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**Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of the New
Literatures in English (ASNEL) / Jahrestagung der Gesellschaft für die
Neuen Englischsprachigen Literaturen (GNEL)**

CALL FOR PAPERS

“TRANSLATION OF CULTURES”

Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, May 4-7, 2005

Perhaps more than in any other period in modern history our globalised present is characterised by a permanent interaction of, and exposure to, different peoples, nations, regions, ways of life, traditions, religions, languages, and cultures. Cross-boundary communication today comes in various shapes: as mutual exchange, open dialogue, enforced process, misunderstanding, or violent conflict. In this situation "translation" becomes an inevitable requirement in order to ease the flow of disinterested and unbiased communication. In the context of this conference translation may be approached from different angles. Naturally, it refers to the rendering of texts from one language into another and the shift between languages under pre-colonial (retelling/transcreation), colonial (domesticating), and post-colonial (multilingual trafficking) conditions. It is concerned with the (in-)adequacy of the Western translation concept of equivalence, the problem of the (un-)translatability of cultures, and new postcolonial, approaches (representation through translation). In addition, translation is used as a wider term covering the interaction of cultures, the transfer of cultural experience, the concern with cultural borders and identities, the articulation of liminal experience, and intercultural understanding.

Papers will deal with the following topics:

- Postcolonial multilingualism/multiculturalism and translation
- Travel and translation in the contact/conflict zone
- Migration and the translation diaspora
- Translation as cultural trade
- Politics of cultural representation
- Translatability and untranslatability of cultures

Guest speakers will include Monica Bottez (Romania), Russell McDougall (Australia), Laura Moss (Canada), Thengani H.Ngwenya (South Africa), Mala Pandurang (India), Stephen Scobie (Canada), and David Staines (Canada). We have already received a few fascinating proposals for papers covering a wide range of topics from First Nations origin stories, Afrikaner culture, Kenyan writers, South African biographies, Nigerian writing, white accounts on Tasmania's aboriginals, to "Trans? Lay it on", to mention just a few. Also on offer will be a panel discussion

on "Intra- and Interdisciplinary Exchange in Postcolonial Studies" (organisers: Virginia Richter, Silke Stroh) and a teachers' workshop (organiser: Albert Reiner Glaap).

Further proposals are welcome and should reach us no later than Jan. 15, 2004.

For registration please visit our website www.anglistik.uni-kiel.de/asnel-conf2005.html.

Registration and conference fees should reach us no later than **March 1, 2005**. A late fee will be required after that date.

GNEL/ASNEL Members	€ 70 (late fee 90)
Non-Members	€ 80 (late fee 100)
students (GNEL/ASNEL Members)	€ 20 (late fee 40)
students (non-members)	€ 30 (late fee 50)

Conference Bank Account:

ASNEL 2005 Conference (Konrad Gross), Commerzbank Kiel (BLZ 210 400 10),
Account No. 780644100

Contact address:

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I IS FOR IDENTITY – LOOKING BEYOND THE MIRROR ASS REVISITED

**Postcolonial Spring School, Freie Universität Berlin,
4-8 April, 2005**

The Postcolonial Spring School PSS 2005 continues the successful tradition of the Autumn Summer Schools held biannually since 1992 under the auspices of the German ASNEL (Association for the Study of the New Literatures in English) which has covered this field since 1989. The 2005 conference is being organized by students of the Freie Universität Berlin to open a platform for exchange on post-colonial thinking. The PSS 2005, like the Autumn Summer Schools before, is not a commercial event; the organizing team as well as the participating scholars and writers make their contributions to PSS without pay.

Do visit our website in order to get a more detailed idea of what the PSS is all about:

www.pss2005.com

We would like to ask you to spread the word of PSS among your colleagues and – most importantly – among your students.

We are currently in the process of recruiting participants from all across Europe and hope to receive applications from many different places.

Please note that students can receive European Credit Points / German Pro- & Hauptseminarscheine through their participation at PSS. The Free University of Berlin considers the “workload” at PSS 2005 to be equivalent to that of a regular seminar lasting a whole semester. You might also like to consider integrating a trip with your students to PSS into your own seminar agenda.

Should you have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. You can either write to **info@pss2005.com** or look for the respective email-addresses on our website.

Juliane Schenk
on behalf of the PSS organizing team at the FU Berlin

Programme

Sunday, 3rd April	09.00-09.45		10:00-10:45		11:00-11:45
Monday, 4th April	Reception / Introduction	Coffee Break	Micheline Lee (Australia) Westernization, Identity and Immigration	Coffee Break	Russ West-Pavlov (Berlin) East Asian Immigration Culture in Australia
Tuesday, 5th April	Cecile Sandten (Bremen) How to talk "Postcolonial": A Critical Review of some of the Terms in the Field of Postcolonial Theory and Other Fields of Study	Coffee Break	Gabriele Pizarz- Ramirez (Leipzig) Chicano/a Art (Muralism and other) and Issues of Nationalism / Transculturalism	Coffee Break	Mita Banerjee (Mainz) The Transnational Meets the Postcolonial: Asian Australian Spaces in Hsu- Ming Teo's 'Love and Vertigo'
Wednesday, 6th April	Monika Reif-Hülser (Konstanz) Concepts of Identity in Postcolonial Writing: Race, Gender, Class and its Reflections in Postcolonial Theory	Coffee Break	Brigitte Glaser (Braunschweig) History, Politics and (Female) Identity in Anglophone Arabic Literature	Coffee Break	Christiane Schlote (Berlin) Post-Orientalism? Exploring Anglophone Arab Diaspora Literature and Culture
Thursday, 7th April	Mark Stein (Potsdam) I is for Identity and E is for Essentialism - Authorization and Authentication in Postcolonial Criticism	Coffee Break	Carmen Birkle (Mainz) Cultural Brokerage in Caribbean Canadian Literature	Coffee Break	Kerstin Knopf (Greifswald) Atanarjuat: Fast Running and Electronic Storytelling in the Arctic
Friday, 8th April	Monika Fludernik (Freiburg) The Postcolonial Prison - Identity and Alterity Revisited	Coffee Break	Frank Schulze-Engler (Frankfurt) The Political Novel in Africa	Coffee Break	Jana Gohrisch Negotiating Whiteness in South Africa - The 2003 Nobel Prize Laureate J.M. Coetzee

