

Inhaltsverzeichnis

A Word from the Treasurer / Jochen Petzold	2
<i>Konferenz-Ankündigungen:</i>	
“Global Fragments: Dis-Orientation in the New World Order”, GNEL/ASNEL Annual Conference in Magdeburg, 28-31 May, 2003: Call for Papers	3
“Transcultural English Studies”, GNEL/ASNEL Annual Conference at J.W.Goethe-University Frankfurt a.M., 19-23 May, 2004: Preannouncement	6
“Extending The Code: New Forms of Dramatic and Theatrical Expression”, 12 th Annual CDE Conference at Dresden, June 19-22, 2003: Call for Papers	7
“Violence and Transgression in World Minority Literatures”, Joint International Conference between the University of Würzburg/Germany & the University of California at Santa Barbara/USA, October 2-4, 2003: Call for Papers	8
<i>Konferenzberichte:</i>	
“Breaking Down Walls”: A Report on the 6th Autumn Summer School on the New Literatures in English at Humboldt Uni- versity, Berlin / Barbara Wennmacher	10
Timeout for a Roving Penguinologist / K. Schuster	12
“Radical Marginality or Disciplinary Normalisation? The New Lit- eratures in English in German and Austrian Academia” – State- ments from the Panel Discussion at the ASNEL Conference in Erfurt	15
LiBeraturpreis – Opening Spaces for Women Writers from the South / Marlies Glaser	27
Lehrveranstaltungen im Wintersemester 2002/03	30
Abgeschlossene Promotionen und Habilitationen	38
Forschungsergebnisse	39

A Word from the Treasurer

Dear members of GNEL/ASNEL!

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about a few issues:

Payment of membership fees for 2002

As of November 1, almost one third of our members have not yet paid their membership fees for this year. I would like to kindly ask all members who have not yet paid their membership fees to do so in the next few days. Membership rates for 2002 are:

Membership (reduced rates):	€ 15,34 (without yearbook)	€ 38,35 (with yearbook)
Membership (normal rates):	€ 40,90 (without yearbook)	€ 63,91 (with yearbook)

Please transfer the appropriate amount to our account no. 102.0505.500 at the Volksbank Osnabrück (BLZ 265 900 25), or send a cheque to the treasurer (Dr. Jochen Petzold, Andreas-Hofer-Str. 24, 79111 Freiburg).

New membership fees for 2003 – Direct debit / Einzugsermächtigung

As you have read in the last edition of *ACOLIT*, the membership rates will change in 2003. Unfortunately, this means that all authorisations for direct debit are no longer valid. Thus, I would like to ask all members who have given GNEL/ASNEL permission to collect the membership fees by direct debit to renew this permission by filling in and returning the form you received with this edition of *ACOLIT*. If you have not yet given GNEL/ASNEL permission for direct debit, please let me ask you to do so now. It is a safe and convenient way of paying the membership fees. (Unfortunately, this is only possible if you have a bank account in Germany.)

Payment by Credit Card (VISA / MASTER CARD)

For members outside Germany, paying the annual fees can be difficult and/or expensive, and a number of members have asked about the opportunity to pay with a credit card. Unfortunately, offering a credit card service in which the card is not physically present is extremely expensive. GNEL/ASNEL would have to pay more in fixed banking fees than it could hope to receive in 'overseas' membership rates. It is to be hoped that the rates for transferring money within the Euro-zone will be reduced soon; you can also send a cheque made payable to GNEL/ASNEL.

Confirmation of membership and payment of membership fees

Your membership fees for GNEL/ASNEL can be deducted from your income tax (at least in Germany). Early next year, I will send a letter confirming the payment of the annual fees to all eligible members in Germany who pay regular (non-reduced) rates. Members who pay reduced rates or members from outside Germany who need the letter confirming payment should please send me an email (jochen.petzold@anglistik.uni-freiburg.de).

Jochen Petzold (Freiburg), Treasurer of GNEL/ASNEL

“Global Fragments: Dis-Orientation in the New World Order”

**Annual GNEL/ASNEL-Conference, 28 – 31 May 2003
Magdeburg**

CALL FOR PAPERS

While the world seems to be getting ever smaller and globalisation has become a ubiquitous buzz word, regionalism and fragmentation also abound. This might be due to the fact that far from the alleged production of cultural homogeneity, the global is constantly re-defined and altered through the local. This tension, pervading much of contemporary culture, has an obvious special relevance for the new varieties of English and the literatures published in English world-wide. Postcolonial literatures exist at the interface of English as a hegemonic medium and its many national, regional and local competitors that transform it in the New English Literatures. Thus any exploration of a globalisation of cultures has to take into account that culture is a complex field characterised by hybridisation, plurality and difference. But while global or transnational cultures may allow for a new cosmopolitanism that produces ever changing, fluid identities, they do not give rise to an egalitarian “global village” as the asymmetry between centre and peripheries remains largely intact, albeit along new parameters.

The 2003 GNEL/ASNEL conference will address some issues across the range from the global to the fragmented. These will include the following panels:

I Diasporic Literatures (partly as Graduate Forum)

Convenors: Anke Bartels (Magdeburg), Rüdiger Kunow (Potsdam), Mala Pandurang (Mumbai)

The panel on diasporic literatures will try to situate the tension between the forces of homogenisation and fragmentation and analyze their impact on cultural (re)production within a global framework conducive to hybrid cultural forms and trans-cultural writing. Possible topics will include, but not be limited to, themes like transculturation, hybridity, migrancy, identity formation, gender, inscriptions of home and exile, space and mobility, the global imaginary, re-assessing history, memory, representations of (trans)nationalism and the role of the publishing industry. We hope to include themes such as the diasporic novel in Britain and North America, the politics of gender in diasporic literatures, diasporic theatre and poetry.

II Media

Convenors: Dirk Wiemann (Magdeburg), Satish Poduval (Hyderabad)

The intensification of global flows of exchange and interaction has resulted in constantly shifting mediascapes that more often than not combine aspects of homogenisation, 'glocalisation', and increasing local productivity. In the field of broadcast mass media, the unbounded dissemination of information and its packaging seems to push into the direction of global cultural homogenisation. At the same time even global players such as MTV have been forced to fine-tune their offerings to their diverse local constituencies. Can the media- and here especially film and the rhizomatic internet- function as an arena for the emergence of new affiliations "from below", partly "local", partly disembedded? In addressing these problems, we would particularly appreciate contributions from practitioners in the fields of the media.

III Postcolonial Literature for children and young people

Convenors: Jürgen Martini (Magdeburg), Cecile Sandten (Bremen)

What this session wants to look at is how the global economy has been influencing traditional values and ways of thinking in the past and how the concept of the global village has changed the outlook of societies. In particular, contributions are welcome that consider the ambivalent role of a literature addressing itself to younger readers through the voice and the eyes of adult writers. Key questions to be discussed should include reference to such terms as colonialism, postcolonialism, neocolonialism, diasporic writing, and the literature of postindependence. Papers should bring to bear these terms on focussing the concept of childhood and youth in a globalized society. Whose values are being advocated, whose culture is hegemonic, whose culture is marginalized? Are the concepts of culture transmitted through children's literature able to fight the loss of regional identity and culture?

IV Local colour in global English

Convenors: Karin Ebeling (Magdeburg), Josef Schmied (Chemnitz)

The sessions on "Local colour in global English" will analyse how the international language English gains local colour when it is adapted to the cultural needs of multilingual societies throughout the world. Multilingualism, multiple identities and multiple layers of hybridisation in various cultural forms of writing will be analysed. Possible topics include, but are not limited to the following: language change/transfer, creolisation, acculturation, transculturation, nativisation, identity formation, intercultural communication, loan words/translations, etc.

V Teaching New English Literatures and Cultures

Convenors: Helene Decke-Cornill (Hamburg), Reinhold Wandel (Magdeburg)

At the level of secondary schools, teachers of English have started to realise that, outside the USA and Britain, there are other sociogeographical and cultural domains in English-speaking cultures and literatures, and this has made an impact on syllabi and curricula and will soon turn into an essential part of the work done in EFL-classrooms. We ask for contributions in this field. Since this session of the GNEL Conference will also be offered as a regular teacher training course, we should like to ask contributors to opt for workshop-like, interactive presentations.

All communications about possible contributions to these, or other relevant, topics should be forwarded to the convenors based in Magdeburg, or to Bernd-Peter Lange.

Keynote speakers include Elleke Boehmer, Amit Chaudhuri, and David Graddol.

Format: Papers will be presented in thematic panel sessions and should not exceed 20 minutes each to allow enough time for debate. Additionally, there will be keynote lectures and workshops. **Deadline for abstracts (250 Words): 31 December 2002**

Conference Fees:	Members:	€ 40.-	Student Members:	€ 25.-
	Non-Members:	€ 50.-	Student Non-Members:	€ 30.-

Registration: All participants are kindly asked to **pre-register**, if possible by **15th April, 2003**. For details and a registration form, please visit our website www.uni-magdeburg.de/gnelkonf, contact Bernd-Peter Lange, Institut für fremdsprachliche Philologien, Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg, Zschokkestr. 32, D-39104 Magdeburg, Tel.: +49-(0)391-6716669, Fax 0391 6716668, or send an e-mail to Anke.Bartels@GSE-W.uni-magdeburg.de, or to Dirk.Wiemann@GSE-W.uni-magdeburg.de.

Transcultural English Studies

Annual GNEL/ASNEL-Conference, 19 – 23 May 2004

J.W.Goethe University Frankfurt a.M.

Pre-Announcement

The Annual GNEL/ASNEL Conference in 2004 is scheduled to take place at J.W. Goethe-University, Frankfurt a.M., from 19 – 23 May, 2004. The Conference topic will be „Transcultural English Studies“, and the organisers hope to bring together scholars and students as well as writers from all over the English-speaking world to explore the manifold challenges posed by transculturalism. While it is still too early to present a provisional programme, some features of this conference will be:

- a strong interdisciplinary focus on questions of transnationalism and transculturalism, involving several contributions from American Studies as well as cultural anthropology and ethnology;
- a section on theories of transculturalism designed to further debates on the uses (and possible misuses) of transcultural themes in German and international English Studies;
- a section on transcultural dimensions of Asian-British and Asian-American cinema;
- a section on transcultural interfaces between American and English Studies;
- a section on transcultural interfaces between British Cultural Studies and the New Literatures in English;
- a teacher's seminar exploring the significance of transcultural themes and problems in the EFL-classroom;
- A number of readings featuring „transcultural“ writers and a major public event bringing together „transcultural“ writers from different parts of the English-speaking world with „transcultural“ writers in the Rhein-Main area.

