Konferenz-Ankündigungen:


“Under Construction”: Research Projects in the New Literatures in English / Poster Forum at the ASNEL Annual Conference 2007

“Arrivals and Departures – Stories of Motion”: 8th Summer School on the New Literatures in English, J.W. Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany, September 3-7, 2007

Konferenzberichte:


Lehrveranstaltungen im Wintersemester 2006/07

Abgeschlossene Dissertationen

Abgeschlossene Habilitationen

Forschungsergebnisse

Andrea Nickolaizig, „Kultur und Identität im zeitgenössischen Roman Neuseelands: Konstruktionen von Maoritanga in ausgewählten Werken von Witi Ihimaera, Keri Hulme und Alan Duff“, Magisterarbeit, Frankfurt/M, 2006

CALL FOR PAPERS
“LOCAL NATURES, GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITIES“

Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of the New Literatures of English (ASNEL) / Jahrestagung der Gesellschaft für die Neuen Englischsprachigen Literaturen (GNEL)
Friedrich-Schiller-University of Jena,
May 17-20, 2007

In many New Literatures in English nature has long been an issue of paramount importance: the environmental devastation brought about by colonial regimes has often continued or even intensified in postcolonial times, and global ecological hazards often have particularly disastrous consequences for the most vulnerable parts of the world’s population. At the same time, far-reaching social and cultural transformations have also led to changed perceptions and representations of nature in postcolonial cultures and literatures.

Not long ago postmodern and deconstructionist sages announced the end of nature: they envisioned post-human forms and ways of life “after nature”; or they speculated about the end of history as culminating in postmodernism as the “expurgation of nature”, that is the surpassing of nature by art and technology (Fredric Jameson). More recently, nature seems to have returned with a vengeance, however. Disasters such as the devastating tsunami that struck South Asia and East Africa and hurricane Katrina wreaking havoc in the Caribbean and the southern USA have not only led to tens of thousands deaths and destroyed whole areas of coastline. In addition, they have profoundly affected our outlook on nature, making us painfully aware of nature’s global forces and simultaneously challenging us to face the responsibilities arising in an increasingly globalized world.

It thus seems timely to place the topic of the environment at the centre of literary and cultural studies. The 2007 ASNEL conference aims at contributing to the global debate on nature and the environment by highlighting how local natures are culturally constructed and how insights into different forms or concepts of nature in literary texts and other (“old” or “new”) media can contribute to a greater sense of global responsibility. We therefore invite contributions examining the multifarious implications of the connection of “local natures and global responsibilities” in postcolonial cultures and the New Literatures in English. The following list of issues is meant as a first hint at the comprehensiveness of the conference’s overall theme:
• The new role of eco-criticism in the New Literatures in English; in its most abstract form approaching literature as a “living organism” or in its more concrete manifestations establishing “nature” as a new interpretative category
• Various forms of eco-literature in the postcolonial world; ranging from texts that present nature as their main topic and/or protagonist to texts with a “nature agenda” (eco-poetry, eco-films, etc); dystopias and post-human environments
• Nature as a cultural construct
• Gendered natures, gendered responsibilities
• The city vs. the country; urban vs. “natural” environments as culture-specific dichotomies
• Representations of global catastrophes, of human agency and responsibility, and of nature as an “Other”
• Global media, global tourism and local natures


You are most welcome to make additional suggestions for issues, approaches, genres and thematic sections for the conference.

We invite contributions to a teacher’s workshop that will consider classroom implications of the topic.

If you are currently working on a project that focuses on any aspect of the New literature in English, you will have the opportunity of presenting your ideas either as a paper in the “Under Construction”-section or in a poster forum. For details of these please refer to the conference website.