	13:00-13:45		14:00-17:00	Night Event
Arrivals and Registration				
Lunch Break	Sue Kossew (Australia) Contemporary Australian Women Writers	Coffee Break	Seminars	<u>Australia Day</u> Opening Exhibition Micheline Lee Readings: Stephen Gray, Michael Sharkey/ G. Collier
Lunch Break	Robert Irvine (UK) Scottish Writing and the Idea of Culture	Coffee Break	Seminars	<u>New Zealand Night</u> Readings: Sarah Quigley, Beryl Fletcher Performance: Dunsford/Meissenburg
Lunch Break	Stephen Gray (Australia) Philosophical Detective Novel	Coffee Break	Seminars	<u>Midweek Party</u> Readings: Sudeep Sen, Joan Barbara Simon Performance: brombeer fisch
Lunch Break	Jo-Ann Episkeneu (Canada) Residential Schools, Child Welfare and Other Nasty Colonial Policies and the Literature that Resists Them	Coffee Break	Seminars	<u>Canada Day</u> Readings: Ian Ross, Birk Sproxton Canadian Movie Night
Lunch Break	Thengani H Ngwenya (South Africa) South African Autobiography	Coffee Break	Seminars	<u>Finale</u> Presentation of Results Farewell Party

Postcolonial Aesthetics

Im Rahmen des Anglistentags 2006 an der Universität Halle findet eine Sektion zum Thema 'Postcolonial Aesthetics' statt. Ein CFP wird demnächst unter folgendem Link abrufbar sein:

uni-potsdam.de/thaluk/pocoaesthetics.html

Weitere Informationen sind erhältlich bei:

PD Dr. Helge Nowak <helge.nowak@sprachlit.uni-regensburg.de>

Dr. Saskia Schabio <saskia.schabio@po.uni-stuttgart.de>

Prof. Dr. Mark Stein <m.stein@rz.uni-potsdam.de>

**The Gems of Hyderabad –
Impressions from a Conference in South India
The 13th International Triennial ACLALS 2004
August 4-9, 2004
“Nation and Imagination – The Changing Commonwealth”**

Let it be said from the very beginning that it was indeed remarkable what kind of coverage the conference got in the local press, from the *Deccan Chronicle* to the *Hyderabad Times*.

However, it was also noteworthy that – Indian English or no Indian English – the conference was referred to as a “carnival”. Moreover, it was interesting that, under the headline of “Of post-colonial angst and changing mindsets”, the *Deccan Chronicle* of August 10, in its Hyderabad section, opened its report in the following way:

It is not every day that we see people sitting casually on the footsteps of the plush Taj Residency, sipping tea and skimming through books written by post-colonial writers.

But let us move methodically, from Southern India to Hyderabad, to Banjara Hills and to the conference proceedings and various receptions.

**Ψ In front of the Taj Krishna the elbow stump of a beggar
interferes with the photo being taken.**

Suswagatam, as the saying is in Sanskrit, it was indeed a hearty welcome to the South of India, not least with regard to cooking or, as the trendy way of expression would have it nowadays, the local cuisine. It begins with paratha, a kind of pancake bread, filled with aloo, that is spiced potatoes, or paneer, which is cottage cheese. Instead of paratha you can have dosa, a crisp rice and lentil pancake, equally filled, and mostly figuring as masala dosa. And then you have idli, a steamed rice and lentil cake, the form of a reversed bowl and the size of your palm, usually served with coconut and tomato chutney and mulagapodi. If you add beans poriyal, which consists of French beans and coconut, mustard seeds and curry leaves, you have most of the main dishes. But a Southern meal also contains very sweet desserts, such as rasmalai and gulab jamun, variations of small dumplings made with cottage cheese, sometimes darkly fried, soaked in syrup or served on cardamom flavoured reduced milk. Of course, people will insist that the Northern dishes, non-vegetarian ones included like biryani, nahari and haleem are also widely served. Remains to be put on record that the posh restaurants nowadays tend to call themselves “multi-cuisine.”

So it is not surprising to learn that the Indian Tourist Board has started a campaign, which will function under the label of Incredible India, which – needless to say – comprises much more than just well-spiced vegetarian food.

In a political context it is good to read that the central government considers repealing the POTA Bill of March 26, 2002, which represents the Indian equivalent of the American Patriot Act, namely the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Furthermore one has to remember the unrest in Manipur in the far north and the existence of the (naxalite) People's War in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, the state where of Hyderabad is the capital.

Ψ **Naked women protest the rape and murder of an insurgent by the Assam Rifles in Manipur.**

With regard to the conference topic of how to imagine the nation a commentary in *The Hindu* of August 11, page 13, was especially telling although it explicitly referred to the situation in Sri Lanka:

Even the (communist) left sees no way for a separate state of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka, since it would bring about the “balkanisation of India.” Any dilution of territorial integrity only opens up a Pandora’s box of insoluble problems.

Hyderabad, then, goes back to the nineties of the sixteenth century and represents today the fifth largest city in India with a population of over four million inhabitants, who proudly emphasize panchanami Sangam, the historical meeting of five languages and cultures, Telugu, Marathi, Kannada, Tamil and Urdu. Today it is mainly Telugu (with a script of its own), English, Hindi and Deccani, which intriguingly is pronounced something like [dakni] and seems to be an Urdu dialect since it employs the Arabic script.

Therefore it is relatively easy for a foreigner to underestimate the persistence of the Nizams’ heritage, which belatedly is brought to the visitor’s attention by the high number of black chadors intermingling with the multitude of colourful sarees, and, surprisingly the dominance of coffee over tea. Consequently hundreds of scooters huddled together in front of the mosque on Jubilee Hills on Friday, the owners of which congregating for prayers and listening to the preacher whose droning voice could be heard clearly in the neighbouring streets.