A call for papers and detailed information will be available on our conference website from **1st March, 2003** onwards. Please check our department website at www.uni-frankfurt.de/fb10/ieas/index.html and follow the links to „Abteilungen“ and „Neue Englischsprachige Literaturen und Kulturen (NELK)“.

Conference organiser: Prof. Dr. Frank Schulze-Engler, J.W.Goethe-Universität Frankfurt a.M., Institut für England- und Amerikastudien, Abteilung Neue Englischsprachige Literaturen und Kulturen (NELK), Grüneburgplatz 1, D-60323 Frankfurt a.M.

Tel.: 069/798-32354 or -32352 (Skr.) * Fax: 069/798-32375

E-mail: schulze-engler@em.uni-frankfurt.de

“Extending The Code: New Forms of Dramatic and Theatrical Expression”

**12th Annual CDE Conference at Dresden, Germany,
June 19-22, 2003**

The German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English announces its 12th Annual Conference. It will be organized by the Chair of American Literature at Dresden University of Technology and held at the Mercure Hotel Meissen and the Altes Fährhaus (special conference rates available).

Call for papers:

Theatre and drama are important instruments in a process of questioning, redefining, and projecting our reality. The theatre is a semiotic system which makes it possible, in the shape of enacted dramas, to take up cultural signs and objects and to (re-)configure them in the fictional space of the stage. In this sense, the conference “Extending the Code: New Forms of Dramatic and Theatrical Expressions” would like to draw special attention to developments in contemporary theatre and drama which could be read as extensions of traditional means of articulation and expression.

We invite papers answering to the following issues:

- theatre/drama and psychology
- theatre/drama and human interaction
- theatre/drama and the correlation of body and mind
- theatre/drama and body and media
- theatre/drama and body/mind and institutions
- theatre/drama and language and gesture
- theatre/drama and the complexity of cultural signs

Abstracts:

If you propose to give a talk (in English, not exceeding 20 minutes), please submit your title and an abstract of about 200 words accompanied by a biographical sketch. In addition to the presentation of papers we also invite contributions to alternative forms of discussion:

- (a) a Workshop on Teaching Contemporary Drama in English and
- (b) a Workshop on Theatre Practice/Working with English Drama Groups.

Deadline for the submission of abstracts: December 31, 2002.

Please send your proposals to:

Prof. Dr. Hans-Ulrich Mohr, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, TU Dresden,
D-01062 DRESDEN, Germany
Tel: +49-(0)351-46332878, Fax: +49-(0)351-46337733,
e-mail: amerik@rcs.urz.tu-dresden.de

www.ContemporaryDrama.de

“Violence and Transgression in World Minority Literatures”

Joint International Conference between the University of Würzburg/Germany & the University of California at Santa Barbara/USA

Call for Papers

Convenors: **Profs. Francisco A. Lomeli & María Herrera-Sobek (UCSB)**
 Dept. of Chicana and Chicano Studies & Center for Chicano Studies
 Co-convenors: **Profs. Rüdiger Ahrens & Karin Ikas (Würzburg University)**
 Dept. of English, American and Cultural Studies
 Place: **University of California at Santa Barbara/USA**
 Date: **2-4 October, 2003**

PROSPECTUS:

The relationship between mainstream literatures and minority literatures is more and more questioned within the critical debate of literary canons. Since creative works of literature must be seen from an inter- and transnational perspective, the borderline in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender and media present a unique challenge. This conference will focus on transgressions of all kinds which stimulate new reading audiences around the world. Borderlines evoke various kinds of violence and aggression because writers do not only want to influence the readership for taking sides but they also think of reflecting on solutions to violent utterances and actions. Current critical theories offer new forms of hybridisation and spaces which have to be considered from different approaches/methodologies in order to pay attention to the authors' original intent.

Potential contributors are invited to submit **an abstract of 200 words** of their paper and **a brief CV** in English (MS Word) **by January 15, 2003** and should consider the following framing topics related to **VIOLENCE AND TRANSGRESSION IN WORLD MINORITY LITERATURES** :

- discourse variants
- folkloric expressions
- effects of visual and verbal media
- theoretical examinations
- historical paradigms
- construction of identity & subjectivity
- minority vs. majority conceptualisations
- languages and cultures in contact
- literary/textual/creative approaches
- facts and fictions
- institutionalised forms
- gender questions
- religious constructs
- political concerns and terror
- the minority “other”: nomad, exile, immigrant
- images of war and combat

The length of the individual **presentation** will be 30 minutes. After every 3 papers there will be 15 minutes of discussion. Please send abstracts (+CV) or direct enquiries to each of the following:

<p>Prof. Francisco A. Lomeli & Prof. María Herrera Sobek Chicano Studies Department University of California at Santa Barbara Santa Barbara, CA 93106 - U S A - lomeli@chicst.ucsb.edu</p>	<p>Prof. Rüdiger Ahrens & Dr. Karin Ikas Dept of English, American & Cultural Studies University of Würzburg, Am Hubland 97074 Würzburg - G e r m a n y - ruediger.ahrens@mail.uni- wuerzburg.de</p>
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The acceptances of abstracts will be notified by **15 February, 2003**.

After the conference a limited amount of selected papers will be published. Essays submitted for **publication** should be a maximum of 20 pages (double-spaced, MLA style, MS Word) including footnotes and works cited (use footnotes instead of bibliography). Please submit one copy of your manuscript along with a disk (MS Word) to Prof. Rüdiger Ahrens, Würzburg University and direct a further copy to Prof. Francisco Lomelí, UCSB (cf. address above).

“Breaking Down Walls”: A Report on the 6th Autumn Summer School on the New Literatures in English at Humboldt University, Berlin

“Why sacrifice an entire week of my precious semester break? What have I been thinking?” That’s what I thought just before going to Berlin, to the 6th Autumn Summer School, when none of my papers for this semester was written, and so much work was still waiting to be done.

By now I am older and wiser, at least a few weeks. This one week in Berlin certainly added to that: Arriving in brightest sunshine on August 25th, the city showed its sweetest face to me and all the other participants. The organization was excellent from the first informational e-mails, the “accomodation service” if needed, the weekly transportation ticket for Berlin that was offered, the well structured daily schedule, the opportunity to have lunch in the Mensa of Humboldt university, to the offers of coffee (urgently needed in the mornings) and cookies between lectures. And if a question remained, there was always somebody to ask: Katrin, Antje and Anja of the ASS committee even published their mobile phone numbers in the ASS 2002 brochure, so you could get a hold on them anytime “when things fall apart”.

The motto of the 6th Autumn Summer School was *Breaking Down Walls*, not only a motto fit for a summer school in Berlin, but also fit for the topics of the New English Literatures, that are in the process of breaking down the traditional canon of English literatures at universities to offer a broader and richer perspective. As in the previous years the ASS offered German and international students a closer look on the growing field of the New English Literatures. The lectures and seminars covered literature from Africa, Australia, Canada, the Caribbean, India and New Zealand, and were held by experts in this field and writers from these countries. Of course this offered a different perspective on these literatures: It is interesting to learn and read about literature, but listening to a person from that particular region talking about problems and achievements of, say, indigenious people from Canada, is more of an experience than a lecture.

The five days of lectures, readings and seminars were roughly grouped to “theme days”. Every day included morning lectures, a lunchtime reading or performance, the afternoon seminars, which you selected beforehand and attended every afternoon, and either a reading or a movie session at night. Monday was a mostly Australian day, with morning lectures on Australian poetry and novels, and readings from three authors, two Australian and one Caribbean.

The morning lectures on Tuesday morning were on Indian and Caribbean literature, and the readings at night were held by New Zealand and Indian writers. This reading took place in the Zionskirche, and although some complained about bad acoustics, the place was wonderful.

On Wednesday night everybody had the opportunity to learn more about Black British literature and filmmaking in the morning and to relax and get to know the other “summer schoolers” after a movie session at the Mid-week Party. The party

went on into the wee hours and left many owl eyed and coffee-craving the next morning, but was great fun for all. What was especially striking was that the distance between students and teachers, if existant at all, melted down within the first few days. And on that night you could see both “species” on the dancefloor together, having loads of fun.

Even with such little sleep the Thursday morning was not a morning to miss with lectures on Canadian indigenous literature and filmmaking, and the last energy was invested at night into the fabulous readings of three Canadian writers. Additionally, because of the support of the Canadian embassy, a buffet for the audience could be offered after the reading, which was delicious.

Friday morning included lectures on various topics, such as Canadian Post-modernism, Maori theatre and Black and Asian British visual arts. At night the stage was open for the performances of the ASS participants: Selected works of art (Seriously! You would not guess what encouragement, some explanation of the know-how and working together in productive groups can do), of writing can fabricated in the creative writing workshops were presented, literary translations were read and could be compared to their English originals, and the night was closed by excellent acting of the drama group. The ASS committee was honoured spontaneously: Everybody was so impressed by their work and dedication that several people introduced the idea of getting a present for the lot of them. Within two days enough money was collected for a restaurant voucher for the entire committee, which was handed over with a poem and a hug, and was just a small appreciation for all they had done.

The last morning offered some time to say good-bye to new friends at the farewell breakfast, and whoever had not gotten a chance to see a little of Berlin could do so at a tour of Berlin organized by the ASS committee.

A few words on the seminars: It was hard to decide which one to take, as the topics covered a wide range and all of them were interesting. There were several creative writing classes offered, with different emphasis: Writing with found materials, autobiographical writing, writing under the influence of postmodern theory, and a guidance for young writers how to build up their work and finally publish it. Then there were seminars on the different new literatures: Caribbean women’s poetry, Canadian youth literature, Canadian prairie writing, Shakespeare in India, Australian Poetry and Australian postcolonial literature. There were also a drama workshop and a workshop for literary translation. While I can only speak of my own seminar, the postmodern one, as valuable and a great experience, from what I have heard and seen of other paticipants, their seminars have been like that as well.

All I can say is that this was just a wonderful week with many new experiences, insights and friends. The ASS is recommendable to anybody who is interested in the new English literatures as well as in meeting interesting people, getting new impulses and having a lot of fun and good times.

