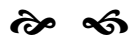


ACOLIT Special Issue No. 4

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New Literatures in English:  
Prospects and Retrospects



25 Years of Study, Teaching and Research  
in German-Speaking Countries

Edited by  
Frank Schulze-Engler

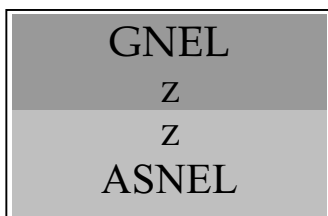
Frankfurt am Main  
2002

*IMPRESSUM:*

*ACOLIT* is a publication of the German Association for the Study of the New Literatures in English (ASNEL)

Series Editor: PD Dr. Frank Schulze-Engler

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Cover Design: Christine Matzke

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*ISSN 0943-738X*

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# Introduction: Names, Fields, Practices

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FRANK SCHULZE-ENGLER



Contemporary literary theory teaches us to regard expressions such as “25 years of study, teaching and research in German-speaking countries” as narrative constructs rather than as historical realities. While the history of the academic practice labelled “New Literatures in English,” which this collection aims to explore, has certainly been real enough for those who participated in it, there can be little doubt that the anniversary marked by these essays represents an arbitrariness of its own. When the first issue of *ACOLIT* – today the newsletter of the German Association for the Study of the New Literatures in English (ASNEL) – appeared in 1977, it signalled the beginning of a new cooperative effort rather than an absolute “point zero” in the field: in the context of English Studies in Germany, Austria and Switzerland the history of academic interest in English-language literatures outside Britain and the USA reaches back via the 1960s to at least the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet it was only with the organized dialogue initiated in 1977 that what was originally designated as “Commonwealth Studies” began to constitute itself as a recognizable field in literary and cultural studies.

This field has undergone major changes in the last 25 years. As DIETER RIEMENSCHNEIDER, the founding editor of *ACOLIT*, points out in his contribution, in the late 1970s and early 1980s “Commonwealth Literature” was still widely considered an academic fringe show staged by a few dedicated *aficionados* or, as PETER STUMMER recollects, “a cluster of *non-arrivés*.” In the course of the 1980s, the field – which by now was often referred to as “New Literatures in English” – rapidly expanded, as the detailed empirical data presented by GERHARD STILZ amply testifies to. This expansion went hand in hand with a growing differentiation (or, as PETER STUMMER argues, even the “formation of fractions”), as area studies paradigms began to exert considerable influence, for example with regard to Canada or Australia. From the late 1980s onwards, a completely new avenue into the field emerged within more traditional English Studies, where new theoretical

interests led scholars to move beyond a specifically British canon and to expand their work to cover a variety of “postcolonial” concerns – a process documented and theoretically reflected in HEINZ ANTOR’s contribution to this volume. A similar move has recently emerged with regard to cultural studies, where practitioners of specifically British cultural studies have also begun to explore possible interfaces with postcolonial studies.<sup>1</sup>

The field documented in *ACOLIT* has continued to grow by leaps and bounds in the 1990s, now often under the designation of “Postcolonial Studies,” and has even set in motion a process of canon revision and (sub)canon formation documented and interpreted in GERHARD STILZ’s extensive survey; its precise contours, however, have more often than not remained elusive. While it is true that the exciting innovations introduced by postcolonial theory at first seemed to provide a new paradigm or at least a modicum of methodological coherence, it has become increasingly clear in recent years that the methodological approaches associated with postcolonial theory cover only part of what actually goes on in the field; this seems true not only in more general political terms (as PETER STUMMER argues in his contribution), but also with regard to the urgent questions of disciplinary organisation explored by CECILE SANDTEN. As BARBARA KORTE points out, German (re)unification has compounded matters even further, since attitudes towards “colonial” and “postcolonial” questions can be seen to differ widely between students in the “Western” and “Eastern” parts of the country. Finally, the future prospects of our field will be decisively shaped by current moves to reform the university system in Germany; as JANA GOHRISCH argues in her survey of these reforms, the controversial changes set in motion by the new federal university law will also have far-reaching consequences for those engaged in the study or teaching of the New Literatures in English.

In retrospect, one can see how much things have changed and expanded, but one can also perceive how the need to gain a critical perspective on one’s academic practice has become more pressing. The marginalisation of the field in the early “Commonwealth” years was undoubtedly a major setback, but it also gave rise to a certain disciplinary exceptionalism and a shared identity as an academically (or even politically) “progressive” group. The expansion and differentiation of later decades has done away with many of these hindrances, but the growing disciplinary normalization that has brought the field closer to accepted “mainstream” practices has also eroded the basis of that older self-understood identity: being somehow “off-

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1 See, for example, Bernhard Klein and Jürgen Kramer (eds.), *Common Ground? Crossovers between Cultural Studies and Postcolonial Studies* (Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2001).

centre" no longer suffices to grapple with the complex situation practitioners encounter in the field.

The term "New Literatures in English" which provided the name for the German Association for the Study of the New Literatures in English founded in 1989 designates a field constituted by sustained academic practice rather than by subject matter or methodology. This field intersects with several other fields: postcolonial studies as a new interdisciplinary practice involving many other disciplines within the humanities, social sciences and beyond; interdisciplinary area studies (most institutionalized in German-speaking countries with regard to Canada, Australia but also to some extent Africa); and "traditional" English literary and cultural studies, which continue to provide the disciplinary base for most scholars active in the field. Despite the obvious shortcomings of the term "New Literatures in English" (there really is no convincing answer to the embarrassing question what "new" is supposed to signify with regard to literary histories reaching back well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century or even beyond), it has one great – and to my mind, decisive – advantage compared to its terminological competitors: it allows theoretical interests to be reconciled with disciplinary realities.

The focus on "English" points towards an academic practice shared in one way or the other by most of those active in the field: a practice built around core qualifications in literary and cultural studies that can be brought to bear on a transcultural world of significations constituted by the English language in the innumerable contexts in which it has come to be used. One of the first insights to be gained in the field is undoubtedly the realisation that in many of these contexts English is embedded within a network of (enriching, challenging and often enough antagonistic) relations to other – often non-European – languages; the fact remains, however, that most people active in the field can bring their expertise to bear on English-language literature and culture rather than on the "postcolonial" totality of literary, cultural, social, economic and linguistic relations. Thus it would seem most productive to think of the study of the new literatures in terms of an emerging practice of transcultural English Studies: "trans" cultural because the notion of cultures as incommensurable, mutually exclusive containers that informs an older understanding of "inter" cultural communication can no longer be reconciled with the cultural realities of an increasingly globalized world. The "transnational connections" that shape this world are not only reflected, but also performatively constituted by the literatures, cultures and linguistic varieties we encounter in our field. This makes it arguably one of the most productive and exciting areas of contemporary literary and cultural studies – and one eminently suited for interdisciplinary dialogues on the emerging contours of a globalised modernity. Acknowledging our core competence in English literary and cultural studies

thus constitutes no hindrance at all for an interdisciplinary widening of perspectives, but might actually be said to constitute a necessary prerequisite for productive interdisciplinary dialogues. A self-reflexive monitoring of this competence might well be the most productive avenue for future theoretical and methodological debates in our field.