On the other hand, many things are of fairly recent origin, such as the Hussain Sagar, the artificial lake which joins the twin cities of Secunderabad and Hyderabad, with its huge statue of the Buddha in the middle of it. The impressive historical monuments of the Golconda Fort, the Qutub Shahi Tombs and the Charminar have to be seen in comparison to the relatively recent additions of Birla Mandir, the shrine to Lord Venkateshwara, Mecca Masjid and the Salar Jung Museum, where incidentally they quite constructively discriminate against ‘Non-Indians’ in that they send you round the entire building to acquire your ticket, but – more important – make you pay an admission fee of 150 Rs instead of a mere 10 for the indigenous population. Noteworthy also innovations such as Indira Park, a fine recreational area next to the lake in existence since 1975, where they charge an entrance fee of 5 Rs and allow you in only for two hours as if it was an indoor swimming pool.

Ψ The sculptures in Indira Park look on in their stony animal aloofness.

What is typical for the area, the so-called Bidri Ware, stems from a place called Bider, roughly 160 km north of Hyderabad, and consists of a black eighty percent zinc alloy which is nicely embellished with white ornaments. It is famous for its special little boxes for pills or precious stones, which are known as dibbas, a tradition which was started in the nineteenth century, concentrating then, it is true, more on spittoons and hookahs (or hubble-bubbles). Today Hyderabad, as Tollywood in the Ramoji Film City seeks to vie with Bollywood in the booming Indian film industry and, more important still, with its newly established High Tech centre Cyberabad tries to catch up with Bangalor and its Indian Silicon valley image.

Ψ Rich and walking you deprive me of my livelihood thinks the driver of the beckoning auto rickshaw.

Remarkable the sheer multitude of competing three-wheelers, the midget yellow cabs of Hyderabad, the constant honking and hooting, the almost killing amount of exhaust fumes, the non-existence of pavements in many streets and the occasional open manhole in the middle of the road, the innumerable scooters as means of transport where the bikers are officially required to be wearing helmets but actually rarely do. Typical also the immediate vicinity of a ramshackle building or a ruin and a glaringly new shopping mall with impressive names like the Astral Heights, which more often than not have their own uniformed guards, just like the various banks are guarded by police or military personnel.

The conference was opened by the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Sri S.S. Barnala, a fact which was remarkable in itself, in view of his activist background, but was given additional ceremonious appeal because of his stately appearance, the presence of soldiers in battle fatigue and sten gun at the ready for his protection (incidentally many first-class hotel venues of receptions later in the programme insisted on security checks reminiscent of airport procedure), the kindling of a symbolic flame and the honours bestowed upon C. D. Narasimhaiah in the form of a bronze statue of the goddess Saraswati. In his response, C.D.N. could not forbear taking it out again on V.S. Naipaul for forgetting his roots and disowning his parents. Noteworthy also that when the governor got stuck in his speech, he calmly waited for one of his attendants to rearrange the paper and find the proper page for him. Almost of equal importance, the sound system was significantly foregrounded when the national anthem was supposed to be heard and the system demurely went on strike, so that the audience had to sing it all by themselves. With regard to new-fangled technology, in the opinion of all the three hundred participants, this was the most cell phone infested conference they had ever attended. Moreover, it is no use repeating the usual complaint that the few Africans who participated were almost all US based. On the other hand, it should be pointed out that a considerable number actually came from Brazil, thus – like a Maltese contribution on Egyptian writing – Anglophone liminality was minimally transgressed.

Ψ **The conference note-pad held together by a strong spiral wire gets curiously hooked by a colourful dupatta.**

Structurally, the conference consisted of plenary keynotes, six parallel paper reading sessions, sometimes three parallel panel discussions, and receptions (by Penguin India, the British Council, Orient Longman and a conference dinner sponsored by the government of Andhra Pradesh). It was perhaps not the best of solutions that some writers were given prominence during these receptions, like Keki Daruwalla, Suniti Namjoshi, Vikram Seth, Jean Arasanayagam, Shashi Deshpande, Girish Karnad, Jayanta Mahapatra, K. Satchidanandan; others gave a talk, like Vikram Seth, Drew Hayden Taylor, Austin Clarke; while others yet again, such as Diana Bridges, Feroza Jussawalla, Jan Kemp, the Hyderabad Hoshang Merchant, Satendra Nandan, Makarand Paranjape were crammed together in one single late afternoon, or were given no proper slot at all, like Syd Harrex. Vikram Seth purported to be in conversation with Meenakshi Mukherjee; however, the poor man got caught in a cross fire between the chair Shirley Chew and the interviewer Ms Mukherjee; a more reticent chair would have helped a lot in that instance, since the questions aiming at his fluidity and his casualness were not merely reverential, but profoundly sounding. They successfully teased out his ‘multi-rootedness’, his concentration on the universality of character and the plan of a new biography project involving his Jewish-German great aunt, who once lived in Berlin. Hayden carried all before him when he demonstrated humour as defensive alter—native strategy in extracts from his comedies. Liselotte Glage helped in launching Deshpande’s new novel *Moving On* (Viking/ Penguin India). Austin Clarke talked about the narrative voice in his *The Polished Hoe*, which won Canada’s Giller prize in 2002, and is attested Joycean overtones not only because the present-day plot unravels in twenty-four hours, but because the heroine’s, Mary Mathilda, lifespan on a plantation in Bimshire/Barbados in the first half of the 20th century delves deeply into slavery.

David Dabydeen was whisked in briefly by the British Council to be given the Raja Rao Award for his outstanding contribution towards the literature of the South Asian Diaspora. As before at the Kashi Art Cafe in Fort Kochi, Kerala, and at a panel discussion in Chennai – with Susheila Nasta (who launched her collection of writers’ interviews published with Routledge, *Writing Across Worlds*), the editor of *The Hindu*, and Mini Krishnan (who has been in publishing Indian novels in translation for decades and will be in charge of the British Council’s new www.womenswriting.com) he launched his new novel, *Our Lady of Demerara* (Chichester: Dido Press, 2004) in Hyderabad, too. In this book, he seeks to link Ireland and Guyana in a spiritual quest, engages with Hindu thought, explores sexuality, and uses a language inspired by religious fervour. He seems to be of the opinion that Guyana might in some ways represent a model for India especially because of its transient nature.

