WIACLALS Report for ACLALS Triennial Conference 2022 Toronto, Canada

Although the past three years have been dominated by the Covid pandemic, WIACLALS continued its publication of the *Journal of West Indian Literature* and staged 2 out of a possible 3 annual conferences in the region. The Departments of Literatures in English at the 3 main campuses of the University of the West Indies (Mona in Jamaica, Cave Hill in Barbados and St. Augustine in Trinidad) and the English Departments at the University of Guyana, The University of the Bahamas, the University of Puerto Rico, the University of Miami and St George’s University (Grenada) all continued (mostly online) their readings, symposia, postgraduate seminar presentations, creative writing workshops and workshops for CSEC and CAPE students preparing for their high school terminal examinations, distinguished lectures and other literary activities.

The 2019 West Indian Literature Conference took place at the University of Guyana, 17-20th October under the theme, “Hinterlands: Journeys of the Imagination.” With over 70 participants, the conference featured panels (including a special focus on Guyanese/ International writer Wilson Harris), screenings of films, theatrical presentations (excerpts from Derek Walcott’s *Ti-Jean and His Brothers* and a new Guyanese play, *Laugh of the Marble Queen* performed by the National Drama Company), as well as an art exhibition by artists of the Division of Creative Arts at the University of Guyana.

Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, no conferences was held during the 2020. The conference was deferred to October 2021 and staged as a virtual conference by the Cave Hill, UWI faculty in Barbados. The conference was held under the theme “Contemporary Currents in Caribbean Literature” between October 28 to 30, 2021. The conference spotlighted Caribbean speculative fiction via, Grenadian-born s/f writer, Tobias S. Buckell and Trinidad and Tobago speculative fiction writer R.S.A. Garcia, who both gave keynote lectures. The third key-note lecture was presented by Barbadian writer, Cherie Jones. Given the statue of Barbadian born Caribbean writer, historian and thinker, Kamau Brathwaite who passed recently, the conference honoured his staggering contribution to Caribbean scholarship, thought and creativity with a number of panels and a special Commemorative Conversation between internationally regarded Ghanaian/Jamaican/American writer Professor Kwame Dawes and the devoted Brathwaite scholar, Professor Elaine Savory.

Our next conference has been planned as a hybrid conference to be held at the University of the Bahamas between October 13-15, 2022 under the theme: “The Future of West Indian Literature.”

Between 2019 and the present time in 2022, the *Journal of West Indian Literature* published 7 issues: April 2019 was a general issue edited by Dr Rachel Mordecai; November 2019 was Special Issue on Caribbean Science/Speculative Fiction Guest Edited by Dr Debra Providence of the Cave Hill UWI Campus; April 2020, the journal dedicated a surprise-festschrift in honour of retiring academic and then Managing Editor, Professor Evelyn O’Callaghan—this issue was guest-edited by Professors Alison Donnell and Bénédicte Ledent; November 2020 was another general issue edited by Professor Glyne Griffith, (who noted in his editorial preface the seismic loss of towering creative figures such as Kamau Brathwaite, Austin Clarke, V.S. Naipaul, Garth St Omer, Derek Walcott, critics such as J. Michael Dash, Michael Gilkes, and Édouard Glissant, and of course, our own long time editor of *JWIL* and former WIACLALS chair, Dr Victor L. Chang)—most recently we lost Barbadian man of letters, George Lamming. For April 2021, the journal doubled its output with two issues, a Special Issue on Caribbean Archives, Guest Edited by Dr Maria Fernández Campa and a general issue curated by Dr Lisa Outar, Senior Editor; November 2021, featured a Special Issue on Dub Poetry, guest edited by Dr Phanuel Antwi and guided by Senior Editor, Dr Michael A. Bucknor. Our most recent issue is a Special Issue on Kamau Brathwaite guest-edited by Professor Kelly Baker Josephs and shepherded by our Acting Editor in Chief, Dr Lisa Outar.

The journal continues to play a role in creating a high standard, visually appealing, cutting-edge publications on Caribbean Literature and Culture on our digital platform.

WIACLALS has had a vibrant three years of great literary activity within the region. At our next conference, we will continue to audit our institutions and put plans in place to ensure that our conference, our journal and our literary organization will have a solid basis for continuing in the future and for consolidating a rich literary and critical tradition.

Submitted by Chair: Dr Michael A. Bucknor (University of the West Indies)

Other Officers:

Dr Ian Bethel-Bennett (University of the Bahamas)

Dr Nicola Hunte (University of the West Indies, Barbados)

Mr Andrew Kendall (University of Guyana)

Dr Antonia MacDonald (St George’s University, Grenada)