The essays collected in this slender volume obviously cover only a few aspects of the wide-ranging subject matter announced in its title; nevertheless it is to be hoped that they will allow readers a few retrospective glimpses at a lively disciplinary past – and will also help them to come to terms with the future prospects of a field that seems set to remain an attractive site in the university system in German-speaking countries.

I would like to thank Dieter Riemenschneider who sparked off the idea for this volume, Christine Matzke and Katja Sarkowsky who helped in the production process, and my daughter Jenny who provided direly-needed technical support.



# The Acolytes' Progress

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DIETER RIEMENSCHNEIDER



A tranquil mood induced by retirement combined with an innate penchant for the nostalgic is perhaps not the worst springboard for a German pensioner relaxing in New Zealand to cast a glance back at a quarter of a century of *the acolytes' progress* or more precisely, the unfolding of *ACOLIT* since 1977. The story has been told that the newsletter's inauguration dates back to a July weekend in that very year when about a dozen not so young men and one young woman met in Frankfurt to talk about how their mutual interest in Commonwealth Literature might be better promoted in their respective universities. Of course, in those hoary years of budding Commonwealth Literature Studies none of us would have claimed to speak on behalf of our colleagues, many of whom would rarely have received tidings of literary activities pursued by the (erstwhile) colonized subjects of Her Majesty. And we also knew that at most, the British Commonwealth (of Nations) might have raised some scholarly interest in a few German university departments of history or political science, or with one or the other American Studies scholar occasionally turning his attention to Canadian literature and culture. Apparently, neither international associations such as ACLALS nor its European branch EACLALS founded in 1964 and 1971 respectively, nor *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, then in its eleventh year, had impacted much on the solid phalanx of German *Anglisten*. If taken note of at all in those years, Commonwealth Literature courses would have been pigeon-holed as "*Übungen zur Landeskunde*," and I do remember that even in the mid-1980s a well-known professor referred to me as "a colleague who had done so much for *Landeskunde*." If at all, Commonwealth Literature was allotted a side stage of Eng.Lit., gracefully reserved for rehearsals in academia by one or the other *Ordinarius* for a lecturer from the Commonwealth, for a *Wissenschaftlicher Assistent* or *Akademischer Rat*. Lest I am accused here of suggesting a conspiracy of benevolent indifference, *ACOLIT* documents such arrangements although fortunately they figure less prominently these days than they did two decades ago.

Not surprisingly then, my letter of invitation to meet in Frankfurt which had been sent out to a good number of German university departments of

English Literature was positively responded to only by two lecturers from New Zealand (Gordon Collier and Nelson Wattie), a few *Wissenschaftliche Assistenten* (Werner Arens, Reinhard Küsgen, Norbert Platz, Dieter Ramm, Ulla Schild) and two at the time quite recently appointed professors (Dieter Riemenschneider and Gerhard Stilz). They were all motivated to teach Commonwealth Literature: Gordon Collier and Nelson Wattie had been exposed to it as “natives,” others as former DAAD lecturers teaching German in a Commonwealth country, or because of their superiors’ occasionally uttered wish that their acolytes should roam in far-flung regions of the world where English was not altogether unknown.

Having introduced ourselves on that particular July weekend and suffering considerably from an unusual heat wave which we battled in true academic fashion by consuming crates of Taunus-springs mineral water, we agreed upon implementing three rather ambitious projects. We wanted to find a publisher who would assist us in bringing out a series of background readers or collections of essays under the overall title “Grundlagen zur Literatur in englischer Sprache.” Besides, we promised each other to work together in arranging further annual meetings and finally, we agreed that we would launch a newsletter from Frankfurt. Our Göttingen colleague Reinhard Küsgen’s suggestion of naming it *ACOLIT* did not require any arguments of persuasion because we instinctively realized that the adopted title conveyed the modesty of our acolytical role as much as it referred precisely – though bashfully-acronymically-bilingually – to our “Arbeitsgemeinschaft/-gruppe für Commonwealth Literatur / Association of Commonwealth Literature.” Of course, and probably because of our mineral-water inspired enthusiasm, we remained realistic enough not to speculate too much as to the prospects of Commonwealth Literature battling within the fortresses of Eng.Lit. pure, let alone did we dream that No. 50 would one day, namely in 2002, embellish the title page of *ACOLIT*.

To say the least, I hope that the newsletter’s midwife and midmen (though unfortunately Ulla Schild is no longer alive, nor is Dieter Ramm) will toast *the acolytes* with pride and satisfaction on the longevity of a publication that has remained young and as dynamic as ever it was. Yet, there is more to it worth celebrating. Since October 1977 the publication of not a single one of its 49 issues was delayed for more than two months and, what is equally astounding (or perplexing, as the case may be): basically, the original format of *ACOLIT* has not changed – and, I believe, for good reasons. Repeated discussions over the years as to whether or not the newsletter should be elevated to the status of a scholarly journal always ended on the agreement that the realistic and functional approach chosen in 1977 should be retained: that is, to offer a forum of information about German (and later on, also Austrian) university courses and publications on

Commonwealth Literature; further to announce, recommend and report on conferences; and finally, to contain information of general interest, such as of visiting writers and scholars from the Commonwealth or of useful contacts and addresses. In retrospect, this chosen course has proved most sensible because neither during *ACOLIT's* infancy nor during its adolescent years would we have had the financial backing, the time and the energy to successfully bring out a journal whose uncertain life expectancy would have been further affected by the sibling rivalry from (financially) healthier serials like *Kunapipi*, *Ariel*, *World Literature in English* or *Commonwealth*.

As to its outward appearance – another reason for celebration – *ACOLIT* has been cosmetically beautified repeatedly since the ascetic appearance of No. 1, which was simply modelled after a typed term paper. The sophisticated-looking title page of No. 49 and an equally impressive “Impressum” reflect the technical progress and the enhanced enjoyment in aesthetically pleasing facades *the acolytes* have been flexible enough not to ward off as questionable pursuits of lesser minds. No longer does an anonymous title picture face the reader, while the “Impressum” unequivocally avows *ACOLIT* to be the “Mitteilungsblatt der Gesellschaft für die Neuen Englischsprachigen Literaturen e.V. (GNEL) / Association for the Study of the New Literatures in English (ASNEL),” complete with GNEL/ASNEL logo and ISSN number. An Anglo-Saxon observer might feel called upon to comment that the newsletter of a loose group of Commonwealth Literature *aficionados* has metamorphosed into the truly German, if not Teutonic institution of a *Mitteilungsblatt* of an *eingetragener Verein*.