The renowned playwright, filmmaker, and Jnanpith laureate Girish Karnad joined in the launching of Sharan Kumar Limbale’s *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature* (Orient Longman) translated by Alok Mukherjee from the Marathi. Alas,

for what ever reason Limbale was not present. And slyly Karnad took him to task for comparing Adivasis to forest animals (p. 21). Equally unobtrusively, he also critiqued the Brahmin translator Mukherjee from Toronto for his occasional inadvertent detachment when referring to the Dalit (which he aptly translated as ‘the trampled upon’) whose literary efforts, according to Limbale in the wake of Ambedkarism, he summed up as the intention to “awake consciousness of self-respect.” Karnad’s fame results from his plays in Kannada way back as early as 1961 with the success of *Tughlaq*. At the conference, he briefly read from *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* (OUP, 2004), which was commissioned by the BBC to commemorate India’s 50th year of Independence. The play concentrates on the greatest son of Karnataka and the fact that he kept a record of his dreams, interpreting thirty-seven of them. It is also a history play which explores the early stages of British political interference in the affairs of India. What a shame that Karnad was not given a greater platform and that playwright Mahesh Dattani was not present, as had been announced earlier. It was not really a substitute when yours truly slunk off the conference premises to see Mallika Sarabhai’s emancipatory play *Colours of the Heart*. The local paper called it a “fusion dance drama”, since iconoclast and rebel author, feminist Sarabhai formed a troupe where she danced with an African American, a Russian and two Indian young women, and joined forces with Pakistani artist Samia Malik who sang ballads tracing the history of the female sex from subjugation to freedom. What made the event special, however, was not the dated ideology nor the use of traditional dance forms mixed with modern ones, but the sociology of the audience. After all, this was the city’s wealthy elite, who perhaps might care about domestic violence, but in all probability dismissed the reality of women labourers carrying stones on their heads in the course of road works in a shopping area called Greenland.

Ψ **On telly the hangman calmly demonstrates the make-up
of the noose with which to dispatch the murderous rapist.**

Harish Trivedi praised Homi Bhabha for his “sutra like formulations.” Bhabha, then, mainly based his talk on an interpretation of W.E.B. Du Bois’s second novel *Dark Princess* (1928). What attracted him there was the hyphenation of politics and the imagination, of Jim Crow in the South and a beautiful sunset in Montego Bay, put more crudely the intertwining of propaganda and romance. Because of Du Bois’s personal contacts, such as Lala Lajpat Rai, “The Lion of Punjab”, Bhabha saw a tendency in the writer to equate India with desire and beauty. Thus the analysis eventually culminated in a reverential bow towards the spiritus loci of India. He praised Du Bois for his attempt at the amalgamation of the material and the spiritual, the modern and the indigenous, the national and the international, though alluding to problems with the colour line within the colour line with regard to the Japanese in this historical period.

Ψ **Young men holding hands leisurely
amble through the rooms of the Salar Jung Museum**

It was left to Aijaz Ahmad to address the topic of nationalism directly in all its different shades. Unfortunately he devoted too much time to the all too familiar historical side of the phenomenon, before he dealt with the much more fascinating multi-facetness of India in this respect and the future project of radical equality in an Indian nationhood without caste, and a fully modernised society speaking in a dozen languages.¹

Gayatri Spivak, in turn, clearly enjoyed the celebratory rhetoric of Stephen Slemon's introduction and in her presentation chose to emphasise the importance of the comparative approach in literary studies to contribute to the sociology of knowledge and, by means of literature, seek to feed the imagination. At the same time she put equal emphasis on the knowledge of several languages for every serious scholar, privileging in her own case the orality of "adivasi" tribal groups she claimed constantly to work with. Responding to Slemon's eulogistic *praeteritio* "I do not praise her", Spivak repeated once too often her avowal that she was not romanticising them, referring to the tribal women's activities who demonstrate the absolute absence of any split between the private and the public.

Helen Tiffin used her reading of Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2002) to illustrate her thesis of a problematised species boundary; hinting at the historical consequences which the blurred borderlines between human – primitive – animal have sometimes occasioned, she left the direct link with the topic of 'nation and imagination' somewhat unspecific – despite distinct echoes of Coetzee.

It turned out to be more than unfortunate that the important panel on the Future of the Nation was left until the very end of the conference. The Bengali psychologist Ashis Nandy emphasised the existence of positive examples of multi-religious communities in India completely devoid of any instances of contestation or strife. He did not feel it necessary though to fall back more on his experience as a well-known activist. This applied even more to the Sri Lankan political scientist Jayadeva Uyangoda, who from his perspective advanced the notion of the state being a voluntary organisation, which in turn privileges the nation as a relatively indistinctive coalition of communalities. It was left to the feminist scholar and activist Susi Tharu to set some highlights. For her the nation logically is a finished product and thus lacks a promise for the future. Due to the effects of globalisation, she sees the present Indian Nation increasingly in the hands of an English speaking elite, with the many dispossessed being left out, but whose rise at the same time is perceived by this same elite as a constant threat. It was somehow an echo of this spirit when Professor Ilaiah angrily accused conference participants and organisers alike of elitist exclusivism with the reprimand of not having included Dalits in the proceedings.

As far as paper sessions are concerned, naturally the main interest centred on things Indian. There it was most fascinating to witness Radhika Mohanram's reading of *Kim*'s whiteness and follow Vanamala Viswanatha's tracing of Kambar's

¹ However not even Ahmed referred to the auspices of the compromise between PM Manmohan Singh and the communist heavyweight Somnath Chatterjee. Cf. Jonathan Power, "Third Way in India," *Prospect* (July, 2004), 56-59.

Singarevva from various adaptations from Kannada novel to English novel and play and finally to film.

With regard to panel sessions the one on the ‘End of Postcolonialism’ (Victor Ramraj, Vijay Mishra) would have been a disappointing dead end, if it had not been for the down-to-earth pragmatism of Makarand Paranjape’s scenario for Trans-cultural Indian Studies.

Ψ **On the bank of the river of opulence
you may observe, beneath the footprints,
the stains of blood.**²

Therefore one of the more appropriate comments on the conference theme comes from the realm of poetry after all, when Keki N. Daruwalla maintains: “Ask the chronicles themselves:/ if there had been no migrations / would there have been enough / history to munch on?”³

Oh, yes, in case you were wondering, the city of Hyderabad is synonymous with pearls. If you want to check on yours truly, go and click on www.fullhyderabad.com.