We will provide slots of 20 minutes for papers and 10 minutes for discussions. **The deadline for abstracts is 31 January 2007.**

Contact address:

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Ernst-Abbe-Platz 8
D-00743 Jena
EMAIL: l.volk@uni-jena.de

Conference website: [http://www.uni-jena.de/fsu/anglistik/gnel](http://www.uni-jena.de/fsu/anglistik/gnel)
"Under Construction": Research Projects in the New Literatures in English

ASNEL is an association that believes in sharing ideas and promoting discussion at early stages of development, often long before the project is published.

To promote this kind of exchange, two new formats were introduced at the 2006 Conference in Koblenz: a paper section called “Under Construction” and a poster-session. Both turned out to be successful and have now become an integral part of the ASNEL annual meetings.

These occasions are not the traditional graduate forums or “Nachwuchsseminare”, but are aimed at every level of academic activity, ranging from young colleagues working on their diploma papers to veteran ASNEL members struggling with their new projects. Both are in need of discussion and feedback, and those presenting as well as those watching and listening profit from the exchange.

Especially for projects in the early stages of development, creating and presenting a poster might help shape and focus a project. Above all, there is an opportunity of receiving a great deal of varied feedback from conference delegates. Those preferring a more traditional presentation can rely on a select attentive audience that is willing to share the experience they have.

If you are interested in participating in the “Under Construction” section or the Poster Session at the forthcoming ASNEL Annual Conference at Jena University, visit the conference website at http://www.uni-jena.de/fsu/anglistik/gnel or mail Dr. Susanne Reichl (susanne.reichl@univie.ac.at) for more information.
“Arrivals and Departures – Stories in Motion”
8th Summer School on the New Literatures in English
in Frankfurt, Germany, September 3-7, 2007

STUDENT SUBSCRIPTION TO BEGIN SHORTLY

The Summer School Committee is currently preparing online subscription for student participants of the summer school. Information material for prospective participants will go out to English Departments and other relevant institutions and contact people in January. We naturally hope that ASNEL members and Acolit readers teaching at universities will help us to attract student participants for the summer school. Details on the subscription procedure will be available at www.arrivals-departures.de very soon.

We are happy to announce that the following seminars and workshops have been confirmed and will be up for choice for student participants:

Seminars

Gordon Collier: “Gender and Political Activism in Caribbean-Canadian Demarcations of Identity: Dionne Brand”
Ulrike Erichsen: “Caryl Phillips: Reconstructions of History”
Tabish Khair: “Bollywood, Indian Films and Indian Fiction in English”
Markus Müller: “Trance Canada Awakening? Histories & Recoveries across the Nation’s Cultures”
Arun Mukherjee: “The Speaking Subaltern: An Introduction to Dalit literature”
Mala Pandurang: “Passage (Back) to India”
Susanne Reichl, Mark Stein & Frank Schulze-Engler: “Postcolonial Laughter: Forms and Functions of Humour in the New Literatures in English”
Amritjit Singh: “African American Migration Literature”
Birk Sproxton: “A Corridor Culture: The Automobile and Stories of Motion”
Silke Stroh: “Too Close to Home? ‘Celtic Fringes’ as Cultural Contact Zones in Travel Writing from the British Isles”
Gilbert Yeoh: “J. M. Coetzee: Novel Departures”
Uwe Zagratzki: “20th Century Scottish, Irish and Welsh fiction”
Creative Writing Workshops

**David Arnason:** “Beginnings and Endings: How to Arrive and Depart in Fiction and Poetry”

**Cathie Dunsford & Karin Meissenburg:** “Borderlands, Heartlands and Creative Journeys – Writing Workshop for Students in all Genres”

**Helon Habila:** “Entrance”

HELP WITH FUNDING STILL NEEDED

Right now our team is in the process of raising money for the summer school. We very much welcome suggestions and contributions from anyone who might be interested in supporting our project or can help us to make contacts that might be valuable. Feel free to contact us via e-mail <checkin@arrivals-departures.de> to discuss options of becoming involved or to find out more about what kind of support might be needed.