To add a few more remarks on the changing format. More readily available photocopiers (installed after a drawn-out battle between traditionalists and modernists in the Frankfurt Institute of English and American Studies, the production site of *ACOLIT*), cut the newsletter from No. 12 onwards to half its format size, no doubt thereby troubling the eyesight of the aging founding fathers of CoLit Studies, yet saving money for the Institute which “somehow” had funded production expenses and postage over the years (and would continue to do so until GNEL took over financing its own *Mitteilungsblatt*). No.15 ventured into the pictorial world by displaying the amateurish photograph of a group of photographed African sculptures on its title page against a washed-out blue background; and as in many subsequent issues, the growing archive of Commonwealth literature and culture in Frankfurt had served here as a treasure trove for increasingly more professionally reproduced cross-cultural art works. Coloured covers would become a further trademark of *ACOLIT*, identifying the publication year of its two annual issues till No.32, when for post-mysterious reasons a successful call for a more frequent change of rainbow colours caused confusion among subscribers as to the year they were living in. Such straying

from the familiar path appeared the more inexplicable by an obvious predilection for the garb of blue for no less than 10 of the last 35 issues. Finally from No. 22 onwards and because of double page printing, the present slimmed-down format endowed *ACOLIT* with that elegant appearance none of us would ever like to miss.

With due respect to the ever rising sartorial standards of *the acolytes' progress*, *ACOLIT's* real merit rests in having transcended such aesthetic commodity promises by having remained 'true to type.' Documenting courses on Commonwealth Literature, properly renamed the New Literatures in English, has continued as one of its mainstays, as much as has listing publications and reporting on conferences. While No. 1 mentions eleven courses mainly on Australian, African or Caribbean literature taught in 1977 as well as in 1977/78, a spectacular increase to thirty courses was recorded within a year, sixty-eight in 1985, 130 in 1991/92 and 156 in 1998/99. A growth by 1500 per cent within two decades that was certainly neither matched by the overall growth of Eng.Lit. nor of Linguistics as another developing area during these years. Economists would not even dream of such a growth rate over a period of merely two decades, but then, culture is a different matter.

Especially during the 1980s, Canadian and African literature figured at the top of the list, but from about the early 1990s onwards courses of a comparative nature and those addressing varieties of English, including Pidgins and Creoles, have almost superseded the earlier more traditionally oriented national literature approach. Further noteworthy observations gained from going through the course listings relate to the institutionalised teaching of a compulsory introductory course in 1987/88 on the New Literatures in English in Frankfurt (where NEL can be studied as one of two core areas in the M.A. English course); of NEL courses forming part of the interdisciplinary and comparative *Aufbaustudiengang* in Munich since 1988; and of the first NEL course in the East, at Humboldt-University in Berlin, which made its appearance in No. 28 (1991).

Similarly, *ACOLIT* registers a comparable positive development in research. The general surveys and introductions characteristic of the mid-1970s were gradually replaced by an ever-increasing number of specialized studies with annual publications growing from less than twenty to forty-five within three years from 1977 to 1980, and then into listings covering several pages of the newsletter, as a glance at No. 40 (15 pages) or more recent issues will reveal. Also worthwhile mentioning here is the project of "Grundlagen zur Literatur in englischer Sprache" that resulted in published volumes on India, West and East Africa and Canada in the 1980s. Unfortunately this undertaking of *the acolytes* collapsed because its series editors, Werner Arens, Gerhard Stilz and myself, could not come to terms

with the new publishing company that had taken over from the original publisher. Although an agreement was signed by us to buy back and make available unsold copies, we never received a response from the new well-known publisher. Copies of all three volumes are still patiently sitting in some storing place in Paderborn, available at half price, as I found out when I bought a set, which I resold to a colleague from Singapore (for the same price!) in 1999.

As exhilarating but more exciting than these facts and figures on courses and publications are the numerous conference reports the editor coaxed colleagues into writing, not the least by promising to honour their individual approaches and styles – which he did, of course. Re-reading them, especially the ones published during *ACOLIT*'s infant years, as I have done with much pleasure recently when on holiday from retirement, has unearthed a host of buried details and recalled half-forgotten moods and memories of places, people and incidents. More than one hundred reports authored by over sixty colleagues *and* students (!) paint a vivid and varied picture of the growth of interest in Commonwealth Literature generally and in specific regions or countries like Australia or Canada promoted first by individual colleagues, for instance Horst Prießnitz in Wuppertal or Konrad Gross in Kiel, and later on by associations such as the *Gesellschaft für Kanadastudien* (founded in 1980) or the Australian Studies Association (founded in 1990). I was also reminded that a very lively centre of Caribbean Studies had sprung up at Bremen University but unfortunately did not survive, mainly I believe, because of university politics and Jürgen Martini's departure to Bayreuth University where, from the beginnings of the 1980s, African Studies were promoted by Eckhard Breitingner, Ric Taylor, Martini and Reinhard Sander, and were partly financed by – the Bavarian state government. Bavarian universities, incidentally – or rather, colleagues in Augsburg, Bayreuth, Laufen and Munich – hosted quite a few conferences on Commonwealth Literature / the New Literatures in English.

The 1978 Augsburg get-together organized by Jürgen Schäfer and Dieter Ramm took a step forward in *the acolytes'* joint endeavour of cooperation by focusing on a topic, the genre of the short story, and boasted twenty-one participants from fourteen universities, no doubt due to Schäfer's high reputation among his Eng.Lit. colleagues and his seminal essay on "Was ist englische Literatur? Wissenschaftstheoretische Probleme und curriculare Herausforderung" (1976). In the following year, Jürgen Martini's Bremen conference laid the foundation of the increasingly international character of future "Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies Conferences in German Speaking Countries" with the active participation of the writer Taban lo Liyong from Kenya and the Australian scholar Carole Ferrier.

And so we have moved on annually from one university to another, grateful to our colleagues who organized our meetings, often enough with little or no financial, departmental or university support. Gerhard Stilz's conference on "Drama in the Commonwealth" resulted in the first book-length publication of papers presented, here in the intimate Tübingen university guesthouse in Bavarian Oberjoch tucked away in dramatic Alpine surroundings. Students participated for the first time in the Kiel conference on poetry in 1982, encouraged by Konrad Gross and Wolfgang Klooss who had established Canadian Studies at this university. Our Bayreuth colleagues organised one of the until then biggest events in 1983 where conference papers and readings by an impressive array of more than a dozen writers from the Caribbean, Africa, Australia, Canada and even far-away Fiji were complemented by a poetry performance and an African drumming session.

These and further annual 'stagings' during the later 1980s in Feldkirchen/Munich, Berlin, Laufen/Salzburg and Königstein/Frankfurt echoed the growing importance of Commonwealth Literature studies in Germany where an increasing number of English departments had now made their appearance on the pages of *ACOLIT*. The time had arrived, some *acolytes* felt, to reflect on their future role – tentatively at first and by no means speaking in one voice, since many of us were quite happy to continue pursuing our slightly subversive activities at our home universities, taking courage from growing student interest and sustained liberal indifference of disinterested colleagues. Within a few years, however, scepticism as to the rationality of organizing ourselves more effectively by founding a German *Verein* with its supposedly innate features of power-broking gave way to the drawing up of statutes of an association which eventually and in a most democratic manner led to the founding of GNEL/ASNEL at the Gießen conference in 1989. Understandably perhaps, *ACOLIT* is silent about details of the by no means smooth process of setting up our association, with Peter Stummer confining his comments on the Gießen conference in the 'blue' No. 25 to its academic and cultural activities. Readers of this issue who had not attended were matter-of-factly informed about the newly founded *Gesellschaft für die Neuen Englischsprachigen Literaturen* on its last page. From No. 33 onwards *ACOLIT* would regularly contain "*Mitteilungen des Vorstands*" with No. 43 finally being transformed from a mere newsletter into its present version of *Mitteilungsblatt*.