Peter O. Stummer (Munich)

² B.S. Hate, ‘The Stains of Blood’, translated by Vilas Sarang, *No Entry for the New Sun*, translations from *Modern Marathi Dalit Poetry*, ed. by Arjun Dangle (Hyderabad: Disha Books, 1992).

³ ‘Migrations’, *The Map-Maker*, (Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 2002), p. 48.

Conference Report

“New Hybridities: Societies and Cultures in Transition” International Conference of the DFG Graduiertenkolleg Postcolonial Studies, Munich, July 22-24, 2004

It was indeed an interesting intellectual exercise to participate in a conference on “hybridity” – a multifaceted term in contemporary cultural and postcolonial studies. As anticipated, it turned out to be an illuminating experience to join the academic luminaries from distant parts of the globe.

The three-day international conference of the DFG Graduiertenkolleg Postcolonial Studies on “New Hybridities: Societies and Cultures in Transition,” was held under the auspices of Institut für Völkerkunde und Afrikanistik, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich. It took place at Kloster Seeon, situated in one of the most scenic valleys in Munich next to the Austrian border. From all over the world, twenty-six scholars and academicians from diverse fields presented their papers on the conference theme. The aim was to address hybridity as a disputed term to negotiate the emergence of this concept in various academic disciplines. The following questions were dealt with: What are the potentials and pitfalls of the concept of hybridity? How have the evolving discourses of hybridity that initially emerged out of decolonisation been transformed by current conditions of globalization? What are the meanings of hybridity in different social, cultural, political, economic, historical, literary and linguistic contexts? What tensions have emerged between discourses of hybridity in the different academic disciplines, especially in contemporary postcolonial studies?

On the first day of the conference, the organizer, Prof. Frank Heidemann gave the opening address. Shalini Puri, from the University of Pittsburgh, USA, gave her keynote lecture on “Disjunctive Hybridities: ‘The Caribbean’, Area Studies, and Globality,” highlighting hybrid dimensions in the Caribbean context in the wake of globalization. Soon after the discussion, the first panel “Concepts of Hybridity” dealt with the idea of hybridity in Latin American art and literature, and hybridity as in-betweenness in the transnational contexts. Prof. Ellen Spielmann (Leipzig) illustrated her point about hybridity in the ‘Latin American Plot’, using selected paintings by Frida Kahlo. The second panel, “Linguahybridities” was held by Eric A. Anchimbe (Munich) who spoke on hybrid identities in postcolonial Africa, and Amina Yaqin (London) who talked about the hybridity of cultural nationalism in Pakistan. In the third panel, “Visualizing Hybridity – Art and Montage”, Wilma Kiener (Munich) presented a paper on “Travelling Images – Towards an Ethnographic Cinema of Montage,” exploring the cinematic element of montage for documentary film. Melanie Klein presented on “Wim Botha: Hybridity of the Identical”, revealing complex hybrid patterns in the artistic pieces of Wim Botha. The first day closed with a meeting at the lake in front of Kloster Seeon where a moonlit landscape held the attention of all the conference participants.

The second day commenced with a keynote lecture by Pradeep Jeganathan from International Centre for Ethnic Studies Colombo, Sri Lanka, on “The Work of Melancholia: Suffering, Nationalism and Hybridity in the Island called Ceylon.” By using an analogy from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, he gave brilliant insights into the concept of hybridity in the Sri Lankan context. This was followed by the fourth panel: “Nations and Beyond” that featured three speakers: Gesa Westermann (Hagen) who presented on “Benefitting from a ‘Shared’ Identity – Asianisms in Southeast Asia and Japan”; Akeel Al-Khakani (Houston) on “Neo-colonialism and the Failure of Hybridity: A Case for Hybridized Existences,” and Fatma Tutuncu (Ankara) on “Between Authenticity and Hybridity: Hidden Injuries of Westernization in Turkey.” Al-Khakani, in discussing the failure of hybridity in war-torn Iraq as a young nation-state and Iraqis’ ambivalent response to hybridity, traced the roots of Iraq’s modern dilemma to the legacy of British colonialism. In her paper, Tutuncu aimed to uncover the unheard experiences of the Turkish people who are deeply injured during the Westernisation process in the country due to a gap between western civilization and Turkish culture.

The fifth panel “Hybridity in Literature 1” debated hybridity in post-colonial literature. Peter Morey (London) discussed hybridity and intertextuality in Hari Kunzru’s *The Impressionist*; Anna Clarke (Essex) expounded on concepts of hybridity and syncretism in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*. Roger McNamara (Chicago) dealt with hybridity in cultural as well as racial terms in his presentation “Hybrid Spaces, Hybrid Races: The Location of Culture in Aubrey Menen’s Writing”, while Nadia Butt (Frankfurt) examined Rushdie’s concept of hybridity from a transcultural perspective in her paper “Transcultural Experience and Hybrid Tensions in Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*.”

The sixth panel “Hybridity and Ethnographic Fieldwork” was covered by Brigit Bräucher, (Munich) who reviewed “Constructed Identities Online – The Performance of the Moluccan Crisis on the Internet” and Carsten Wergin, (Bremen), on “Doing Fieldwork in Transmusical Spaces: On the Construction of Lifeworlds and Communities in La Réunion – an Ultra-Peripheral Region of Europe.” Bräucher revealed the role of the internet in the Moluccan conflict in Indonesia between the Christians and Muslims and how the internet enabled the emergence of hybridity as well as the essentialization of identity.

The seventh panel “Visualizing Hybridity in India” amused the audience thoroughly with a current hybrid discourse in Bollywood. Bernhard Fuchs (Vienna) made a presentation on “Cinematic Hybridities: From Bollywood-Films to Cross-over- and Fusion-Cinema”. Nicole Wolf (Frankfurt) spoke on “Interrogating transformative potentials in hybrid aesthetics – Independent non-fiction filmmaking in India”. Both presenters established how Bollywood is a vivid example of hybridity in Asian cinema. Clips from the latest Bollywood mega hits were shown to point out a mixture of east and west in contemporary Indian films.