For further information on our project, the Summer School Committee, our programme and for a list of our academic and literary guests check our homepage at

www.arrivals-departures.de
International *Transcultura* Symposium:  
“Playing by the Rules of the Game”  
10 to 14 July 2006, Merzig, Germany

While the whole of Germany was still celebrating the outcome of the “finals of the hearts”, and, above all, enjoying the satisfaction of having successfully organized the Football World Championship, a number of indefatigable scholars were hard at work in a charming town in one of Germany’s smallest federal states. The University of Saarland, coordinator of *Transcultura* Studies (Europe) invited academics from four continents to a conference organized under the motto: “Playing by the Rules of the Game”. From 10 to 14 July 2006, scholars from a variety of academic fields, such as Anglophone studies, anthropology, Romance studies, law, linguistics, media studies, and philosophy, discussed whether ‘playing by the rules’ is a universal cultural concept, and whether the principle of ‘rules’ and their validity is homogeneously understood and implemented.

The conference opening took place at Museum Schloss Fellenberg in Merzig, where Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn, professor for Transcultural Anglophone Studies at the University of Saarland, welcomed the attendants and guests. The modern town hall of the city of Merzig, located in an inviting and lively centre, served as the venue of the conference and provided not only excellent space for engaged discussions, but also an ideal surrounding for a refreshing stroll through the streets between the paper presentations.

One of the main points of interest at the conference was the ideological and linguistic involvement of different kinds of sport with their cultural context. *Transcultura* representative Maximilian Herberger amplified the consideration of the rules of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews as rules of law, while Roland Marti, professor for Slavonic studies, rejected the general notion that rugby is ‘a sport where anything goes’. Proceeding from a fascinating account of the founding myths of rugby, the presentation emphasized that in rugby, rules are not simply rules. Rules are laws; and the rugby myth and its concept of playing are understood as a kind of philosophy. This somewhat serious approach to the game does not, as one might expect, result in a rigid and never changing order. In fact, rugby laws, which have experienced a number of changes during the past two centuries, reflect both the transformations in the world outside rugby and the developments within the game itself.

The interdependence of self-conception and game rules was further examined by Cornelia Gerhardt from the chair of linguistics; her paper highlighted the verbal practices British football fans employ when they are watching a game on TV and attempt to construct themselves as experts. While presenting transcriptions of recorded conversations of football fans, Cornelia Gerhardt demonstrated how their talk interlaced with the remarks of both the commentator and the pundit who explain the match on TV, and how their discourse provides a platform on which the fans can display their knowledge and can construct themselves as part of the foot-
ball community. Paul Morris from the chair for American studies, who, like Roland Marti, added the spice of personal experience to his discussion, pursued the question whether and how Canadian Society and Canada’s national sport, Ice Hockey, have mutually influenced each other. His focus lay on Canadian identity and how it evolved in accordance with hockey from ‘the mythic purity of their small-town, pre-capitalist origins’ to the urban, global phenomena they represent today. Hockey, like the country and its national identity, has passed through a series of parallel transformations. And although both country and sport have changed frequently, hockey continues to express fundamental features within the national identity.

Since one of the goals of the European project of Transcultura is to collocate scholarly materials for pedagogic use, it seemed only consequent to present transcultural ideas to school classes in the course of the symposium. On Wednesday morning, Saarland's state secretary Susanne Reichrath introduced the German education system and entered a transcultural dialogue with grammar school pupils. Her talk was followed by a paper of Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn, who used the movie Bend It Like Beckham to emphasize the problems of young migrants in Europe. More than one hundred pupils from Germany, France, Luxemburg and China attended the workshop and discussed the difficulties of assimilation and (trans)cultural identities with the Transcultura people.

The social highlight of the symposium was the boat trip on Wednesday afternoon, which took the participants on the river Saar to the famous Saarschleife, one of the Saarland’s most beautiful natural settings. The boat trip not only provided the Chinese philosopher Zhao Tingyang with the chance to demonstrate his remarkable talent for the art of paper folding: he also turned out to be a gifted cartoonist. His works of art were later put on the walls of the town hall where they embellished the venue and served as a humorous background for all the discussions.