Personally, I am not now sure whether this noticeable shift towards bone-dry *Mitteilungen* informs and entertains readers as much as earlier issues have done. To produce such healthily balanced issues, perhaps more attention should again be paid to a number of features that had been intro-

duced earlier but had not been followed up throughout, while new ideas of further augmenting the quality of *ACOLIT* should be developed. I remember the inclusion of synopses of M.A. and PhD.-theses, which as far back as in No. 4 had filled one or the other *ACOLIT* page, but in later issues may unfortunately have given the impression that it was mainly the editor's university where such work was being produced. Further, bibliographies of important publications, creative as well as critical, can be found in No.11 to No.19 and at the time served as first-hand information of various 'national' literatures and linguistics, selected by German specialists and intended for German students. Although journals like *Australian Literary Studies* or *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* offer near-comprehensive annual surveys, guided and select bibliographies might be of more use to students and new arrivants on the scene. A final feature, which similarly had helped students and younger academics to familiarize themselves with the NEL scene, was the presentation of NEL activities at one or the other German university as presented in No. 27 to No. 32. Now, almost ten years later, such surveys would not just attract notice to the state of the art but also offer insight into changes and developments that have since taken place in Frankfurt or Bayreuth, Munich and Aachen, or Hanover and Trier, which featured in these earlier issues.

As *ACOLIT*'s editor for many years I would like to thank my colleagues for their support and frequent contributions: conference reports and surveys typed out by a succession of secretaries of the IEAS on their rather old-fashioned machines during those cumbersome BC (before Computer) years. And, I would also like to thank a long line of young *Wissenschaftliche Hilfskräfte* and *Mitarbeiter*, those irreplaceable mainstays of German universities – of whom I must mention Martina Raßmann and Monika Trebert, Marlies Glaser-Tucker and Andrea Sperl, Markus Wegner and Katja Sarkowsky, but most of all Frank Schulze-Engler. They assisted with the collection of material, the preparation of the manuscript, with proof-reading and co-editing and invested their aesthetic imagination into the lay-out of *ACOLIT*, thereby nurturing it through its adolescence. In its twenty-sixth year in 2002, with its intellectual and financial future secured by more than 250 international members of GNEL, *the acolytes' ACOLIT* can now look forward to an actively mature middle age – with no thought of retirement.





# Postcolonial Positions and the Study of World Literatures in English

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HEINZ ANTOR



Fifty issues of *ACOLIT* justify the publication of a special issue of this journal looking back on the history of postcolonial studies in German-speaking universities, taking stock, and developing new perspectives for future projects. In this contribution, therefore, I will first cast a personal look back on myself and, by doing so, demonstrate how, even to someone who was not confronted with anglophone texts from the ex-colonies right from the beginning, the study of such texts in the course of time became an unavoidable necessity for theoretical and conceptual reasons. This will then be followed by an analysis of some aspects I consider to be of central importance to our field now and in the future.

## 1. The Inescapability of Postcolonial Studies

The present writer, as an undergraduate, was mainly confronted with traditional English Studies in the sense of the critical analysis of texts hailing from the metropolis, i.e. from England, with a few exceptions being made with respect to such writers as Tobias Smollett, Sir Walter Scott, Henry James, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Katherine Mansfield and others who were referred to as 'English' in the vague sense of anglophone and important to the development of English literature and who thus almost became honorary 'English' writers. Issues of the implied assimilation of such authors into the English canon and of the cultural imperialism this might be taken for were not made explicit or were considered to be of only minor importance. From time to time, the odd ambassador from some Commonwealth nation paid a visit to the English Department and left a cheque for money with which the university was expected to buy literature from the respective country. This led to the first courses in what was then termed "Commonwealth literature," but the majority of students, including myself, being used to more traditional literary fare, eyed these seminars with a certain amount of scepticism. Here we were confronted with writers whose names sometimes we had not even heard of. If they were so little known, could

their texts have any literary qualities worth the effort of study? Moreover, we thought we already had enough on our hands dealing with the central texts of the great English tradition, not to mention all the books we had to read to grapple with the cultural contexts of these works. How could we be expected to do the same with Australian, Canadian, Caribbean, African or Indian texts in English? And so the easy option out was to remain Euro- and Anglocentric and to consider the ambassadors' cheques and the books they had brought as gifts from the periphery and, consequently, as marginal.

As it turned out, however, there was no way of disregarding post-colonial literatures in English and remaining theoretically and methodologically intact, as the present writer was soon to realize. I was rightly taught by my professors that any reading of a text is based on certain assumptions and that a literary scholar would be well served to reflect upon these presuppositions and to critically question their legitimacy. This led to my embarking on a lengthy course of studies in literary and critical theory, and the result was a growing awareness of the problematic Anglocentrism of the reading I had hitherto done. For example, reception theory and reader response criticism, with their emphasis on the role and on the position of the reader, made me aware not only of the importance of individual and collective horizons of understanding, but also of the relativity and of the limitedness of such horizons (Gadamer 1986, Iser 1984). Stanley Fish's concept of "interpretive communities" (Fish 1980) put the notion of critical authority into perspective, and, even without having read a great many postcolonial theorists at that time, I became aware of the necessity of looking beyond the pale of the traditional English canon. If our cultural horizons determine what we read and how we read it, I came to realize, the legitimacy of such approaches to the world of texts has to be submitted to critical testing from other perspectives. Consequently, the seeking out of alterity (Antor 1995), both with regard to the texts studied and as far as ways of reading them are concerned, became an important prerequisite to an emancipated dialogue with human culture(s) that refuses simply to replicate a critical discourse without questioning its theoretical foundations and without laying bare the factors it is indebted to. As a result, the exclusionary strategies of the champions of the established English canon and the camouflage of the determining influence of aesthetic, ethical, social, political or religious factors such tactics and their claims to authority are based on became unacceptable and were to be done away with in my own reading practice. This made it necessary to read anglophone texts from outside England or the United States (as the two privileged literatures in English) and to study ways in which these "other" texts were conceptualized by critics and theorists. The study of the New Literatures in English as well as of postcolonial theory had become inevitable.

This development undergone by the present writer as a student of literary texts in English also became a necessity due to the study of theoretical approaches other than those practised by reception theorists. For example, the poststructuralist rejection of closure and the postmodernist disbelief in meta-narratives (Lyotard 1984) as well as the decentering strategies of these two approaches deconstructed the exclusionary and authoritarian pose of the traditionalist representatives of the English canon as a master narrative based on the erroneous and unfounded assumption of an essentialist universalism derived from a specific and historically as well as culturally determined set of values without any rightful claim to general validity.