Barbara Wennmacher

Timeout for a Roving Penguinologist

As my train rumbled into Berlin, my thoughts neither dwelt on the city's history, nor were they engaged in the attempt to recite the impressively long list of "must-do" sights. I was busy remembering which tram to take to Friedrichstrasse and how to proceed from there. Luckily, the caring ASS committee had seen to providing fail-proof descriptions so that even a complete disorienter like me managed to hit home, i.e. the "Orbis Office", without any difficulties. After a warm welcome in the registration office, I proceeded to the opening ceremony. The official welcome and acknowledgements were complemented by an overview of the history of the ASS and a slide show about Berlin's past and present, and topped off by a generous helping of sparkling wine afterwards.

The morning lectures started with an old ASS-hand, Michael Sharkey, who mud-mapped contemporary Australian poetry for us. As a non-literature student (I mainly deal with penguins, which gives you a somewhat reduced scope on literary theory) I won't deny that the majority of theoretical intricacies have quite possibly been utterly lost on me. Still, I enjoyed most of the presentations, because for me they continued to mud-map as yet uncharted territory I would never have accidentally trodden on had I stuck with my tuxedoed study birds.

As in previous years, the ASS was chockers with authors, and participants and "outsiders" were invited to enjoy three excellent evening readings. The committee had chosen different settings for each, and the first two places were simply stunning. The "Caribbean / Australian night" took place at the "Stadtbad", an ex-swimming pool, fantastically illuminated and very atmospheric. The only drawback was that the mike was too... I strained my ears trying to catch first of all Laurence Scott's poetic and sensuous poetry and prose, as he read a long poem followed by an excerpt from his latest novel *Aeldred's Sin*.

Michael Sharkey was next. To all who had already heard him, it was possible to enjoy his poems, even though his performance was marred by the acoustics as he lost the fight against the mike. Last but not least was Bernard Cohen, a new voice from down-under for me, and one I'm definitely looking forward to reading. After the reading we were offered refreshments and snacks the never-resting committee had prepared for us.

The Zionskirche with its grey walls, high vaults and brilliant acoustics turned out to be a perfect setting for next evening's NewZealand / Indian reading.

Beryl Fletcher's performance was as impressive as I had expected and surely the best advertisement for her latest book, *Under the Duna*. Her prose takes you right in, you see the story unfold as you listen.

She was followed by the second "kiwi" author, Sarah Quigley whose surrealist short story "The English Speakers" was all the more gripping for me because it contained so much of what we'd theorised about in the Creative Writing course that afternoon. Although the story never solidly ground its foot into reality, although words and context refused to merge into a realistic "picture", Sarah managed to

profoundly move the audience – judging from those I talked to after the reading – and left them with a multitude of disturbing images, a lingering sense of unease. (I strongly recommend trying to get hold of that story, to my knowledge it is not going to be published in English).

The Indian part of the evening started off with Tabish Khair who once more gave a delightful performance. His fellow poet, Sudeep Sen, read extracts from a number of his poetry collections. I frankly admit to not having grown up enough to seriously appreciate kitchen-erotix, but other than that, I enjoyed his poetry: strong and at times “clever”, like the New York poem, the lines of which – if turned around 90° – gave the outline of Manhattan skyline. After the reading, the NZ embassy kindly donated a considerable quantity of NZ wine to the ever-dry tongues of a satisfied audience.

As expected, the ASS party was a great success, good music, lots of dancing – and like two years ago, David Arnason would have won the “perseverance cup” for being the most persistent dancer on the floor.

The Canadian evening starred the writers Dennis Cooley and David Arnason, as well as the playwright and actor Ian Ross. Most Acolit-readers will have heard Dennis and David before and enjoyed the quick-fire volleys of their performances. Ian Ross’s reading clearly conveyed his qualities as an excellent dramatist, who with a slight turn of his head, a minute change in body posture, manages to slip into another character. In turns funny and dead serious, his performance, that is to say his plays, neither ridiculed beyond dignity nor did they conjure up the almighty index finger. In terms of spontaneous creativity, I was especially impressed by his out-of-the-sleeve piece containing some of his German experiences. The Canadian reading was generously supported by the Canadian embassy which invited the audience to a luscious buffet after the show.

Complementing the evening venues, several lunchtime readings had been organised, culminating in a hilariously funny performance by – of course – Gordon Collier and Michael Sharkey.

In the well-attended afternoon seminars, students dealt with topics ranging from Shakespeare in India to Canadian Prairie Writing, from Contemporary Australian Poetry to Caribbean Women’s Poetry, from Literary Translation to Memoir Writing, and from various aspects of Creative Writing to Theatre.

The participants’ performances on Friday night were ample proof of the seminar teachers’ efforts and the motivation their “pupils” had brought into the ASS. Members of the three Creative Writing courses, some participants of Beryl Fletcher’s seminar on Memoir-Writing, and Ian Ross’s theatre group provided a varied and entertaining programme for the last evening.

The farewell breakfast on Saturday was a pleasant chill-out for the majority of the participants, while some “indefatigables” used it as a build-up for the ensuing sight-seeing tour of Berlin. Much as I would have liked to follow them, especially because I had been so immersed in ASS proceedings that I had not given much time to the city itself, I could already hear the penguins hollering in the distance. So I

shouldered my backpack and slightly regretful returned to my first-priority duties, keeping in mind that the next ASS would be something to look forward to.

I'd like conclude this report with a thorough thanx to the students of the ASS committee, who with their unfailing patience, irrepressible good spirits and hard work managed to make this ASS an unforgettable event for all participants.

K. Schuster (Marburg)

Radical Marginality or Disciplinary Normalisation? The New Literatures in English in German and Austrian Academia

Statements from the Panel Discussion on 10th May, 2002 at the
Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of the New
Literatures in English (ASNEL) on “Embracing the Other:
Addressing Xenophobia in the New Literatures in English” at Erfurt
University

At the annual GNEL/ASNEL Conference held last May at Erfurt University a new feature was introduced: a two-hour panel discussion on the current situation of the New Literatures in English in German and Austrian academia that was attended by most of the conference delegates and gave rise to intensive debates about present and future developments in our field.

*The panellists were **Prof. Dr. Heinz Antor** (Cologne University, President of GNEL/ASNEL), **Prof. Dr. Liselotte Glage** (Hanover University, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Hanover University and former Vice-President of GNEL/ASNEL), **Prof. Dr. Klaus Stierstorfer** (Düsseldorf University), **Prof. Dr. Graham Huggan** (Munich, co-founder of the “Postcolonial Studies” Graduiertenkolleg at Munich University), **Prof. Dr. Norbert Platz** (Trier University, former President of GNEL/ASNEL), **Dr. Susanne Reichl** (Vienna University), **Esther Laubsch** (student of English at Potsdam University). The panel discussion was chaired by **Prof. Dr. Frank Schulze-Engler** (Frankfurt University)*

The statements of the panellists sparked off a lively, at times also controversial debate about the degree to which the new literatures in English have been institutionalised in German and Austrian academia, and about future perspectives for our field. A number of conference delegates from Africa, Asia, the USA and other parts of the world participated in this discussion and compared the issues raised with regard to German and Austrian academia with developments in their own university systems. For reasons of space, only the initial statements of the panellists are documented below.

Frank Schulze-Engler

I would like to indicate 3 areas of possible debate:

1.) The first area concerns the question of self-definition or self-identity of the field we work in. The *ACOLIT* Special Issue No. 4 that has just come out looks back on the past 25 years of teaching, research and study of the New Literatures in English in German-speaking countries, and the essays show clearly that in the early

stages, there was considerable marginality and a constant struggle for acceptance. On looking at more recent developments (such as those presented in the empirical research by Gerhard Stilz in the *ACOLIT* Special Issue, for example), it is apparent that a lot has happened since then. Currently, we seem to be hovering in a situation shaped both by the inherited marginality of the past and the disciplinary normalisation going on at present. In this context, it seems important to develop new strategies enabling us to cope with this situation.

Major questions in this respect are: how far has this normalisation – i.e. a process of growing acceptance in German academia – progressed and how do we define or redefine our field against the background of this normalisation? Isn't it really much more fun to be marginalised – instead of being normalised, which can be rather boring? After all, if you are as accepted as any other discipline, you could also be as boring as any other discipline.

2.) The next area deals with the disciplinary definition of the field – what is it that we are actually doing? The origins of our field are clearly in English literary and cultural studies, but once more a lot has happened in the last 25 years. A core activity of those engaged in the field, whatever its denomination – “Postcolonial”, “Commonwealth”, or “New Literatures in English” – has been a comparative critical practice based on literary and cultural studies. However, other definitions are possible and are also being practiced; I would like to mention two of these that seem particularly important at present:

- Area Studies, which are strongly represented in German-speaking countries with regard to Australia, Canada and Africa; in various other areas there are similar tendencies, but generally with a lesser degree of institutionalisation.
- Postcolonial Studies, an interdisciplinary approach that potentially represents a new discipline of its own and forces us to reconsider what we are doing in disciplinary terms.

How, then, do we define ourselves in disciplinary terms? To look at things from a dystopian perspective: are we in danger of falling apart into new disciplines or subdisciplines?

3.) How far do recent developments/reforms in the German university system affect what we are doing? There have been quite a few changes in recent years – some that look quite interesting, others that seem more intimidating and yet others that are simply awful – creating a situation which we have to come to terms with and that presents a major challenge to our field, opening up new perspectives and opportunities as well as new dangers.

I have asked the panelists to use either of three approaches in their presentations: an analytical approach looking at what is actually going on in our field; a utopian approach delineating what we may be hoping for in our field; and a dystopian approach pinpointing what we may be afraid of with regard to developments in our field. The choice of approach (or of an appropriate mix), however, has been entirely left to the panelists' own choice.

Heinz Antor:

When I first read the title of this panel, “Radical marginality or Disciplinary Normalization? The New Literatures in English in German Academia”, I must admit I had mixed feelings. On the one hand, I was delighted by the question in the title, which I think can only be asked because there is indeed a higher degree of acceptance with regard to the New Literatures in English in German universities than there was some years ago. On the other hand, having said this, I must also say that the phrase “disciplinary normalization” might also conjure up the scenario of a containment of the initial critical impetus of postcolonial studies and its subversive potential for change.

Where, then, are we at the beginning of the twenty-first century? I think there are at least two stories one can tell in this respect, and both will have to be heard.