The concluding presentations linked up with the question of fairness and ethical principles examined earlier on, by participants like Klaus Vieweg, Balveer Arora, and Carsten Momsen, who illuminated the fairness principle in sports and politics. The penultimate speaker Klaus Steinbach, who is the former president of the German Olympic Committee and a former world swimming champion himself, and the final speaker Peter Müller, Minister President of the federal state Saarland, both complemented our discussion with examples and insights from their own professional experience. Their papers opened up broader perspectives not only on fairness, but on the predicament and the moral dilemma one can get in when trying to balance the ethical values of society with the practical demands of everyday life.

The Transcultura conference succeeded in raising many more questions than it could answer, a result which was, I dare say, its intention from the start. The interested and thought-provoking inquiries of the response panels, the lively discussions during the breaks, the familial atmosphere and, not to forget, the seemingly effortless concern of the conference team who had organized simultaneous translations in the conference's three languages German, English and French, all contributed to a memorably warm and intellectually stimulating experience.

Katrin Berndt (Saarbrücken)
LEHRVERANSTALTUNGEN IM WINTERSEMESTER 2006/07


Deutschland

AACHEN
Davis                     Black and South Asian British Theatre
---          Recent Canadian Drama
---          Cultural Studies: Aspects of Postcolonial Studies
---          Australia
---          Filming New Zealand
Davis/Jansen               Southern African Women’s Writing
Griffig                   Geographical Varieties of English

AUGSBURG
Böhm              Landeskunde USA & Kanada

BAMBERG
Müller             Postcolonial Literature: An Introduction

BAYREUTH
Dannenberg         Cultural Identity in Anglophone Asian Fiction and Media in Britain and Canada
Feldbrügge          After Apartheid: Literature and Culture in Contemporary South Africa
Harprecht           A Stranger in a Stranger Land: Multi-Ethnic Literature in Great Britain

BERLIN, FU
Leitner            Sociolinguistics and Varieties of English
Leitner/Noor       Sociolinguistics in South-East Asia: Social, Ethnic and Gender Variation
Schwarz            Colonial and Postcolonial Literatures II: ’Common Skies, Divided Horizons’. Writing Postcolonial Spaces

BERLIN, HU
Luig               White Teeth, Dark Skin?
Matzke             So, what’s new? Anglophone afrikanische Literatur im 21. Jahrhundert
Peter.             English in Africa
N.N.               Postcolonial Britain
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Heiler  Postcolonial Rewritings

KIEL
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Andrea Nickolaizig, „Kultur und Identität im zeitgenössischen Roman Neuseelands: Konstruktionen von Maoritanga in ausgewählten Werken von Witi Ihimaera, Keri Hulme und Alan Duff“, Magisterarbeit, Frankfurt/M, 2006 (Prof. Frank Schulze-Engler)


Keri Hulme: The Bone People – Keri Hulme stellt in The Bone People sowohl die fortschreitende Hybridisierung der neuseeländischen Gesellschaft als auch die Bedeutung von Maoritanga für die Maoris dar. Ihre Figuren sind bereits zu Beginn des Romans vom Einfluss beider Kulturen geprägt und tragen sowohl Pakeha- als auch Maori-Eigenschaften in sich. Die Autorin zeigt in ihrem Roman, dass beide Kulturen zu Neuseeland gehören und propagiert ein gleichberechtigtes, respektvolles Zusammenleben.
Alan Duff: *Once were Warriors* – Alan Duff thematisiert in seinem Roman die zunehmende kulturelle Entfremdung der Maoris in urbaner Umgebung und weist mit seiner realistischen Darstellung eines vorstädtischen Maori-Ghettos als erster indigener Autor auf die problematische Situation der Maoris im zeitgenössischen Neuseeland hin. Duff macht die Maoris selbst für ihre Perspektivlosigkeit verantwortlich und sieht gänzlich von Schuldzuweisungen an die Pakeha ab. Stattdessen konzentriert er sich auf die selbstkritische Untersuchung der archaischen Traditionen seiner Ethnie und zeigt wie Eigeninitiative, Engagement und eine gewisse Anpassungsfähigkeit neue Möglichkeiten eröffnet, in der Pakeha-Welt auch zukünftig bestehen zu können.