In connection with my readings in postmodernism, I also developed an interest in literary anthropology (Iser 1989) and in ethical criticism (Booth 1988, Nussbaum 1990, Antor 1996). The only valid universalism I could think of was that of all human beings functioning as pattern-building animals in order to place themselves in the world and provide themselves with a sense of identity and of orientation (Antor 1992 and 1996). Different cultures are nothing but complex systems of such patterns or frameworks, and indeed none of them can lay greater claim to universal normativity or to essential truth value than any other. At the same time, the absolute relativism of a postmodernist anything goes seemed to be an unacceptable philosophical and political extreme amounting to a denial of the basic human need for orientation as well as for values, rules and justice. Such intellectual auto-rape could only lead to arbitrariness, to frustration, political and social Machiavellianism, to the justification of egoistic exploitative mechanisms and to mental and practical insincerity.

Torn between the postmodernist insight into the impossibility of universal cultural master narratives and the neo-humanist acceptance of certain needs of humans as pattern-building animals, needs which, on a meta-level, appear to be universal after all, albeit in different forms, the present writer found himself confronted with the question of how to deal with such a supposed inconsistency. The logical consequence was to study cultural patterns in the plural in their historical, regional, political, social and religious specificity, thus acknowledging the limited and relative validity of concrete cultural discourses and practices, while at the same time reflecting upon the functions of such activities and beliefs as explanatory frameworks which make individual lives and collective existences possible within specific environments and thus cater for our needs of orientation. Thick description, specificity, difference and alterity thus to me became important interpretive components of an internationally and multiculturally oriented version of cultural studies that shunned the pitfalls of fragmentation and non-committal arbitrariness by relating its results to a non-centric and anti-essentialist umbrella paradigm of cultural pattern-building which

can best be described as a differentiating and non-hegemonic universalism.

If this sounds like an inherent self-contradiction, this is only seemingly so because, on the one hand, differentiation and totalization are not absolute and mutually exclusive alternatives and, on the other hand, they refer to different levels of investigation here. The epistemic systems used by different cultures to explain and make manageable their respective environments and the resulting aesthetic, social, political and religious practices may be very distinct indeed, but they nevertheless share their common function as epistemic systems. The universal and the specific thus go hand in hand, and both have to be given their due, just as the pitfalls of both have to be avoided. We must neither essentialize in a gesture of totalitarian normativity nor should we differentiate ourselves to death in a fit of over-scrupulousness, thus cutting ourselves off as critics and theorists from the possibility of concrete agency in specific situations. Rather, we must accept the inescapability of individual and collective positionalities without which communication and fruitful negotiation become impossible. At the same time, though, it is important that we should remain aware of the various factors all positions are invariably indebted to. This alone precludes the essentializing reflex and the colonialist presumption of a universalizing normativity.

If, then, it is the diversity of different discourses and practices in the English-speaking world we want to seek out, how can we cope with the resulting heterogeneity of the multiple alterities we are constantly confronted with? Bakhtinian dialogism has a lot to offer in this respect, and it is particularly interesting in our context because the Russian philosopher's poetics and cultural theory were developed in a situation of internal colonization of minds in a totalitarian Soviet Union which disallowed the expression of ideas deviating from the essentialist monologizing of Stalinist ideology, a situation Bakhtin had to pay dearly for when he was imprisoned and exiled in 1929 for his suspect views. His ideas on subversion and on the hybridity of heteroglossia champion otherness and refuse to reduce human pattern-building processes to the oneness of an all-encompassing grand narrative, putting in its place the necessity to negotiate and to appreciate different ways of conceptualizing the world (Bakhtin 1981).

Such theoretical considerations of course render extremely problematic the exclusive concentration on the part of the literary scholar and the student of culture(s) on anglophone texts coming out of England or the United States of America only, and a wider awareness of literatures in English and the cultures that have produced them becomes imperative. There are still other reasons, though, which led the present writer beyond the traditional English canon. I was also very much interested in EFL (English as a foreign language) teaching, and the questions and decisions

one is confronted with in this field also made it necessary to look beyond the limits of the English canon. Which variety of English do you teach? What do you teach English for? In which contexts will your students have to use English and move in anglophone situations in the globalized world of the future? What do German school curricula prescribe, and where do they stand in need of additions? These are only some of the main aspects to be considered, and, both with a view to the role of English as one important medium of international communication and with regard to the many very different contexts in which English is spoken as a first or second language in this world, a privileging of British and American English and its cultural contexts to the almost complete exclusion of other anglophone regions is no longer tenable today, so that in the field of foreign language pedagogy, too, there can be no way round the study of the New English Literatures and Cultures.

Of course, there are many more reasons for going beyond the traditional canons of British and American studies, and I have discussed some of those elsewhere (Antor 2000). In the present contribution, however, I have so far deliberately concentrated on considerations taking their point of departure not from within postcolonial theory, but from Western, Anglo- and Eurocentric approaches in order to show that even if one comes from such a conventional background, going beyond the metropolitan pale and dealing with New Literatures in English becomes an inescapable necessity if one takes seriously the cognitive implications of the theories mentioned without willingly turning a blind eye to some of the unavoidable consequences.

## 2. Conceptual Considerations for the Future

Due to restrictions of space, it is only possible to point out here some few aspects for the future of the study of world literatures in English in a globalized postcolonial world. So far, I have concentrated on theories and discourses without foregrounding the problem of agency. Any consideration of the legitimacy and relevance of our subject, though, has to deal with this aspect of the field. The violence of colonialism as well as the no less insidious forms of violence exerted through neocolonial exploitative mechanisms and through cultural imperialism throughout the world are always also based on epistemic violence in the form of ideological apologies of abusive practices, ranging from the neo-capitalist construction of the necessities of international markets at the expense of developing countries via the invention of a paradigm of clashing civilizations used to justify neo-imperialist measures to protect Western interests (Huntington 1998) to the actual justification of the waging of war. The subversive deconstruction of such

epistemic tools and the consequent laying bare of ulterior motives of imperialism behind the rhetorical façades produced by the proponents of the postcolonial continuation of colonialist practices, therefore, is much more than a merely academic exercise. Rather, it constitutes a practical intervention (cf. the title of Robert J. C. Young's new journal *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*) in contemporary world affairs by the way it creates an awareness of and thus also contributes to the blunting of the ideological instruments of neo-imperialist iniquities on this planet. This may be an uphill battle, but popular grassroots movements of the recent past have shown that such forms of intervention need not necessarily mean fighting a losing battle. The consciousness-raising function of postcolonial studies is one of the major factors that renders it relevant beyond the ivory tower walls of the academy, and it should be one of our foremost tasks to fulfil that function inside as well as outside the university.

One of the consequences of such an ethos of postcolonial studies is that we have to practice a dialogic approach not only in the seminar room, but in a wider social and political context, at public meetings, in the media, at conferences, in various kinds of national and international organizations, etc. If the intellectual is to practice more than a professional glass-bead game, s/he has to become active outside the ivory tower as well and instigate and become part of the public debate on issues of a postcolonial world order.