The last day of the conference began with the third keynote speaker Vittoria Borsò from the Department of Romance Literatures, University of Düsseldorf, who

lectured on “Hybrid Perceptions: A Phenomenological Approach to the Relationship between Mass Medias & Hybridity”. The eighth panel : “Hybridity in Literature II” further negotiated hybridity in Japanese novels by Asako Nakai (Tokyo), in Algerian literature written in English by Bouti Riche (Tizi-ouzou) and in the works of Toni Morrison by Hanna Reinikainen (Joensuu).

The last panel “Hybridities in Germany” was represented by Christopher Ramm (Bochum) who presented on “Against the Wall – Hybrid Irritations of the Popular Image of ‘Non-integrated Young Turkish Immigrants trapped between Two Cultures’” and Jana Domdey (Tübingen) on “‘Sexy Kanake?’ – Ambivalent Use of ‘Kanak Sprak’ in Recent German Cultural Production.” Ramm discussed the applicability and limits of the concept of hybrid identities with regard to the construction of collective identity among young Turkish-Germans. Domdey provided an overview of the ambivalent usage of ‘Türkisch-deutsch’ in present-day German literature and mainstream media productions focussing on Zaimoglu’s socio-critical ‘Kanak Sprak’ project.

The conference ended after an open discussion on the multiple dimensions of “New Hybridities” as put forward in the presentations of the conference participants. One of the most challenging questions was: Is it possible to coin one definition of hybridity? We concluded that the ambivalence of the term makes it not just open to many interpretations but is a matter of an ongoing debate in various academic disciplines.

Nadia Butt (Frankfurt/Main)

“Transculturality in the Diaspora: Spaces – Cultures – Identities”

**Institut für Postkoloniale und Transkulturelle Studien
(INPUTS), Bremen University and International University
Bremen, November 25 - 28, 2004**

A Conference Report with a Personal Note

I am of recent adoption both to Germany and the German academic community. As a newcomer, I am still in the process of exploring the new terrain, still trying to grasp and translate the dynamics of interaction of my new home. Meanwhile, I observe the landscape around me from a safe distance and try to make myself as invisible as possible, performing the ambivalent function of outsider/voyeur which is a common feature in the first phase of the immigrant's integration into the host country. For various reasons I now feel that the Bremen conference has marked a change in my position.

This was the third conference I had attended in Germany and thus far, my favourite. Firstly, rather than a conference, this was actually a workshop: not too many people, no parallel sessions, a small and comfortable venue, as well as a cooperative and friendly spirit reminiscent of school group work. Additionally, several elements contributed to making me overcome the usual feeling of being 'out of place' (in the literal sense) and culturally alienated. I was hosted together with three other colleagues from Frankfurt in a nice apartment in a building which looked like a ship. From my bed, through large windows, I could see the river on both sides, something which immediately reconciled me with my dislocation (where I come from, water is essential to beauty and happiness). The proximity to Frankfurt colleagues in a site other than the usual office, the late-night pyjama talks – which extended the orthodox academic perspective on transculturality to the most intriguing anecdotes in our biographies – added a sense of comradeship which we hadn't yet experienced. Then, to my delight, I discovered that several conference participants spoke Romance languages, which gave me a sense of connection which had proven difficult for me to find in my anglophone performance (following up one of the main ideas that emerged during the conference, that of identity as performance... but let me say that some performances are more performed than others and the degree of familiarity with the context is a key issue). Last but not least, the interdisciplinary perspective of the conference proved especially stimulating and restored a sense of the pragmatic which I sometimes find lacking both in the literary field and in my life.

Now let me start from the beginning...

On Thursday evening, after being warmly welcomed by the conference organizers, who stressed the importance of intellectual engagement in a transcultural world which sometimes takes the ugly shape of violent confrontation (the recent

murder of Dutch film director Theo van Gogh and the consequent attacks on Islamic schools and mosques in the Netherlands could not be forgotten on such an occasion), we were emotionally and intellectually charmed by key-note speaker Khachig Tololyan, who gave a light-hearted and nevertheless poignant lecture on the discourses of diaspora in different disciplines. He looked at diasporic ‘contagion’, not in the sense of disease but rather as a positive quality, suggesting the speed with which something spreads and the mutual power of adaptation and transformation of both guest and host. He explored diaspora as a term in language, a concept and a social formation designated by that term, and reminded us of the necessity to separate intra-communal concepts from those generated by scholars (we academics are enthusiastic about diaspora, he said, but in certain places the term is still problematic). Tololyan argued that diaspora has been mistakenly associated with mobility, while it follows instead a logic of sedentary networking. After enumerating a series of qualities characterizing diasporic communities, he finally stressed the element of self-representation and naming (Am I that name? Am I a diaspora? Does one need a self-consciousness of being diasporic to be called so?) and the importance of scale and speed in the development of diasporas.

The second day was quite intense and equally rewarding. After a hearty breakfast our brains were set off with theoretical questions. Frank Schulze-Engler addressed the transgressive and the transcendent in transcultural thought. He started by clarifying the confusion around terminology (transculturality is not the same as transculturation, the latter term dating back to the 1940s in the field of anthropology) and went on exploring the concrete modes of making the transcultural operative in literary studies, distinguishing between specific areas such as writers, readers and texts. Patrick Williams focused on transcultural aspects in the work of three Palestinian intellectuals – Edward Said, Mahmoud Darwish and Naji Al-Ali – and explored the continuing ‘nakba’ (catastrophe) suffered by a people forced to endure not only territorial but also ontological, narrative, dialogic and ethical dispossession. After lunch at the Krankenhaus Café (strange place for a conference meal, but large enough to accommodate all of us and not bad after all), the rest of the day was devoted to African diasporas. Sérgio Costa glanced through the meanings of the Black Atlantic, in the empirical-descriptive and the political-normative sense, complementing Gilroy’s work by pointing out the asymmetries of power within the Black Atlantic in the specific case of the Afro-Brazilian community (Brazil has the largest population of African descent outside Africa). An interesting insight into French and English tales of the slave trade was then offered by François Poirier, who, looking at both white and black traders, raised the politically delicate question of the continuity between the African structures which sustained slavery as well as the slow and stumbling development of the continent. With a charisma all of her own, Michelle Wright explained how blackness was invented by Western philosophers between the 18th and the 19th century and how this notion has been contested by a counter-discourse of black intellectuals in the diaspora (particularly interesting, but unfortunately not extensively developed for lack of time, was her interrogation of Afro-German subjectivities). Finally, to close the evening on a

positive note, a couple of videoclips to illustrate how British media are popularising cultural diversity were offered by Barbara Korte, who took *White Teeth* (the novel and the TV adaptation) as a prototypical multicultural narrative whose pluri-vocalism and rejection of essentialism open the way to a post-racial, post-post-colonial paradigm. Not many among the audience could share the optimism of Blair's 'New Britannia', but it was already dinner time and a large table was waiting for us at the *Cargo* (an apt venue for a diasporic meal).