Story number one: The study of the New Literatures in English has come a very long way in the past quarter of a century. If, in the 1970s, Commonwealth Studies were still a field largely neglected by the overwhelming majority of academic teachers in German university departments of English, something looked down upon by many not only as marginal, but also as secondary, minor, negligible, etc., by now postcolonial studies are part of many university programs and even a somewhat fashionable subject to be interested in. Many of the jobs I applied for in the late 1990s had a postcolonial or NEL component in their job description, and it helped to be able to go beyond the pale of British or American studies. Similarly, there are many more publications in journals and books on aspects of the New Literatures in English than there were two decades ago. The study of the New Literatures in English has come of age at German universities, and in this respect the development here mirrors that in other countries where a similar change of attitudes can be observed. The catalogues of the big anglophone publishers even feature postcolonial studies or world literature as one of their regular categories, and this shows just how much more attention is paid to what used to be referred to condescendingly as Commonwealth Studies. Even the *Anglistenverband* had a whole series of panels dealing with anglophone literatures from the ex-colonies in its annual conferences.

This is not to say that there is no longer any opposition to the New Literatures in English at German universities. It is still not impossible to meet people who, after you have told them that you teach, say, the African novel in English, ask you whether that sort of writing can be “good literature”, and a minority at the Berlin Anglistentag in the year 2000 unsuccessfully tried to prevent another postcolonial panel for this year’s annual meeting in Bayreuth, where diasporas and literatures in English will be discussed. However, these are rearguard skirmishes, and I consider it imperative to read and analyse New Literatures in English for anyone who wants to remain theoretically and conceptually intact. Some of the reasons for this I have outlined in my short contribution to the special issue of *ACOLIT* edited by Frank Schulze-Engler. As I point out there, the question we have to ask is not whether or nor the study of the New Literatures in English will make it or not in the long run,

but who will and who will not be part of this project. So there might be a bright future ahead for our subject – except ...

... And this is where *story number two* comes in: The one major threat I see to the positive further development of our subject at German universities is the new *Hochschulrahmengesetz* and the various reforms envisaged by the politicians in our country. Let me become somewhat dystopian in tone here and delineate a worst case scenario. From what politicians tell us about the kind of university they want to have, we must draw the conclusion that the academy will be reorganized along the lines of neo-liberal free market capitalism in a society dominated by the very same principles. The rules of competition as well as of supply and demand will determine the flow of students, and this in turn will determine how the universities will be endowed with resources. Utility will become a major factor in the evaluation of academic quality, and the utility our reformers have in mind will again be one based on economic performativity. The more students you have the more money and professorships you will receive. The more easily what you teach fulfils a function in the brave new context of the late capitalist social and economic environment the more students will flock to your seminar rooms. Such a system will not only prefer some disciplines such as economics or the applied sciences to others such as the humanities, but it will also always be more favourable to approaches that leave untouched the basic ideological assumptions of the social systems based on the principles of a market economy.

The New Literatures in English or Postcolonial Studies might have a hard time in this respect. Their oppositional and subversive character will not recommend them to sponsors and distributors of so-called *Drittmittel*, which will become an ever more important non-academic factor in determining the supposedly academic value of university subjects and disciplines. Many an academic teacher might refrain from teaching new and little-known postcolonial texts if this might mean fewer students and, consequently, less money and less prestige. This will be an important factor for young academics who will have to qualify under the new rules and who will more often than not have second thoughts when it comes to deciding which area of research might turn out to be the most profitable – that is, not in a genuinely academic sense, but primarily in terms of the new market economy again. The sort of competition many politicians have in mind for our universities creates pressure, the pressure to adapt to and function smoothly within a system that is based on a specific ideology, one postcolonial studies are intensely critical of, and this might be turned against them. University reform might thus become an act of containment, a conservative movement in neo-liberal disguise intent on bringing the subversive and recalcitrant sheep back into the fold in order to reaffirm its own master discourse.

Mind you, ladies and gentlemen, this is just story number two, the dystopian counter-version to its more optimistic Other represented in story number one. I am still fairly optimistic myself as far as the future fate of the study of the New Literatures in English both at universities and at schools is concerned. But I do think that we must be on the alert and engage in a very critical dialogue not only

with each other, but with politicians and other people outside the university in order to draw people's attention not only to the material impoverishment of our universities that might result from the reforms introduced and about to be implemented, but to the cost in open-mindedness, in intellectual and ultimately in political freedom.

Liselotte Glage

I am very much with Heinz Antor's second story – in fact my everyday job is to go against my own personal, very pessimistic grain in this respect. I have two observations: one concerning the state of the art and the other concerning the state of the institution.

My feeling about Postcolonial Studies is that there is a tendency for it to go the same way as feminist or gender studies – not only in its commodification or in an obvious recycling of its discourse, which can happen with any paradigm. What disturbs me is what is going on in the field of theory, of conceptualization: in the process of moving from one categorical impasse to the next so many new terms have emerged in the theoretical school. Just like feminism or gender studies, Postcolonial Studies seems to have lost its moorings or groundings or foothold (or whatever material metaphor you would wish to add), and instead has moved into the realm of self-referentiality, thereby also leaving behind the critical aspects of this field that Heinz Antor hat just mentioned.

What I feel is necessary, then, is not to *return* to, but to *move on* to the political or historical dimension of the field. In the early days of Commonwealth Literature, we knew that colonisation signified differently in different countries. We should relink ourselves to these differences in signification, I think, or to put it in Bernd-Peter Lange's words, we should relink ourselves to the awareness of "the global fragment".

Second – the state of the institution: I advocate disciplinary normalisation in the sense of mainstreaming Postcolonial Studies (again a certain parallel to the democratisation of gender studies), mainstreaming also in the sense that we should pull in other disciplines, that we should have inter- or transdisciplinary studies. Heinz Antor was quite right, I think, to point out that money goes where the student goes. We have to observe the student flow and therefore the money flow and we might get students more interested in Postcolonial Studies, if we show them where the grounding of these studies is.

I also advocate radicality in a different sense than the heading of our panel discussion seems to suggest – not radical marginality, but radical centring in the sense of what over the last two years has come to the fore in German Higher Education Policies. What I would like to see is the establishing of centres of Postcolonial Studies. Not just the centres mentioned by Frank Schulze-Engler, but centres in the sense of what has come to be called centres of excellence: e.g. Berlin; Bayreuth – a centre in a different sense; Munich is establishing itself on the map;

Frankfurt has been on the map for so many years; I don't know about recent developments in Cologne. I think we need mainstreaming and normalisation, and we also need to think about strategies concerning DFG funding or the development of centres for Postcolonial Studies – which also means re-establishing something like a political discussion within GNEL/ASNEL.

Klaus Stiersdorfer

Although we agreed that the discussion was not to be Germanocentric, I still feel that it is very important to have a brief look at the local perspective and move out from there. The situation I am most familiar with is the current upheaval in Northrhine-Westfalia, and I would especially like to speak about the University of Düsseldorf.

What has happened is that Düsseldorf and several other universities in the area have lost their teachers' program. This means, first of all, that we may be losing a lot of students in simple numbers, which is bad news. It also means on the content side, that we are called upon to rethink *Anglistik* as it was used and taught for ever so long, in entirely new terms. What are we *Anglisten* good for, apart from training teachers which is a kind of self-reflexive thing of course: We teach others to teach. What do they teach? Well, it's not our problem – we just teach them to teach. So perhaps the good news is that people in our departments are forced to reflect on what we are really doing.

Now what is the outcome? We haven't got an outcome yet. The outcome certainly has a lot to do with institutional structures. As it happens, at the moment the University of Düsseldorf does not have a valid long-term studies program in English literature or in English language beyond the year 2008 – all the programs we have at present are moribund. So we can design new courses of studies not only in the New Literatures in English, but in English in general. What do these studies look like? We have a wonderful opportunity to redesign what we think is important in English studies – tailor-made for the particular exigencies of our current world and, if you so wish, of our current market. This is the good news, perhaps, but the bad news is that there are constraints and obligations – and this is where the big trouble comes in. In order to get a new course of studies passed, you have to have it sanctioned by an outside panel of whose constitution, preferences and prejudices I really have no idea. I've only been told that, as we're starting out now, the preference and indeed the requirement is that all new courses have to be interdisciplinary. So you can't just say that we will do an English Studies program (to say nothing of a New Literatures in English program). We have to think within the faculty – what are the *Anglisten* at all good for, within an overall framework? And there the ice is really getting thin, I feel, because you just don't know with whom to link up.

So far, *Anglistik* has not been so badly situated in this context in the institutional framework, because representatives of several other subjects have said “No,

no let's not cancel Anglistik, because it's important." Well, why are we important? Because we teach the English language, they think. Who thinks so? Well, professors of economics, professors of law and they are the people who call the shots at the moment in our institutional frameworks. So what do we have to think about? We have to think about how we can make ourselves useful to legal studies, economics and so on, and I can't say that I'm particularly happy about this development. So this long story I have presented to you is important in the overall context of redefining the New English Literatures within this framework. At present all we can do is design modules using tailor-made little snippets and pieces, taken from the larger framework of English studies, e.g. from Shakespeare, from African literature or from Australian literature, and try to fit them within an overall philological, humanistic framework. I don't think there is considerable fragmentation going on. If there is a chance for the New English Literatures, it lies in the fact that we can choose in terms of didactic or utility value. I very much doubt that this state of affairs can compete with what we've been doing in the larger framework of what used to be called philology and is now called literary or cultural studies. But this is precisely the framework we have to work with at the moment.

Graham Huggan

To some extent I'm going to be rehearsing, I think, the very valid and articulate arguments of the first two speakers, thereby partly proving Liselotte Glage's point about the recycling inherent in the field. The following is certainly not analytical, it wavers between the utopian and the dystopian and it may sound suspiciously sermonic to some of you. I'll begin by saying that practitioners of the New Literatures in English or as I prefer to call them Postcolonial Literatures in English are nothing if not self-reflexive – self-reflexive, I sometimes feel, up to the point of being almost apologetic about the field they represent. The term "post-colonial" in particular seems to be treated with great suspicion, not least by post-colonial critics themselves: it carries a certain embarrassment about itself. The field is hedged about with various disclaimers, so that post-colonial critics – like cannibals – are always someone else.