Another consequence of such an approach for the postcolonial critic is that our work has to become even more interdisciplinary in character. Most postcolonial critics, including the present writer, have come out of the language and literature departments of our universities, and they have been trained in one or two philological subjects. The interpretive competence acquired by way of such a university education is indeed very useful when it comes to the reading of colonial and postcolonial texts of all kinds, be they literary or so-called non-fictional expository texts. The hermeneutic competence of the literary scholar is of course an important tool not only for the reading of novels, poems, plays or stories from former colonies, but also in the process of understanding and, where necessary, of deconstructing the writings, speeches, and other official statements of politicians, economists, historians, sociologists, etc. But the natural limits of our linguistic competences usually restrict us to a small number of languages and, consequently, mainly to texts produced in these idioms only. Postcolonialism, however, is not a phenomenon which can be properly viewed through such restricted lenses. The ideal postcolonial critic would have to be fluent in English, French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, and a variety of other languages. S/he would furthermore have to be familiar with the cultural contexts in which these languages have been used throughout history, particularly in international situations. This will of course remain an

impossible ideal, but we should nevertheless remain open and read as widely as possible in as many languages as we can in order to understand the transcultural dimensions of the phenomena of (post-) colonialism and imperialism. Translations will have to be accepted as the imperfect crutches they are, but this will be better than ignoring ideas simply because they have been expressed in a language the individual critic does not understand. Such inter-philological interdisciplinarity, from the point of view of the anglophone reader, has been practised with regard to postcolonial writings in French and, to a certain extent, in Spanish as well. But as far the other languages mentioned above are concerned, much still remains to be done.

Interdisciplinarity has to be practiced beyond the borders of the traditional philological subjects as well, however. If we are interested in tracing the mechanisms, structures, dynamics and strategies of the phenomenon that for convenience' sake is generally referred to as postcolonialism, we will have to practice cultural studies in the widest sense of the term, and this will include a dialogic interchange with scholars from such diverse fields as political science, sociology, religious studies, anthropology, history, philosophy, gender studies, geography, musicology, area studies, etc. This will require a crossing of traditional institutional boundaries without which such collaborative efforts will be doomed to failure. This is why at my own university, for instance, we have begun to build up a Centre for Inter- and Transcultural Studies (CITS) the aim of which it is to bring together competences from the various disciplines mentioned above. The hybrid practices we come across in the postcolonial world have to be analysed through the similarly hybrid collective approach created by the multiple horizons, points-of-view, and methodologies gathered in such a Centre.

Postcolonial studies involves a process of what we might call "learning to unlearn" in several respects. It includes "unlearning the privilege," as Gayatri Spivak has put it, of viewing the world from the sphere of Western hegemonic discourse and instead placing oneself in the position of the Other, e.g. that of the colonized, of the subaltern or of the marginalized. It also includes "unlearning the inherent dominative mode" (Williams 1989, 181) of Eurocentrism and of the various other restrictive essentialist centrisms we are constantly confronted with. Such efforts of unlearning, however, also necessitate the effort to unlearn using exclusively the optics of the one or two academic disciplines we have been brought up in, and interdisciplinarity thus becomes an inescapable prerequisite to our project yet again. New institutional structures and networks will have to be created that bundle the competences from various old and new disciplines, and these joint efforts will have to be structurally much more flexible and fluid than traditional academic departments and faculties. Within the university,

trans-departmental structures as well as new groupings transgressing the borderlines between different faculties will have to be created and restructured from time to time, but collaborations will also have to be institutionalized between the university and social groups as well as international organizations outside the academic world if the aspects of relevance and agency discussed above are not to be dismissed.

The institutional and structural changes considered here must not become an end in itself, though, i.e. a symptom of the current craze for so-called modernization, the reshuffling and rearranging not only of academic, but also of other cultural, economic, social or political organizations. Such transformations more often than not exhaust themselves in the creation of a new façade of increased efficiency on whatever marketplace one wants to succeed without bringing about a real change in modes of perception, conceptualization, discourse, and, most important of all, of practice. The overriding aim of our future undertakings should remain – in Ngugi's words – the decolonizing of the mind (Ngugi 1986), and this is the aim the newly created structures will have to serve.

This process implies yet another unlearning project, namely that of unlearning the binarisms of early postcolonial studies. This is a development that is already well under way, but far from completed, which is why it deserves to be mentioned here and to be included in the list of things to be desired for the future. The simplistic and reductive quality of such distinctions as colonizer and colonized, oppressor and oppressed, metropole and colony, centre and margin, developed and underdeveloped, black and white, rich and poor, male and female, good and bad, has long been deconstructed, and the various theories of hybridity are just one outstanding example of such a development (Bhabha 1994, Young 1995, Fludernik 1998). But we constantly have to remind ourselves of the implications this has for our own practice as cultural critics. Differentiation and concrete multi-factor analyses are the best means of avoiding the new essentialisms inherent in binary oppositions that may have been justified in the early phases of the postcolonial project of putting a non-Western Other on the mental maps, but are now too crude an instrument for an adequate analysis of the world. For example, in many postcolonial regions of this world, the oppressed are also oppressors themselves. Colonization is a phenomenon that can be observed not only in colonies, but also in the Western metropole in the form of internal colonization. Freedom fighters and exponents of resistance against hegemonic structures of exploitation have often turned into the instigators and proponents of new post-independence exploitative mechanisms that, in a stunning way, share many characteristics with the iniquities practised by the erstwhile colonial power. In the thick descriptions (Geertz 1993: 3-30) of concrete and differentiating analyses, therefore, the postcolonial cultural



critic should beware of the erroneous totalizations implied by such binary dichotomies. At the same time, though, a certain amount of justified totalizing on a more abstract level will be required in order to uncover structural parallels and strategic similarities between cultural and political practices in different parts of the world. This “strategic essentialism” (Spivak 1984-5: 183-4) alone will make possible concerted efforts of countering the new global discourses and practices of domination.

If such a kind of constructive critical oppositionality and the resulting agency count among the aims of the postcolonial critic, then this also has consequences for the reading and teaching s/he does. Due to reasons of time and to quantitative considerations, most of us combine a general interest in postcolonial theory with special expertise in a version of postcolonial area studies, i.e. with a specialization in, say, South Africa or Canada or the Caribbean or Australia, to mention just a few examples. This will have to be supplemented by a comparative approach that takes into account developments beyond one’s individual region of special interest. We must practice and teach interdisciplinarity within postcolonial studies as well, then, if we aim at an understanding of the increasingly global cultural processes on this planet. This includes an awareness of the global when dealing with the local so that, next to the phenomenon of globalization, that of glocalization will have to be studied in greater depth (Robertson 1995, Riemenschneider 2002). In addition, the paradigms of interculturalism and multiculturalism will increasingly have to be viewed in connection with that of transculturalism (Pratt 1992) in order to avoid not only national or regional straightjackets, but also conceptual ones based on assumptions of relations between two or more distinct cultural poles.