The morning of the third day was dedicated to anthropological perspectives, which stressed the performative element in the enactment of ethnic collective identity. Patricia Alleyne-Dettmers, who charmed us with her enthusiasm and shared with us significant episodes of her childhood in Trinidad, offered a case study of the Afro-Caribbean diasporic celebration of Carnival on the streets of Notting Hill, England; a performance which reconstructs in an interstitial space a sense of heritage and community. Jacques Galinier examined the ways in which the urban phenomenon of Aztec cultural revival in Mexico City is being assimilated into local Indian communities, providing an example of how the performative becomes 'authentic'. It was then time for lunch and some of us, in search of 'transcultural authenticity' (what a contradiction in terms!), ended up in a Spanish *bodega* with Italian signs and English-looking dishes. A short walk through the weekend market restored our sense of place, though not of time (where strange medieval personages were engaged in masterful efforts to catch our attention). In the afternoon, Dirk Klopper explored the context of Afrikaner identity in post-apartheid South Africa based on the work of Antje Krog and argued that the European in Africa is not necessarily in a secure position of domination. The last paper on schedule was for me the most interesting given my remoteness to the discipline of geography. Sue Ruddick pointed out the absence of diaspora in geographical discourse in spite of the profound impact that the reality of diaspora is actually making on geographic thought, producing destabilizations and raising new questions in the practice of 'earth writing'.

In the final discussion Gisela Febel made things easy for the rest of us by meticulously summing up what had been said in eight points which I would like to report, albeit briefly: 1) We had been talking above all about strategies and tactics enacted in diasporic situations; 2) The question was raised on how to talk about transcultural identity, if we can still talk about identity at all. Perhaps we can only do it in terms of performance, identification processes or everyday practices of renegotiation; 3) Discussing transcultural and diasporic spaces brings in the question of empowerment, strategies of exclusion and inclusion, and we should continue thinking about that; 4) We looked at cultural strategies of empowerment and discussed the possibility of transcultural policy and agency; 5) The question of the economy of transculturalism, together with the performing and strategic quality of the transcultural, has to be seen in relation to migration and the process of modernity; 6) An important element considered was the sense of memory and history in diasporic practices; 7) We should continue to rethink the concepts we were using and what diaspora means in relation to transculturality. To do so, inter-

disciplinary work is needed (perhaps we can start talking of a ‘pseudo-transculturality’); 8) Two levels of transculturality have been addressed: the transcultural situation in a postcolonial context and the transculturality of the new migration, coming back or going away in a new diaspora.

A lively discussion followed among participants and several other questions were raised: the numerous challenges posed by transculturalism, which are exploding notions of cultures; the ways in which transculturalism can inform the moves of cultural communities; the possibility of transcultural perspectives in political processes of negotiation; the on-going struggle for a transcultural vocabulary which privileges the plural; the need to come to terms with the obsolete nature of the old notion of culture as possession; the political strategies of making the transcultural space visible... . The discussion would have continued, had not an explosion of fireworks saluted our crowd from the river bank. We rushed to the terrace to enjoy the show and our conference came to an end.

I would like to thank Professors Thomas Rommel, Gisela Febel, Sabine Broeck and their wonderful team for these three very special days. And let me say, from my position of displacement, that a magic spell was cast on me during this conference giving me a sense of being at home which was very deeply felt and needed.

Sabrina Brancato (Frankfurt/Main)

LEHRVERANSTALTUNGEN IM WINTERSEMESTER 2004/2005

[zusammengestellt aus *AREAS - Annual Report on English and American Studies*,
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Deutschland

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Davis	South African Literature during and after Apartheid
Davis/Marsden	Basics of Postcolonial Studies
---	Postcolonial Drama
Deringer	Recent Scholarship in American Studies and Canadian Studies
Marsden	Varieties of English in the British Isles

AUGSBURG

Redling	Einführung in die Literaturtheorie: Rezeptionsästhetik, Postkoloniale Theorie und Ecocriticism
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BAMBERG

Jansohn	Malta in British Literature and Culture
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Breitinger	A Survey of African and Caribbean Writing
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West	Introduction to Contemporary Australian Literature

BERLIN, HU

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Starck	Introduction to Literary Studies in English-Speaking Cultures

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Kane English-Speaking Cultures of the World

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Kern-Stähler Construction of the Canadian North

Peters Recent Novels by Margaret Atwood

Stierstorfer Images of Canada: Literary Negotiations

--- Teaching Australian Short Story: Cultural Contexts and Didactic Strategies

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Hünig Varieties of English

EICHSTÄTT

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Grzega "Glocal" Linguistics: Anecdotes and Myths of Languages Around the World

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Kuntze Introduction to English-Speaking Countries

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- Hellinger English as a World Language
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- Beyond India – Anglophone South Asian Literature in Pakistan and Sri Lanka
- Patrick White
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- Deuber Language, Politics, Culture: English in Post-Colonial Societies
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- Collier Canada's Chekhov: Girls, Women and Other Creatures in the Fiction of Alice Munro
- Legutke Teaching the Pacific Northwest – Landeskundedidaktik
- Mukherjee English in Australia and New Zealand
- Müller Varieties of English
- Neumann/
Borgmeier *Jane Eyre* Revisited: Intertextual Reworkings of Charlotte Brontë's Novel

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- Bast Neither/Nor: Racial Mixedness in American and Canadian Literatures
- Knopf Canadian Sound, Dub, and Concrete Poetry
- Koll-Stobbe Afrophone Englishes
- Kraft Canadian Native Myths: Telling & Retelling
- Susemihl Canadian Children's Literature
- Vanderbeke Postcolonial Studies and Literature: Theoretical Approaches

