Professor UR Ananthamurthy passed away on August 22, 2014.

CLAI remembers him for the pioneering role he played in the development of Comparative Literature in India. Professor Ananthamurthy was the founder President of CLAI. He helped organise the first CLAI conference at Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, when he was the Vice-Chancellor there. Subsequently, he supported another CLAI conference when he was the Chairman of the National Book Trust, New Delhi. These two important events laid the foundation for the academic growth and development of Comparative Literature as a discipline in Indian universities.

Professor Ananthamurthy was an extraordinary scholar and an eminent novelist and critic. He was a Jnanpith awardee. He was also honoured with the Padma Bhushan. He was President of the Sahitya Akademi and was committed to the cause of a Comparative Literature rooted in Indian realities. Among his most important works are Samskara, Bharati Pura and Avaste.

Professor Gurbhagat Singh, a veteran scholar, a great human being and a patron of the Comparative Literature Association of India, passed away on April 4, 2014.

Professor Gurbhagat Singh, then Vice-President took over charge as President, CLAI, after the sudden demise of Professor Sisir Kumar Das. He was deeply interested in and committed to the study of Comparative Literature. His books, Western Poetics and Eastern Thought (1984), Transcultural Poetics (1988) and Literature and Folklore after Poststructuralism (1991) received high acclaim. He held a pioneering international seminar on Comparative Literature in 1990 with the expert group of the International Comparative Literature Association.

Professor Singh was Head of the Department of English at Panjabi University, Patiala, for many years. Differential Multilogue: Comparative Literature and National Literatures (1991), edited by him, played an important role in the development of Comparative Literature in India. His piece, “The Sacred Writings of the Minorities,” appears in Discouring Minority, a recent volume published from the proceedings of CLAI’s international conference held recently at the Central University of Rajasthan, Kishangarh.

CLAI mourns the death of Professor Krishna Dutt Paliwal, Hindi critic and writer. He taught at Hindu College, Delhi, and later in the Department of Hindi, Delhi University. He also served as Visiting Professor (Hindi) at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. He edited the Maitlisaran Gupta Rachnavali and the Ajneya Rachnavali and wrote 42 books. He contributed to many projects on Comparative Indian Literature—he wrote for Encyclopedia of Indian Literature and Integrated History of Indian Literature (Sahitya Akademi). He was conferred the Vishwa Hindi Samman, the Ram Manohar Lohia Ati Vishishta Samman, the Subramanya Bharati Samman and many other awards.
**Professor D K Pabby**, former Principal of RLA College (University of Delhi), passed away recently. He was committed to the cause of Comparative Literature in India and was the serving Treasurer of CLAI. He played an instrumental role in organising many of the CLAI conferences. He also made a significant contribution to the development of Canadian Studies in India. He was an office-bearer of the Indian Association for Canadian Studies. He will be remembered for his book, *Alienation in the Fiction of Anita Desai and Margaret Laurence*

Dr Pabby has been associated with the Comparative Literature Movement in India from the very beginning. He has held the position of Treasurer and Secretary in CLAI. He was known as the most affectionate and adorable person. He was a dedicated worker and always helped the members. Dr Pabby was a great organiser. There are so many seminars and conferences in which he played a great role in their successful organisation. He also contributed significantly to the development of Canadian Studies in India.

**Professor D Prempati** passed away in Bengaluru on July 25, 2014. It was Professor Prempati who drafted the constitution of CLAI after the historic decision taken under the advice of the late Professor Sisir Kumar Das and Professor Amiya Dev about the merger of INCLA (Kolkata) and CLA (Delhi).

He had been an office-bearer of CLAI and vociferously supported the development of Comparative Indian Literature in the curriculum of Indian universities.

He was formerly Associate Professor of English, Delhi College of Arts and Commerce. He was a prolific writer in Bangla, Hindi, English and Telugu. Before moving to Delhi he had also taught at Vanasthali Vidyapeeth, Jaipur.

During his last few years, Professor Prempati was known in political circles as a great activist in support of the marginalised people especially the Dalit.

**Professor Chelva Kanaganayakam** is no more. He was a brilliant scholar and a most popular teacher. He had just been awarded the prestigious Royal Society Fellowship in Montreal.

Professor Kanaganayakam leaves behind a considerable body of work on Canadian literature, English literature and Comparative Literature. He was mentor to many Indian researchers who went to Canada under the Canadian Studies Fellowship programme.

Professor Kanaganayakam played a pioneering role in the development of South Asian Studies at the University of Toronto. He delivered several plenary Lectures at IACS and CLAI conferences. He was in the process of writing a history of South Asian Literature which unfortunately remains incomplete. As a member of the Research Committee of the International Comparative Literature Association, he addressed its meeting held at the Paris International Congress last year in 2013.

He has given several plenary lectures at IACS and CLAI conferences. He was writing a history of South Asian Literature when he passed away.
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CLAI PARTICIPATION AT 2013 PARIS ICLA CONGRESS

CLAI is proud to record its growing links with the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA). A record number of CLAI members (over forty), participated in the ICLA International Congress held in Paris, France, in August 2013. A special session on the subject research committee was held at the congress. Fifteen presentations by eminent scholars from India and adjoining countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and also from North America focusing on the theme of the project were made at the special session / workshop of the ICLA congress in Paris. Eight out of the ten submissions have been accepted for publication by the Editorial Committee of the ICLA.