Another consequence of such a transgressive approach to world literatures in English is that despite the necessary rejection of Eurocentrism, European literature will not become irrelevant and cannot be ignored. Postcolonial literatures have long ceased merely writing back to the centre (if ever this was what they could be restricted to), but the ‘centre’ and the literature it produced have not ceased to be relevant to the postcolonial critic. Indeed, a substantial amount of ‘English’ literature in the traditional sense of texts coming out of Great Britain is or has become postcolonial literature. Hanif Kureishi, Caryl Phillips and Zadie Smith are important examples in this respect, and the postcolonial re-readings of such texts as *Robinson Crusoe*, *Mansfield Park* or *Jane Eyre* (Childs 1999, Said 1994: 100-116) have shown that the classical English canon is anything but removed from postcolonial concerns. Any attempt, then, at binary categorization along the lines of ‘English vs. Postcolonial’ or the like would lead to reductive simplifications. As a result, just as we cannot restrict ourselves to a reading of the so-called great English tradition, we must not commit the

opposite mistake either and restrict ourselves to the study of anglophone texts from erstwhile British colonies. In other words, those students of postcolonial anglophone literatures who eagerly follow what is published in India, Nigeria, Malaysia, Jamaica, and elsewhere in the English-speaking world, but who have not read their Shakespeare, Defoe, Ch. Brontë or Dickens are no better served than those who practise the same exclusionary strategies, only the other way round. They will not be able to understand the phenomenon of the (post-)colonial on a larger scale just as they will not be able to see the multifarious intertextual relationships between texts from the so-called New Literatures in English and classical 'English English' texts. Our own research as well as our teaching will have to take this into account and should avoid new exclusions based on old binary thinking.

### 3. Conclusion

Much more would have to be said on the future of postcolonial studies, which is impossible here for reasons of space. I would like to finish, therefore, by drawing the reader's attention to the present state of postcolonial studies at German-speaking universities. Taking stock at the beginning of the twenty-first century, there is reason for hope and for caution at the same time. On the one hand, the number of seminars offered in the field of postcolonial studies and the number of theses written on topics transcending the narrow boundaries of traditional English Studies are encouraging. More and more conferences tackle the interesting and important issues raised by the new horizons opened up by postcolonialism. Many of the professorships and chairs offered in German departments of English include in their job descriptions an element referring to the New English Cultures. On the other hand, the very strengthening of our field of which these are promising signs seems to be taken as a threat to vested interests in some traditionalist quarters. Behind the façades of openness and tolerance, there sometimes still lurk old entrenched attitudes of Anglocentrism and the exclusionary strategies that result from them. The decolonizing of the mind must remain on the agenda, and it is not only the minds of people from former colonies that have to be decolonized. This is illustrated, for example, by the surprising recurrence with which traditionalists still ask the question of whether the works of, say, an African anglophone novelist, qualify as 'good' novels, the Eurocentric aesthetic standards and their precarious legitimacy in such a context being totally neglected in the question. The study of postcolonialism and of world literatures in English will not be served either by the paying of supposedly politically correct lip-service to the abstract values of difference, plurality, decentering, openness and tolerance towards the

Other, but by the actual transgressing of mental boundaries, by practical research into and by the teaching of texts from anglophone cultures around the world, by participation and intervention in the cultural, social, political and economic dialogues of which anglophone texts (as well as texts in other languages) and our negotiations of them in the public space are an integral part.

On the whole, though, despite the dangers mentioned here, the present writer is fairly optimistic for the future. The arguments in favour of our project are very strong indeed, and the retrenchments one can still observe here and there are based on illegitimate and hegemonic centrisms which are no longer tenable. The question to be asked, therefore, no longer is whether or not postcolonial studies will make it as a serious subject of academic enquiry, but who will and who won't be involved in this relevant and important contribution the university can make towards the future development of the world.

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# Continental Discontents: Central European Constructions of World Literature in English

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GERHARD STILZ\*



## 1. Steering

When Leslie Fiedler exploded his revolutionary message of “opening up the canon” at the 1968 MLA Convention in New York, he certainly revived a healthy and indeed highly productive tradition of canon discussions.<sup>1</sup> But he was by no means the first to advocate a widening of the horizons of traditional reading. In Europe, revisions of the literary canon have been a regular if not continuous concern of the cultural debate down from the 17th century. After the *querelle des anciens et des modernes* (in which the “moderns” voiced their discontent with classical models and proposed originality, novelty and empirical realism instead), Goethe – on the basis of the romantic concept of a “progressive universal poetry” – emphatically propagated the development of “*Weltliteratur*.” According to Goethe, three transitory epochs had to be overcome in order to arrive at the ultimate stage of universal literary knowledge and awareness: the “idyllic” epoch of familiarity and parochialism, the “social or civic” epoch in which a regional or national liberalism was supposed to reign, and

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\* This paper was first presented at the MLA Convention in Washington DC, on 29 December 1996. It was first printed in *Anglistik: Mitteilungen des Verbandes deutscher Anglisten*, 8.2 (Sep 1997), 133-146. A shortened version appeared in the pages of *Antipodes* [Texas] (June 1998), 41-46. The following text is largely a reprint from *Anglistik*, with a few emendations and additions (most notably table A). My gratitude goes to Rüdiger Ahrens for the permission to reprint the article. I apologize for the gap which has been opened up by the flux of time since 1996. A full update of the material is planned for the year 2005.

1 Published in Leslie Fiedler and H.A. Baker (eds.), *English Literature: Opening Up the Canon*. Selected Papers from the English Institute: 1979 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981). For a general introduction to the more recent phases of the canon debate cf.: John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1993); Karen R. Lawrence (ed.), *Decolonizing Tradition: New Views of Twentieth-Century "British" Literary Canons* (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1992).

the “general” epoch, during which the circles of separate knowledge were expected to merge and fuse into a unified net of communication. Once the “universal epoch” of world literature has been reached, Goethe anticipated, “all foreign literatures will be equivalent to our native one, and we will not lag behind the *Weltumlauf*” (which, today, requires a little courage to translate as “the revolution of the world”).<sup>2</sup> World literature, world trade and world citizenship were Goethe’s programmatic concepts by which egotistic nationalisms might be overcome and replaced by the universal agencies of tolerance, consideration and humanity.

For two centuries Europe, and particularly central Europe, has been grappling with Goethe’s project. Parochialism, nationalism and what might be called Continental “continenence” have proved to be powerful and repeatedly disastrous conservative factors in European cultural policy. Yet, there has also been a continuous line of intellectual malcontents insisting on making slits in the cultural umbrella and sticking their heads out, often at the risk of being ostracised, marginalised, or simply ignored. Questioning the canon meets with the old responses to heresy.

Under favourable political circumstances, cosmopolitan “discoveries,” suggestions and directives were accepted and followed. Goethe himself, in the liberal climate of the court at Sachsen-Weimar, actively contributed to the productive reception of Arabic, Persian and Indian literature. This undoubtedly supported the foundation of Oriental departments in German universities and prepared for the long-lasting special relationship between Germany and Oriental countries – which has not been fully recognized in Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978).

In English studies, a discipline that came into its own with the granting of the first chairs for “Englische Philologie” in Vienna (1872) and Straßburg (1873), in Halle (1875) and Leipzig (1875),<sup>3</sup> Goethe’s concept of world literature fell on fruitful ground. Backed by the world-wide political interests emerging from the proclamation of the German “Empire” (1871), a surprisingly far-sighted awareness of the intercultural character of “English” became apparent more than a hundred years ago. Five years before Kipling, in his Barrack-Room Ballad “The English Flag,” asked the famous question “What should they know of England who only England know?”, Karl Elze, in his *Grundriß der englischen Philologie* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1887), one of the earliest manuals in this academic trade, approvingly mentioned the beginnings of an autochthonous literature in all the British colonies,

2 Cf. Walter Jens, “Nationalliteratur und Weltliteratur – von Goethe aus gesehen,” *Kindlers Neues Literatur Lexikon* (München: Kindler, 1988ff.), xi - xxiii.