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- India: British Colonial Past, Commonwealth, U.S. Impact and World Power Status

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- Dannenberg Canadian-Asian Fiction
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 Lange Empire and Migration

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 Reitz Fiction of the Empire

Mainz, Germersheim

- Stoll Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*

MANNHEIM

- Reichardt Globalisierung aus kulturwissenschaftlicher Perspektive
 Reichardt/Klinkert Globalisierung: Thorien und Aspekte
 Winkgens Apartheid in White South African Fictions

MARBURG

- Heuser Multi-Ethnic Britain Today
 Kuester Recent Developments in British and Canadian Drama
 Müller London in Contemporary Post-Colonial Literature
 Quennet Regional Stories in the US and Canada in the 19th Century

MÜNCHEN

- Clemm Canadian Regionalism in Canadian Writing – a Historical, Political and Cultural Survey
 Janney/Heidemann New Approaches to Postcolonial Studies
 Kluge Dinkum Aussies? The Heritage of the Australian Short Story and Its Reflection on Concepts of National Identity
 Sanchez Fundamentals of Economics with Reference to the USA and Other English-Speaking Countries
 Sedlak Katherine Mansfield and D.H. Lawrence: Modernist Short Stories in Context
 --- Analysing Canadian Texts – Race and Gender Issues
 Schneck The Fiction of Diversity: Contemporary Canadian Literature
 Streit Australian Fiction: White, Malouf, Carey and Mudrooroo
 Stummer The Pacific Rim with Special Emphasis on Australia and New Zealand
 --- Features of Canadianness: Advanced Comprehension Exercises

- Narrative Reflection on India's Spirituality and Indira's
Emergency: Gita Mehta *A River Sutra* (1993) and Rohinton
Mistry *A Fine Balance* (1995)
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Africa & Australia
- Zwingenberger Canada Today
- MÜNSTER**
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- Pankatz The Construction of Britain on TV: *Blackadder*, *The Office*, *The
Kumars*
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- Research Colloquium Postcolonial and Transcultural Studies
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Forschungsergebnisse

Bettina Weiss, *Tangible Voice-Throwing: Empowering Corporeal Discourses in African Women's Writing of Southern Africa*. Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe 14: Angelsächsische Sprache und Literatur. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004 (erscheint im Herbst). Dissertation, Berlin 2004 (Prof. Dr. Flora Veit-Wild).

“Women have no mouth” goes a Beti proverb of Cameroon. The notion that women are voiceless and passive victims in an androcentric world is an all too persistent complaint.

The thesis of my work is that women are not voiceless, but hold a powerful, liberating potential by, what I call, ‘throwing their voices.’ This claim is verified by first investigating the literary production of African women writers in the Southern African region, that is Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia, and Malawi, and second, by analysing various selected novels, life stories, and short stories which include works written by renowned authors such as Bessie Head and Yvonne Vera, as well as literature which has not yet been or has only been superficially discussed in the field of literary criticism. These are, among others, Dianne Case’s novel *Toasted Penis and Cheese* (1999) or Rayda Jacobs’s *The Middle Children* (1994) of South Africa, Neshani Andreas’s *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) of Namibia, and Virginia Phiri’s *Desperate* (2002), a short story collection on prostitutes in Zimbabwe.

The aim of my study was not to come up with a single theory of women’s writing, but to focus on a very special kind of writing. I claim that women’s voice-throwing is, as the title of my work suggests, a tangible one. It is an act of voicing where women traverse their bodily terrain of agony, pain, desire, and passion. Women realise their repression and (dis)placement and in the act of throwing their voices, they re-member their bodies. This venture forms a kind of re-creation and self-realisation which leads to self-empowerment.

To give an example: The chapter “Shades of Utter(ing) Silences” investigates a quite different and unusual strategy. It focuses on the idea of women’s potential to unveil gender and race constricting laws by uttering silence, or as the title also suggests, by being enveloped in utter silence. This voicelessness, however, a cloister into the emotional space, is chosen deliberately. It serves the women as an instrument to rebel against patriarchal conventions, to find the necessary power to go against racist practices, and to find a new language to overcome traumatic experiences of male-induced violence. This chapter is especially interesting as silence has, to the best of my knowledge, only been regarded in the context of silencing women or women falling into silence as passive victims. But silence is not always merely a helpless gesture or a capitulation, it can also be a resource as in Bessie Head’s *Maru* (1971) or a reinforcement – in the sense of reinforcing a taboo, and thereby embodying the unspeakable, or a platform for finding a new voice as no “mouth can carry a sight such as that” as described in Yvonne Vera’s *Under the Tongue* (1996). To keep silent, to actively decide on being voiceless, as one

encounters in Neshani Andrea's *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001), may also be used as an instrument in order to subvert patriarchal traditions.

Employing the corporeal as a narrative paradigm is a kind of 'writing the body' which includes, to a certain degree, a strategic corporeal. It challenges and subverts master discourses, discourses which are not only confined to gender, but also intermingle with race, class, ethnicity, religion, and language. Notably, this strategic corporeal is not implemented in a way of emphasising corporeal difference by lack, but by attributing positive markers to the body. Women's tangible voice-throwing is an empowerment that reaches beyond a speaking which only represents their thoughts and emotions physically – a mode which might render the impression that they are incapable of expressing their conceptions and sentiments linguistically. It is an empowerment that – in echoing Pamela Banting – reflects their skill in “not censor[ing] the bonds between language and [...] body.”

My work provides new insights into African women's writing, because:

it investigates a broad field of African women writers' literary production (the complete Southern African region);

it gives a substantial and very enlightening perspective on African women's distress and passion. Decisively, these women depict themselves not as passive victims – which denies the hitherto closely connected image of voicelessness – but present their impressive skill to attack and deconstruct prevailing notions on women's so-called 'Otherness' in regard to gender, race, and class;

it focuses on corporeality which is still a neglected discourse in the Southern African context; and

it includes, among others, discourses on HIV/AIDS, prostitution, and homosexuality – topics which are still treated as an anathema in Southern Africa and experience too little attention in literary criticism.