There are obvious terminological problems within the field. I think we all know what these are, though I sometimes think that the hand-wringing involved is somewhat excessive. The "New Literatures" are not new, "post-colonial" is not post-anything and so on and so forth. Having said all that, I want to look very briefly at the terms within which this particular panel has been framed. Radical marginality, disciplinary normalisation, the New Literatures in English and last but not least, German academia. Starting with "radical", are the New Literatures in English or Postcolonial Literatures in English radical? Hardly. Are they "marginal"? Yes, certainly – in the German academy at least, though marginality strikes me as an institutional condition to be challenged, rather than a political position to be embraced. Our field, however we might call it, should not seek to congratulate itself

by embracing its own partly imagined Otherness (and here I'm also playing on the terms for this conference). "Disciplinary normalisation" – some people in the field would see it as resisting or even transcending disciplinarity. Personally I think this is a bit of pipe-dream. I prefer to see a future for the field in interdisciplinary cooperation and therefore I would fully endorse Liselotte Glage's remarks and also Heinz Antor's at the meeting yesterday – what is required is an opening out of Postcolonial Studies onto different areas of disciplinary expertise.

It does remain true that the field is still dominated by literary and so-called cultural critics, several of whom claim to be doing interdisciplinary work, but often without actually bothering to consult people working in other disciplines. So I think there's a viable distinction that can be made here between interdisciplinary cooperation on the one hand (which I see is an ideal to be worked toward) and the current state, particularly well-represented in post-colonial theory, of interdiscursive borrowing. So I think there's a great deal of *interdiscursivity* in the field but not enough *interdisciplinarity*. Finally a few words on the New Literatures in English in a German academic context: The New Literatures in English have an institutional history here in Germany reaching back into the early 1970s. It seems to me that this history and the people who helped to shape it should be respected. I myself think the term "New Literatures in English" itself is perhaps too respectful in other ways; respectful toward the discipline of English literary studies for which it becomes a kind of satellite or subset, respectful toward the inbuilt hierarchies of the German academic system. Now this might sound like radical talk, but it isn't, really. I do think, though, that one of the best ways for the New Literatures in English and Postcolonial Literatures in English to move forward is to open out to interdisciplinarity, to forge different kinds of institutional allegiances, rather than accepting the normality of its own marginal place.

Norbert Platz

I had prepared some written notes, but I think I'll deviate from what I've prepared and pick up the word that has been brought into the discussion by Heinz Antor and by other speakers – the notion of utility.

My major problem is: how can we sell the New Literatures in English to people who are outside the academy? There's also the problem: how can we sell the New Literatures in English within the academy? In this respect the *Anglistentag* differs from us; as far as my own academic history is concerned, I had great trouble in the 1980s when I wanted to write a 'Habilitation' – a second PhD – on Derek Walcott. I submitted my thesis to the Dean and the answer that came back was "Lass doch die Neger im Busch" – "why don't you leave the niggers in the bush". So instead I wrote my second PhD on the Victorian novel. Fortunately things have changed since then within the academy; I have been able to convince people that it is useful to deal with the New Literatures in English.

There's another thing I want to mention. When I was organizing a conference in Mannheim some 12 years ago, we had a theatre company from South Africa. I wanted to have some sponsoring for this theatre company and a colleague of mine, an economist, told me "Well, there's this bank manager, just go up to him, he usually has an interest in supporting cultural events." So I went to him and talked to him about this project and about the company and also about the New Literatures in English and our conference.

"Aha", he said, "well, that's quite interesting, but does that also imply criticism of South Africa?"

"Yes", I said, "that's why we're doing it."

"Well, in this case, I can't give you any money."

And when I left his office, he mentioned in passing: "Well, I've just granted your colleague, who was here half an hour ago, 50.000 DM."

So it's very difficult to sell what we do, to market what we do to people outside, and I think we haven't done enough to give reasons and to account for what we do. Now, for many years I've been involved in "selling" MA students having studied English, German and other subjects in the Humanities, and what I found out is a useful strategy that could be used to invite people from outside, to establish contact with them. In Trier we invited people from various companies to join us and we had courses together with them, in which we explored a certain problem area, e.g. cultural misunderstandings. I think it's good, in this context, to focus on the kind of intercultural competence that we would be able to teach. There's an interest, but I think it takes some time to convince these people, because they all think along lines of economics and of quick rewards for any kind of investment.

There are some wiser people in various personnel departments of big companies, who have a special interest in well-qualified *Magister-Geisteswissenschaftler*, who have critical minds. That's something we could capitalize on, but we have to explain our concerns to them. We have to explain what kind of specific areas are covered by our teaching, how we have sensitized our students, and that they have competence in dealing with cultural conflicts: that they have got the kind of emotional intelligence to comprehend the other – not just to read statistics, but also to empathise with what people feel like who have to live under the present conditions of globalisation. So this would be a way – but it's a thorny way. One can't expect quick solutions, but I think the more we get into this impasse of having to justify what we are doing, the more we should open up discussions with people outside the university – and some of them are enlightened enough to listen. We can also try to connect ourselves with other disciplines that do important research, e.g. in Trier there's a new *Sonderforschungsbereich* dealing with poverty. I personally couldn't take part in the *Sonderforschungsbereich*, but it would have been an ideal case. One could argue that when studying the New Literatures, one also becomes aware of how poverty has come about in various parts of the world. In this way we should try to cooperate with other disciplines; we should make clear to the outside world what we do – and that what we do may turn out to be not just *meaningful* but also *useful* for society in the long run.

Susanne Reichl

Let me start by answering Frank Schulze-Engler's question whether it isn't really more fun to be marginalized. No, it isn't – although I see your point. But the position from which I speak, compared to the other speakers here, is slightly different – not only because of my academic career, which goes back only a few years, but also because I speak from an Austrian position. Although Austrian English departments came to be closely linked to German English departments, there are major differences and I feel they come to bear especially as far as the New English Literatures are concerned. And with regard to this opposition that Frank Schulze-Engler suggested between radical marginality and disciplinary normalisation, I would say that in Austria we are still very close to the marginalisation end, that is, the non-existence of the New English Literatures (this is an exaggeration which I'll return to later on), and nowhere near a normalisation or an institutionalisation process. Things are improving gradually, but very slowly.

I'd like to separate the research from the teaching question. There are things going on in terms of research in Postcolonial Studies and the New English Literatures – individual bits and pieces; since there are only 5 English departments in Austria, you can't expect a vast outcome in this area. I think it's the teaching that is really interesting in terms of institutionalisation and I can relate to what Klaus Stierstorfer said about the situation in Düsseldorf, because in Vienna we're also threatened as far as losing the teacher training course is concerned. That's a major concern of ours as well. On the whole, students in Austria are not exactly encouraged to develop an interest in the New English Literatures, so I would speak for a radical awareness raising process first of all, and here we still seem to be lagging behind what's going on in Germany. There are a few courses, there are guest visiting professors and so on, there are special topics in Klagenfurt and Innsbruck, but on the whole people do like to do a token New English Literatures text once in a while, and they don't seem to be very much aware of the scope of the subject area. If such a token postcolonial text is done in class, it's done without any interest in the post-colonial specificities.

You could argue that this is what we want to reach eventually – this kind of integration, normalisation that a postcolonial text is done like any other Jane Austen text, but I don't think this is quite the right way of going about it. I think before you actually treat postcolonial and non-postcolonial texts as the same, you should treat them as equals in their own specificities. The way to go about the move from marginalisation to normalisation would be via the specificities and not via treating everything in the same manner. So they should be treated as equal but not as the same.

I also agree with what most people have said about the interdisciplinary future of the New English Literatures – Graham Huggan's *Graduiertenkolleg* in Munich is an excellent example of this closer to home. I would like to bring in two institutional constraints that have been mentioned before, that will have an impact on the New English Literatures and their development. One is the large amount of European education policies and the other is the more local English departments'

personnel policy and the individual postcolonial scholar's career profile mentioned before. Now your *Hochschulrahmengesetz* sounds just like our *Universitätsordnungsgesetz* (quite rightly, actually), and in Austria we are also under increasing pressure from the government (but also from the media and from people inside the university) to justify what we're doing. Having to justify that we're doing literature in the first place is bad enough, but then having to justify that we're doing what is still regarded as a marginal section of English literature seems even worse. So I see this kind of utility discussed before, and I see two ways out – or rather two ways of bringing the New English Literatures in.

One would be this idea of cross-cultural communication skills – it's a buzzword, of course, and nobody really knows what it means. Nevertheless, this idea of intercultural competence is all over the place at the moment, in educational and political discussions. A lot of us haven't given this much thought yet, but we might use it as an argument for the study of the New English Literatures and cultures. The other argument for Postcolonial Literatures would be a growing interest (at least in Austria) in cultural studies as such. Now here, too, we have a problem of definition because when people get together and discuss cultural studies in the curriculum, they all disagree on what they really mean. But here, too, especially because of such hazy notions, we could use this concept, redefine it and put in our own ideas of what it should look like. Since students are increasingly interested in doing cultural studies (no matter what it is), I think this is important for us, too.

We have already discussed individual career profiles in the New English Literatures. Here, too, there's a discrepancy. On the one hand, as an individual working in the New English Literatures, you're dealing with a novelty, the students like you: it's a trendy thing to do, especially in a very conservative department. On the other hand, inside the department, among colleagues who are not all that unimportant, you do risk being marginalised and you do risk statements like "Oh, you know, these young colleagues are only doing Postcolonial Studies because it is so easy to get published. There's no secondary literature, and there's hardly anything to read." In addition, after having specialised in the New English Literatures, you're expected to move on to something completely different. You can't stay with Postcolonial Studies, you're expected to do something else, something from another geographic region or something old, some "real" English literature. Of course the idea that as soon as you've become a specialist in the New English Literatures you are supposed to move on to somewhere else is not particularly helpful as far as the teaching of the New English Literatures is concerned. This should not be a "moaning and groaning" session, so I'll end on a hopeful note: even the situation in Austrian departments might change for the better. At the moment we are in the position of revising various curricula which have been rejected (we're having a hard time about that), but I think there's also a chance at this particular time of revising curricula, rethinking concepts and structures, that we might bring in some of the New English Literatures.