Durch ihre Literatur haben es Ihimaera, Hulme und Duff geschafft, den Maoris eine Stimme zu geben und eine gewisse Aufmerksamkeit auf die Ethnie der Maoris zu lenken. Allen drei Werken ist die Ansicht gemein, dass Maori-Kultur Veränderungen erfahren muss, um in der Zukunft weiterhin Bestand zu haben.

Claudia Perner, “Textual Freedoms – Political Risks: Cross-racial Narration in the Contemporary Novel”, Magisterarbeit, Frankfurt am Main 2006 (Prof. Frank Schulze-Engler)

Despite the fact that the “death of the author” was declared decades ago and the pursuit of cultural authenticity has been condemned by large numbers of literary schoolars, labels that classify works of literature according to the cultural or racial background of their creators enjoy ongoing popularity. This research paper deals with literary works that actively resist such categorizations: Four contemporary novels are explored in respect to the “cross-racial” quality of their narration, the “racial gap” between the authors and the narrative instances they create.

The introductory theory chapter outlines the problematic quality of the notion of “race”, a concept that has long been proven to be a biological fiction yet nevertheless survives as a force shaping social realities. Furthermore the question of “who is allowed to speak for whom” is introduced as a crucial issue that recurs in academic and more generally public responses to cross-racial and cross-cultural works of literature.

The analysis of the four novels chosen for this thesis, V. S. Naipaul’s *Guerrillas* (1975), Nadine Gordimer’s *My Son’s Story* (1990), Caryl Phillips’ *The Nature of Blood* (1997) and Richard Powers’ *The Time of Our Singing* (2003), situates each novel in its specific historical, political and social context and shows how questions of racial identity and membership are negotiated within the novels. Each novel is also examined in regard to the critical – in certain cases almost violent – responses it has provoked, many of which relate to issues that are central to this thesis.

The analysis of the four novels suggests that acts of narrative race-crossing can function as self-reflexive and self-conscious attempts of exploring “in between” states (Gordimer, Powers), of creating connections between different experiences of
oppression and suffering (Phillips) or of closely – but also detachedly – observing human beings struggling in a complex modern world (Naipaul). All four authors have resisted the simplistic task of speaking for or on behalf of another person or group of people but instead employ cross-racial narration as an intimate mode of speaking about their protagonists without, however, failing to acknowledge their own outsider status.

This thesis is an attempt to show in how far the novels under consideration are influenced by and may also benefit from the tensions that exist between the characters and contexts they depict and the racial backgrounds of their authors. Narrative fragmentation and ambivalence of perspective are major features of the narrative technique in all four novels and create ‘narrative halls of mirrors’ in which the authors of the respective novels emerge as presences that do not produce or inscribe meaning but nevertheless may enrich our reading and understanding of the literary texts.

The author of this thesis concludes that voluntary acts of literary “transgression” like the cross-racial novels under consideration venture out to explore the world beyond the ‘color-line’ (W.E.B. DuBois) and thereby create connections and overlaps that potentially destabilize the imaginary demarcation lines that divide the “races”. In their awareness of distinctions of race and their conscious choice to scrutinize these distinctions, cross-racial novels can propose a more flexible concept of racial and literary ownership and work towards a more fluid interchange of narrative traditions. Thus they advocate the step ‘across the line’ as a conscious part of the literary ‘product’ and as a source of insight and artistic fertility.