Esther Laubsch

I'm speaking from the perspective of a student of cultural studies at Potsdam University where I've been since 1997. I spoke to a couple of my fellow students and asked them about their thoughts on the integration of Postcolonial Studies at the English Department of Potsdam University. In my second semester I opened my handbook and discovered that the English Department has a specific focus on Postcolonial Studies and that this focus is integrated in all teaching areas – literature, linguistics, cultural studies, cultural history and didactics. And then you had a list in the handbook of the courses you could take if you were interested in this focus. During the last few semesters this list has become more comprehensive and the subjects have become more diverse. However, when I walked around the department and talked to a couple of students, it turned out that most of them had never even heard of the term “postcolonial”. And they looked at me asking “What do you want? What's that for?” Of course, I only talked to 16 students – the Department has 500 English students plus another 400 external students, so I cannot really present a complete picture here. All of the students are in their 5th or 6th year of university and they are either doing a teaching degree or a Master's degree, but that doesn't matter because you have to take literature courses no matter what degree you do. Exactly eight students did not know the term, there were three or four who knew it had something to do with studies of the former colonies, and there were just two or three who could really engage in a conversation – it was really interesting to see what they had to contribute. Two of them had spent a year abroad studying in the US. Interestingly, when I talked to the people who didn't know anything about this, it turned out that they had actually taken courses from the Postcolonial Studies list. So it really seemed that they were studying something, doing certain topics, but had never heard of postcolonial discourses or discussions.

So I thought: what could be the reason for this? I do have a comparison because I studied in Sydney for two semesters and I did Aboriginal Studies there. In Australia, you open up a newspaper and you have the examples right there in the country. You hear about the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and there's also a call-centre for Aboriginal people and they tell you their perspective. It was basically first-hand, whereas here in Germany, for many students it is just another field of studies – like Victorian novels. You go to literature classes and you have the New English Literatures, for example, Mexican immigrants, and then you learn about the narrative structures and the development of figures, and the role the weather plays, but you can't actually take this in without the context. Things are different in the majority of courses; I have also experienced courses where the lecturers try really hard to bring across the idea of a post-colonial deconstruction of representations, but in these few sessions of theory students don't really grasp the complex issues, and they don't remember that there was a discourse. You just do the topics and that's what you remember after a couple of years, so that's where the dim awareness of postcolonial discourse comes from, I think. A note on future perspectives: we're very lucky and I hope things will change with our new junior professorship for the theory of post-colonial studies; he or she will come early next year, I think, so things might change and awareness of the postcolonial field might increase.

LiBeraturpreis – Opening Spaces for Women Writers from the South

“My heart leaps with joy every time a woman steps out of the shadows”

Mariama Ba,
So Long A Letter

“Never stop writing especially when you are a woman from the South”

Assia Djébar

This year saw the 15th anniversary of the LiBeraturpreis – a literary prize awarded to a work of fiction (most times a novel) written by a woman writer from the so-called third world which has been translated into German. What is the background of this prize? A group of people interested in development politics had been keeping regular discussions in Christuskirche – an ecumenical center in Frankfurt/Main, Germany – until in 1987 they decided to read literature from these areas to gain a deeper insight into the diversity of these cultures and the wealth of their different experiences and traditions. Taking Mariama Ba’s and Assia Djébar’s quotations above as guidelines, the group decided to set up an annual literary award for a writer from the South, a woman writer, as it was felt that – like in Germany – women had much more problems to be accepted in the literary field than men. The name *LiBeraturpreis* with the capital letter B (for liberation) hints at the political intention of this prize, the German readers’ attempt to widen their views, to accept other cultures as equal, in a way to liberate themselves through the reading of literature.

The “founding mother” Ingeborg Kästner is still the president of the group and last year had her work honoured by the German section of Women in Publishing who elected her Woman in Publishing of the year 2001. Some of the writers awarded the LiBeraturpreis have been Maryse Conde, Assia Djébar, Kamala Markandaya, Patricia Grace, Edwidge Danticat – to name but a few – and this year for the first time an African writer, Yvonne Vera from Zimbabwe, received the prize.

What are the criteria for this prize? Only works of fiction in German translation will be considered for the prize, and they have to be written by women from a so-called third world country. A list of books is put together following the Frankfurt Bookfair and circulated among the interested readers who read as many of these books as possible. In April the following year a shortlist is created by a simple voting system, either by letter, by e-mail, or by telling members who will attend the meeting held that month. *All readers* (not only members) can vote for the books on this year’s booklist. The voting procedure is quite simple: if you want a book to be awarded the prize, you mark it with it a “plus”; if you think a book is not prize-worthy at all, it gets a “minus”; and if you do not mind a book winning the prize, although it may not be your favourite, it receives a “zero”. It is not necessary to read all the books on the list; even if you have only read one book, you can participate

and vote for the book you have read. Finally the votes are counted and the books with the majority of votes are put on a shortlist (usually four or five titles) from which a jury of professionals in the field of literature choose the winner.

The actual prize consists of a symbolic sum of 500 € and an invitation to the Frankfurt Bookfair. A prize giving ceremony and a public reading in the Literaturhaus in Frankfurt is arranged, as well as a reading tour.

One definitive effect of all that reading is that about thirty or more books by women writers from the South will be read very attentively and talked about by about three hundred or more readers in Germany. These are books which might get little attention otherwise, easily noticeable by anyone entering a German (or any other international) bookshop. On wide display throughout the shops are not high quality literary books but volumes of the “White Massai” variety, i.e. books containing Eurocentric impressions of European or North American writers which are often full of biases and prejudices against these areas of the world. This prize then helps to counter these false images, and this effect alone seems to me extremely positive.

In 2001 the LiBeraturpreis group went a step further. Up till now only books already translated into German were considered for the award, but what about authors who had not been translated into German yet? This consideration led to the foundation of the *Foerderpreis* in co-operation with the translators’ group “Die Fähre” in Leipzig, a prize to support and promote authors not yet translated and therefore unknown to the German readers. The recipient of this prize is suggested by the present LiBeraturpreis winner who names at least two other writers she finds worthy of being translated into German. From these the LiBeraturpreis group chooses the winner of the *Foerderpreis* who will be invited to the Bookfair in Leipzig. Before the fair excerpts of her texts will be translated, a brochure will be published and distributed to the media, publishing houses and literary agents to stir interest in the writer before her actual arrival in Germany, and a reading tour will be arranged as well. For the previous winners of the *Foerderpreis* this strategy has worked out well: Mirta Yanez from Cuba published a collection of her short stories with Atlantik Verlag (Bremen), and Yanik Lahens’ short stories will come out with Rotpunkt Verlag (Zürich).

All these activities are financed mainly by the members’ annual contributions and some donations (and in case you are looking for a good way “to get rid of your money”, here it is). The nucleus of the organization still lies in Frankfurt/M (although there are some groups in other areas of Germany), where meetings take place once a month. The group is not a closed circle, everybody is welcome to join in and discuss the texts; it is a place where ideas and books are exchanged and where a lot of hot discussions take place. Meanwhile information is also available online (www.liberaturpreis.org) and even voting for one’s favourite author or at least one’s favourite book can be done via the internet. Finally it should be mentioned that the activities of the LiBeraturpreis have developed in close co-operation with the Society for the Promotion of Literature from Africa, Asia and Latin America in Frankfurt/M.

What remains to be said in the end is that the LiBeraturpreis group is very much alive, but new input, i.e. participants in the meetings, is always welcome. Do not hesitate to come along either in person to the meetings or virtually to the website to take part in this literary exchange.

Monthly meetings: Christuskirche, Beethovenplatz, Frankfurt, underground stop: Bockenheimer Warte, every fourth Thursday, 7.30 p.m.

Further information: www.liberaturpreis.org. The author can be contacted by e-mail: mg@tuckers.de

Marlies Glaser (Frankfurt/M)

LEHRVERANSTALTUNGEN IM WINTERSEMESTER 2002/2003

[zusammengestellt aus *AREAS - Annual Report on English and American Studies*,
Band 23 (2002) sowie aus Zusendungen von Mitgliedern der GNEL]

Deutschland

AACHEN

Davis	Literature in Zimbabwe
---	Literature and Slavery
---	Filming Australia
Deringer	British, American and Canadian Poets in the EFL-Classroom
Lothmann	English-Based Pidgins and Creoles
Marsden	Sociolinguistics: Geographical and Social Variation of Present-Day English
Marsden/Davis/ Wieger	Ringvorlesung: Der Pazifik heute: Wandel, Werte, Wirtschaft

AUGSBURG

Böhm	Sprach- und Sprachenpolitik weltweit
------	--------------------------------------

BAYREUTH

Bolz	The Arts in Contemporary Zimbabwe: Film, Music, Literature and Visual Arts
Breitinger	Introduction to African and Caribbean Literatures
---	Intertextual Postcolonial Writing
Kopatsch	West-African English
Mengel	Contemporary South African Novels

BERLIN, FU

Ickstadt/Klaus Krahé	Kanada im Umbruch: die 60er und 70er Jahre 'The White Man's Burden': Großbritanniens koloniales Erbe
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BIELEFELD

Fleischmann Kummer	South Africa Under White Rule Interkulturelle Kulturen
-----------------------	---

BOCHUM

Puschmann- Nalenz Weber	Class in the Commonwealth and its Representation in the Fiction of (Anglo-)India The Neo-Slave-Narrative
-------------------------------	---

BONN

Kreutzer	Postkoloniales Kolloquium
Mukherjee	New Englishes and Commonwealth Literatures in English Language Teaching
Sielke/Reger	Slavery in Literature
Straehle	Immigration and Multiculturalism in Canada
---	Quebec – State and Society
Weiber	Black Britain

BRAUNSCHWEIG

Hochbruck	Modern American and Canadian Drama
Intemann/ Gnutzmann	The World of English – Englishes of the World

BREMEN

Schaffeld	Indigenous Theatre in Australia and Canada
-----------	--

DARMSTADT

Erichsen	Writing Back to Shakespeare – Djanet Sear’s ‘Harlem Duet’
----------	---

DORTMUND

Bell	Introduction to Australian Literature and Culture Project Design and Evaluation: Australia/New Zealand
Kramer/ Klein	Cultural Studies of the English-Speaking World (apart from the US)

DRESDEN

v. Rosenberg	Black British Culture
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DÜSSELDORF

Gomille	Literary Form – Culture – Media: Gothicism(s) in Anglophone Fiction from the 18th Century to Postmodernism
Stierstorfer	Cultural Crossroads: Hong Kong in Film and Fiction

DUISBURG

Maksymiuk	An Introduction to the Culture and History of Canada
-----------	--

ERFURT

Meierkorb	Varieties of English in South Africa
-----------	--------------------------------------

ERLANGEN

Frank	Colonial Encounters: From Crusoe to Marlow
-------	--

ESSEN

Davis	Reading Zimbabwean Literature
Lehmann	The Boer War in South African and European Texts
Lehmann/Reck- witz	Kolloquium Südafrika
---	Recent South African Fiction

FRANKFURT/M

Hellinger	English as a World Language
Kerr/Schulze-Engler	Varieties of English
Matzke	The Novels of Chinua Achebe
McCann	All The Wonders of the Mysterious East: Britain and India from the 18th to the 20th Century
Schulze-Engler	Introduction to the New Literatures in English
---	Contemporary Asian-British Literature and Culture
---	Indigenous Literatures: Canada, Australia, New Zealand
Solmecke	Das Bild der englischsprechenden Welt in deutschen Englischlehrbüchern

FREIBURG

Mair	Creolisation: Language and Culture in the Commonwealth Caribbean
Sand	English in South East Asia
Woods-Czisch	Great Britain and New Zealand

GIEßEN

Colavincenco	Canadian Poetry from its Beginnings until 1960
Colavincenco/Schwindt	Die fiktionale Biographie in der deutschen und kanadischen Erzählliteratur (Komparatistik)
Collier	Canada's Best Features: Filmmaking North of the Great Divide
---	The Poetry and Prose of Derek Walcott and Kamau Braithwaite: Two Views on Caribbean History and Culture
Nünning	Postmodernismus: Neue Entwicklungen in zeitgenössischen englischsprachigen Romanen

GÖTTINGEN

Küsgen	Kurzgeschichten aus Kanada und der Karibik
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GREIFSWALD

Enter	US-American and Canadian Literature in School
Koll-Stobbe	World Englishes
Lutz	The Canadian Prairie West in History and Fiction
Mills	Introduction to Canadian Literature
Plasa	Introduction to Post-Colonial Studies

HALLE-WITTENBERG

Hartwig	"The White Man's Burden": Britain and its Empire
Metzger	The Rise and Fall of the British Empire

HAMBURG

Hühn	Intercultural Confrontations in Contemporary British Fiction
Moss	Contemporary Canadian Literature

Schwerin/
Störtenbecker Advanced Integrated Skills: Australia

HANNOVER

Bettinger The Empire and Its Discontents (Conan Doyle, Collins, Kipling
and Conrad)

HEIDELBERG

Glauser Pidgins and Creole Languages
Selle Multicultural Britain: History, Politics, Society, Literature

KASSEL

Beckenbach Indian Short Stories: From Kipling to Orwell to the Present

KIEL

Groß Die anglophone Literatur Kanadas
--- Lit./Kulturwiss. Kolloquium: North American "Indian" Oratory
Meyer Major Regional Varieties of English: American, Canadian,
British and Australian English

KOBLENZ-LANDAU

N.N. Research Seminar Down Under: Aspects of Culture and
Literature

Schmidt-
Schönbein English as a Global Language

KÖLN

Antor Canadian Drama in English
Bölling Twentieth Century American and Anglo-Canadian Drama
Lehmensick-
Mitchell Advanced Essay Writing: Cultural Studies: Religious and Ideo-
logical Conflict as a Political Factor in the English-Speaking
World

KONSTANZ

Mergenthal White Women in Africa: Karen Blixen, Doris Lessing, Nadine
Gordimer

Rosenthal Un/covering the Canadian North

LEIPZIG

Ronthaler/
von Rosenberg Black English Culture and Literature

MAGDEBURG

Bartels The British Empire
Lange Anglo-Indian and Indian Fiction
Martini Contemporary Maori and South Pacific Writers
Wiemann Introduction to Postcolonial Studies

MAINZ

- Stahl Empire Windrush: British Postcolonial Theory and Reality in the
2nd Half of the 20th Century
- N.N. Culture Studies III (Canada)

MAINZ/GERMERSHEIM

- Rüttgers V.S. Naipauls Indien

MANNHEIM

- Winkgens Die koloniale und post-koloniale Konstellation in der Literatur
und Theorie
- Zur Ambivalenz der Kolonialisierungskritik im britischen
Roman: Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster, Doris Lessing
- Theorien des Postkolonialismus

MARBURG

- Stang World Englishes

MÜNCHEN

- Clemm "Big Brother is Watching You" – the US and the Caribbean:
Essay Writing and Oral Practice
- Kluge Patrick White
- Sanchez Fundamentals of Economics with Reference to the USA and
Selected African Countries
- Sedlak Multi-ethnicity and Intercultural Relations in Africa, the West
Indies and Britain: Regional, National and Transnational
Perspectives
- Simatei The African Novel
- Stummer Indo-English Novels in India and in Britain
- Reading African Texts: Comprehension Exercises
- Narrative Critique of Civilisation: Wilson Harris vs. Joseph
Conrad
- N.N. Immigration to Britain

MÜNSTER

- Brack Immigration and Racism in Great Britain
- Kohli Introduction to Indian Literature in English
- Schmidt-Haber-
kamp Literature from Southern Africa

OLDENBURG

- Davids Contact Zone Caribbean
- Duncan Multi-Cultural Britain
- Schwarzer The Postcolonial Experience: The New English Literatures in the
Advanced Foreign Language Classroom

--- Autobiographical Writing and Colonial Experience: Teaching
African Women's Literature
Zagratzki Fiction from Nova Scotia/Canada

OSNABRÜCK

Asu English-speaking Africa
Karrer Captivity and Slave Narratives
Markmann Introduction to the New Literatures in English
--- Pacific Writing in English
--- Canada: Literary Pluralities

POTSDAM

Bonin Australian English
Kinsky-Ehritt Introduction to Post/Colonial Studies
--- Anglophone Literatur(en) und Kultur(en) der Gegenwart:
Projektdarstellung für das Internet

REGENSBURG

Dunphy Asian Communities in Britain
Nowak Salman Rushdie

REGENSBURG

Bös Varieties of English

SAARBRÜCKEN

Morris Canada and the United States in Comparison
von Lutz Novels of Empire

SCHWÄBISCH GMÜND

Lindsay Images of Identities – Australia and Ireland: A Comparison
Schocker-von Intercultural Language Learning and the Internet: A Cooperative
Dithfurt Seminar with the University of Waikato, New Zealand
Zirkel The Frontier Concept in Canada and the USA

SIEGEN

Krewani Canadian Cinema
--- Immigrant's Literatures
Plag English-Based Creole Languages
Waegner Postmodernism and Literature of the Black Atlantic

STUTTGART

Bühler-Dietrich Postcolonial Negotiations: Contemporary British Drama
N.N. Varieties of English
Schabio Shakespeare in the Caribbean: Introduction to Postcolonial
Literature

TRIER

Klooß	Grundzüge der Geschichte und Literatur Anglokansas im 20. Jahrhundert
---	Discourse and Counter-Discourse in Colonial and Postcolonial Fiction
N.N.	Landeskunde: Kanada
Platz	Australian Novels

TÜBINGEN

Eckstein/Stilz	British Caribbean Narrative: An Introduction to the Black Atlantic
Goergen	Colonial and Postcolonial Tensions in US Caribbean Literature
Korte	English-Canadian Culture: An Introduction
Stilz	An Introduction to Australian Literature
---	Postmodernism and Postcolonialism: Studies in Late 20th Century Cultural Theory and Literature Practice

WÜRZBURG

Ikas	Die kanadische und neuseeländische Kurzgeschichte im fortgeschrittenen Englischunterricht
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WUPPERTAL

Kerkhoff	Dub Poetry: The Caribbean, Great Britain, Canada
Schulze	Twentieth-Century Australian Short Stories
Spies	The 'British Empire' in Contemporary Prize-Winning Novels in English

*Österreich***GRAZ**

Bernhart	European Colonial Experience
Löschnig, Maria	Canada: Regions and Literature

INNSBRUCK

Ganner	(Post)Colonial Literatures in English
Zach	Key-Texts of (Post)Colonial Literature

KLAGENFURT

Holt	Core Problems in British Cultural Studies: The Immigrant Experience – as Perceived through the Media
James	Advanced Topics in English Linguistics: Pidgins and Creoles
Tschachler/ Strohmaier	Survey of Anglophone Cultures I

Tschachler	Research in Culture Studies
Wildburger	Core Problems in Postcolonial Cultures: Aboriginal Australian Identities – An Intercultural Introduction to Indigenous Australian Culture/s
Wimmer	History of Australian Culture: Introduction to Australian History and Culture
---	Topics in Australian and Postcolonial Culture Studies: Early 20th Century Australian Literature
SALZBURG	
Coelsch	Aspects of Anglophone Civilizations: Poetry and Music
Steiner	North America and South Africa: Cultural Myths in Context
Wieden	Anglophone Cultures and Global English
WIEN	
N.N.	Cultural and Regional Studies: Focus Caribbean
Rauchbauer	K. Mansfield: Short Stories
Zacharasiewicz	The International Novel in American and Canadian Fiction

ABGESCHLOSSENE PROMOTIONEN

FREIBURG

- Sandra Hestermann Meeting the Other – Encountering Oneself: Paradigmen der Selbst- und Fremddarstellung in ausgewählten anglo-indischen und indisch-englischen Kurzgeschichten. (Fludernik)
- Jochen Petzold Re-imagining White Identity by Exploring the Past: History in South African Novels of the 1990s. (Goetsch)
- Susanne Strobel ‘Various Forms of Savagery’: Identitäts- und Alteritätskonstruktionen in Reiseberichten viktorianischer Frauen zu Süd- und Westafrika. (Goetsch)

HEIDELBERG

- Stefanie Hackert “I did done gone”: Typological, Sociolinguistic, and Discourse-Analytical Approaches to Past Marking in Bahamian English. (Glauser)

MAINZ

- Andreas Rosie „Terrified Consciousness”: Ausdrucksweisen postkolonialen und postmodernen Bewußtseins bei V.S. Naipaul, W. Soyinka, W. Harris und D. Potter. (Stoll)
- Nicole Stahlmann New Caribbean York: The Transnational Poetics of Caribbean Literature.

MANNHEIM

- Sabine Kahrmann-Faulhaber Lexikalische Besonderheiten des New Zealand English in den Romanen Witi Ihimaeras, Patricia Graces und Keri Hulmes. (Stemmler)
- Sigrun Meinig Witnessing the Past: The Representation of History and Australia’s Postcolonial Predicament in Selected Historical Novels by Henry Handel Richardson, Patrick White, Peter Carey and Rodney Hall. (Winkgens)

TRIER

- D.S. La Breche Australian Reflections in a Mirror Clouded by Dust: Perceptions on Self, Soul and ‘the Other’ in the Australian Novels of Blanche d’Alpuget and Christopher J. Koch. (Platz)

ABGESCHLOSSENE HABILITATIONEN

REGENSBURG

- Helge Nowak Ansätze zur Neukonzeptionierung einer Geschichte der englischsprachigen Literaturen. (Berger)

Forschungsergebnisse

Jochen Petzold, *Re-imagining White Identity by Exploring the Past: History in South African Novels of the 1990s*. Studies in English Literary and Cultural History 5. Trier: WVT, 2002. (244 p. € 26,- ISBN: 3-88476-529-9). Dissertation, Freiburg 2002 (Prof. Dr. Paul Goetsch).

In South Africa, the 1990s were a period of vast political changes. The official system of racial segregation, apartheid, was dismantled and the (white) government started negotiations with a variety of opposition groups and organizations, thereby setting the country on a track towards desegregation and democracy. Nelson Mandela, who had been imprisoned for 27 years, was released and became *the* symbol for change. In 1994, the first truly democratic elections were held, and the ANC (banned until 1990) achieved a landslide victory; Mandela became the first black South African president.

Naturally, the political upheavals greatly affected the way South African (group) identities could be constructed. While the perverse logic of the apartheid system was (partly) based on the concept of distinct ‘national’ identities that were used to differentiate between ‘whites’ and ‘non-whites’, the new South Africa was now presented as the ‘Rainbow Nation’ that embraced all its inhabitants.

My study examines the way in which four white South African authors (re)examine and question old and new concepts of a ‘white identity’ in South Africa. My basic premise is that any form of group identity is largely dependent on the construction of a common history for the group in question, an ‘intentional history’ of common knowledge about the group’s past that determines its difference from others and serves as a homogenizing force within. Based on this premise, I have selected a range of texts that deal with South Africa’s past, either in the form of official historiography, or in the form of personal histories. All seven novels expose, in various ways, some of the breaks and fissures that were covered up by the intentional history the apartheid system used to legitimize its version of white identity and white supremacy.

The connection between literary treatments of history and the construction of group identities is, of course, not limited to the South African context. I narrow the focus of my analysis a series of steps: A first theoretical chapter examines the relationship of history and identity on a general level, the next section then looks at the representation of ‘history’ in works of fiction, particularly at issues of hiding or exposing fictionality and at the possible functions ‘history’ fulfills in literary texts. Post-colonial theory is then used to examine the special relationship between history and identity in post-apartheid South Africa. The final step then explores issues of white identity in South Africa, presenting the old version of ‘Afrikaner identity’ as a foil for the discussion of the novels.

Since my study is interested in analysing constructions of white identity from within the group, I have focussed on ‘white’ authors: André Brink, Anne Lands-

man, Mike Nicol and Jo-Anne Richards. This selection of four authors covers at least a small spectrum of 'white writing', and their texts are distinctly different stylistically and in their treatments of history and identity.

The three novels by André Brink that are included in my discussion, *On the Contrary* (1993), *Imaginings of Sand* (1996) and *Devil's Valley* (1998), are all marked by a strong scepticism towards 'reality' and 'truth'. The very concept of historical truth is called into question, and various histories replace the master narrative of an official, homogenizing historiography. However, the free-play of possible histories is not maintained throughout Brink's novels. His texts give precedence to a version of history that stands in stark contrast to official apartheid historiography and which can (or should) now be used to construct a hybridized and non-hegemonic version of white identity. Brink's political agenda rests somewhat uneasily in texts that start out by deconstructing the very notion of historic truth, but then offer a privileged version of history.

In Anne Landsman's novel *The Devil's Chimney* (1998), history is examined as part of the dreams and visions of a white conservative alcoholic who uses the (pseudo)historical figure of Miss Beatrice as a screen for projecting her own hopes and fears. In this way, history is turned into a personal space of the imagination, but it remains tied to the political realities of South Africa in the early 1990s. Only by engaging with her own past is the narrator finally able to confront the 'new' South Africa, but it remains doubtful if she is really able to change herself.

The two novels by Mike Nicol, *This Day and Age* (1992) and *Horseman* (1994), actively evade a quasi-mimetic rendering of the 'real' South Africa by refusing to anchor their stories in time and space. Parallels to South Africa and its past can be drawn, but they are not the only possible readings. Nicol's treatment of history is particularly striking. Disregarding chronology he blends various incidents from South Africa's past, creating a 'mythical' past that invites an allegorical reading of the stories. Nicol's texts refuse to offer positive models for a new white identity, focussing instead on violence as the only stable aspect of human interaction.

On the surface level, Jo-Anne Richards's *The Innocence of Roast Chicken* (1996) merely seems to present a traumatic experience the narrator had in her childhood. However, the childhood memories are inseparably connected to South Africa's political history, and it is interesting how the narrator tries to distance herself from her past. While the narrative is a kind of confession, the text in fact counteracts the narrator's acceptance of guilt by belittling the sufferings of apartheid's victims and by offering the prototypical racist farmer as an easy scapegoat for white guilt.

All seven novels discussed connect the examination of the past with questions of personal or group identity. However, only Brink's *On the Contrary* and *Imaginings of Sand* explicitly envision a new form of white identity. Instead, the novels expose that the apartheid-version of white identity was based on an intentional history that tried to suppress all internal divisions, postulating homogeneity instead of hybrid diversity. Thus, the seven novels cannot easily be read as examples for an active attempt at constructing the new Rainbow Nation.

Nonetheless, the novels do point out to what extent identity constructions are based on concepts of a shared past. And by exploring the breaks and fissures of apartheid's historiography, they do provide starting points for imagining white identities in a new South Africa.

Jennifer Michele Letki, „Domestic Wars in the Fiction of Timothy Findley“, Magisterarbeit, Frankfurt 2002 (PD Dr. Geoffrey V. Davis).

Vor 46 Jahren gab der kanadische Schriftsteller Timothy Findley sein Debüt. Findley gilt heute als einer der berühmtesten aktuellen Schriftsteller Kanadas, der mehrere literarische Preise, z.B. den Governor's General Award erhielt. Findley beschäftigt sich seit Jahrzehnten mit dem gleichen Themenkreis: die vielschichtigen Auswirkungen der Weltkriege, speziell die des Faschismus und des Holocaust, sowie „Kriege“ auf zwischenmenschlicher Ebene (*domestic wars*). Verknüpft damit sind Themen wie z.B. die Rolle der Technologie in der Neuzeit, die Unterschiede zwischen den Begriffen geistig „krank“ und „gesund“ und die Suche nach Zuflucht.

In den 1980er und 90er Jahren erhielt Findley viel Beifall für sein Engagement für diese Themen, die in den 1960er und frühen 70er Jahren noch auf Ablehnung gestoßen waren. Dies zeigt, dass er mit seiner Weltanschauung der Zeit voraus war. Seit der Veröffentlichung seines dritten Romans *The Wars* (1977) erschien eine wachsende Zahl von kritischen und wissenschaftlichen Abhandlungen, die die verschiedenen thematischen Aspekte seiner Werke untersuchten. Mehrere Themenbereiche sind jedoch noch unerforscht; eine Reihe von Zusammenhängen und Querverbindungen innerhalb seines Gesamtwerkes sind noch zu etablieren.

Der Begriff *domestic wars* umfaßt ein breites Themenspektrum. Er bezeichnet Konflikte, Aggressionen und Gewalt in Familien, zwischen Geschlechtern, Generationen, Gesellschaftschichten sowie auch zwischen Menschen unterschiedlicher Hautfarbe. *Domestic wars* spielen sich in Findleys Werken auf verschiedenen Ebenen ab und betreffen eine Vielzahl seiner Figuren.

Der I. und II. Weltkrieg, zwei dramatische Ereignisse der Geschichte, die unser Verständnis von der Welt änderten, durchziehen Findleys Werke. Diese Arbeit zeigt, dass die *domestic wars* in seinen Werken mit (mindestens) einem dieser Weltkriege verbunden sind. Man sieht, dass ihnen die gleichen Konfliktmechanismen zugrunde liegen wie in militärischen Kriegen. Durch militärische Kriege werden *domestic wars* aufgedeckt und/oder bereits vorhandene noch verstärkt. Es entstehen neue Probleme und Konflikte, und gesellschaftliche Maßstäbe verändern sich. Sie wirken sich auf die Zurückgebliebenen aus sowie auf die Veteranen, die aus dem Krieg heimkehren. Auswirkungen der Kriege machen sich unterschwellig auch zu Friedenszeiten bemerkbar.

Die Arbeit untersucht, wie in Findleys Werken die *domestic wars* ausbrechen und sich entwickeln. Sie konzentriert sich hauptsächlich auf drei Werke: den Roman *The Wars*, die Novelle *You Went Away* (1996) und die Kurzgeschichte „Stones“ (1988). Dysfunktionale Familien und das Unvermögen, Zuflucht finden zu können, sind symptomatisch für die zwischenmenschliche Kampfzone. Es werden die weitreichenden Auswirkungen im Leben von einer einzelnen oder von zwei Familien aufgezeigt, wie im Falle von *The Wars*.

In einem weiteren Kapitel werden eine Reihe von anderen Werken Findleys untersucht: die drei Romane *The Last of the Crazy People* (1967), *The Telling of Lies* (1986), und *The Piano Man's Daughter* (1995); das Schauspiel *Can You See Me Yet?* (1977) sowie eine Kurzgeschichte, „Lemonade“ (1986). Obwohl diese Texte nicht primär zu Kriegszeiten spielen, wurden sie ausgewählt, um zu zeigen, dass die Weltkriege trotzdem bedeutende Auswirkung auf die *domestic wars* haben und die gesellschaftliche Atmosphäre einen militärischen Krieg begünstigt kann.

Findley zeigt in seinen Werken den starken Einfluß der Vergangenheit auf die heutige Generation. Obgleich Krieg als ein typisch männlicher Bereich betrachtet wird, offenbart Findley, dass er in seinen verschiedenen, oftmals versteckten Erscheinungsformen jeden und alle betrifft: Männer, Frauen und auch Kinder.