3 Cf. Thomas Finkenstaedt, *Kleine Geschichte der Anglistik in Deutschland: Eine Einführung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), 54-59.

although he still missed historical surveys of these initiatives. Likewise, Gustav Körting, in his *Encyklopädie und Methodologie der Englischen Philologie* (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1888), located English-speaking regions of the world not only in the United States, but also in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, in East India, the Cape Colony, Natal and Cyprus. He numbered the English and the non-English speakers, prognosticated future linguistic and cultural assimilation processes, attributing to the English language the predicate of a "world language in the fullest sense of the word" – while suggestively placing German second (102-105). In the realm of letters, however, Körting could not yet see the point of going beyond English national, Scottish and North American writing in favour of an Irish or Australian literature. To him Irish authors still belonged to English national literature, whereas Australia (and New Zealand) are said to have "for obvious reasons, only been fruitful in the field of journalism." – "But," Körting closes, "the time will come, when an Australian literature will flourish too" (391).

These little-known sidelights from the early days of English Philology mark out the wide horizons viewed from a Germany whose travellers, explorers, missionaries, traders and emigrants had spread all over the world. The perspective is dominated by a partly sympathetic eye to a more successful Germanic brother based on the British Isles. But at the same time it is ambivalently mixed with the fascination, potential envy and the growing self-assurance of a newly arising imperial power *and* with the Goethean desire and readiness to take account of and accept world literature on equal terms wherever it can be found.

In my paper "Any Business of Ours? Some German Reflections on the Purposes and Priorities of Studying the New Literatures in English"<sup>4</sup> first presented at a conference in Trento in 1990, I recapitulated in five short chapters this opening phase as well as the broadening and restrictive forces at work in the history of the German canon for English studies. My story ended with an account of the dynamic rise of the NLE in German departments of English during the seventies and eighties, which, however, had not met with adequate budgetary and structural reforms. In face of German reunification, the plea seemed timely for accommodating the New Literatures in English within a reformed structural pattern of International English studies, as "an adequate answer to the changed realities in the English-speaking world." I surmised that such a move "would reflect the true interests of a new Europe, striving for regional identities and for multicultural

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4 *Imagination and the Creative Impulse in the New Literatures in English*, ed. M.-T. Bindella and G.V. Davis (Amsterdam: Rodopi 1993), 25-32.

exchange" and that "it would pave the way for a world community beyond nationalism and hegemonial blindness."

It appears that such ideas, supported by many colleagues, along with a plenary paper and a motion submitted to the "reunification" *Anglistentag* at Marburg in 1990,<sup>5</sup> were not without effect. The *Wissenschaftsrat* (i.e. the central German research policy advisory board comprising federal, state and university representatives), in their recommendations for restructuring the universities in Eastern Germany, expressly favoured a structurally relevant competence in the New Literatures in English, next to British and American Studies, for all English departments in the German East.

The intriguing question is now whether, under these time-honoured dispositions and under the pressure of recent developments, the teaching of English in German universities and possibly, on a larger scale in other Central European countries, has changed. How do or did the English and American departments respond to the needs and exigencies of a new global awareness in the midst of a deeply traditional but now vigorously reformative old continent? Which of the regions of the English-speaking world, next to Britain and the USA, have come to be the favourite areas of the central European universities' commitment? Which authors from the NLE are preferred on departmental reading lists? Which mechanisms of preference and canonization can be seen to be at work?

In order to go beyond mere wishful or sceptical impressions, one might be tempted to start with the availability of books and sales figures of authors representing particular regions. One might also think of questionnaires to be sent to staff and students concerning their actual reading. Both procedures, however, are extremely shaky in their database and lead to uncertain results when it comes to canon indicators. I therefore conducted two statistical investigations whose database seemed more reliable and evidently representative for canon issues. One is based on the topics taught in literary classes in the English departments in Germany and Austria, and the other analyses the departmental lists of recommended reading in Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

## 2. Teaching

My observations on the teaching of NLE in Germany and Austria look back to an earlier survey which I first presented in 1987 [Chart I].<sup>6</sup> Canada and

5 Gerhard Stilz, "International English Studies," *Anglistentag 1990 Marburg: Proceedings*, ed. Claus Uhlig and Rüdiger Zimmermann (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991), 29-35.

6 "Commonwealth Studies in German-Speaking Countries 1977-1987: A Tour of New Horizons," published in *Critical Approaches to the New Literatures in English*. A Selection of Papers to the 10th Annual Conference of 'Commonwealth' Literature and



Africa (undifferentiated) had emerged, since 1977, as the two favourite regions (the one, obviously, for the substantial support of an encouraging Canadian cultural policy, along with the active enthusiasm of the Association for Canadian Studies; the other for reasons that seemed to culminate in the 1985 centennial concern over the consequences of Bismarck's Berlin conference and the heated debate over apartheid in South Africa in succeeding years). Australia and India followed on a lower level, leaving behind New Zealand and the Caribbean as well as general and comparative topics on the NLE.

In my new analysis [Chart II], relying again on the database offered by *ACOLIT*<sup>7</sup> and covering the years 1988-96 (with the data now collected semester-wise), Canada soars to new heights, with a peak of 42 classes in winter 1991/92, while for Africa, surprisingly, the frequency of classes stabilises within a relatively large amplitude around an average of 15 classes per semester. The internal distribution of classes on West, East or South Africa does not reveal any major shift during recent years. Australia, meanwhile (with a remarkable slump after the Bicentennial), comes close to the numbers for Africa, possibly due to the activities engendered by a lively Association for Australian Studies, whereas India, the Caribbean and New Zealand form an increasingly tightly-woven competitive group at the level of 5-8 classes per semester. The real surprise in recent years is the dramatic growth of general and comparative classes on two or more of the New Literatures in English. This new awakening of comparative interests seems to have answered to the complaint frequently heard in the mid-eighties that so little was being done in the systematic and comparative field. Moreover, this growth in general and comparative approaches must clearly be seen as a concomitant of the theory-honoured discussion on post-colonialism which, in Germany as in western academia generally, has become fashionable and respectable even among many who had never really cared much about the actual living conditions and writing practices in the countries concerned.

A good number (i.e. about 20-30%) of course announcements on the NLE name the individual authors to be read [Table A]. This is where a few quantifiable hints at the prevailing tendencies toward canonization can be

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Language Studies, Koenigstein, 11-14 June 1987, ed. Dieter Riemenschneider (Essen: Die Blaue Eule, 1989), 13-31.

7 *ACOLIT*, founded by Dieter Riemenschneider and now edited by Frank Schulze-Engler (University of Frankfurt: Institut für England- und Amerikastudien, 1977ff.), serves as the half-yearly newsletter of the Gesellschaft für die Neuen Englischsprachigen Literaturen/Association for the Study of the New English Literatures (GNEL/ASNEL). It collects and supplements relevant information concerning the NLE from the *Annual Report on English and American Studies (AREAS)*, ed. Gerd Stratmann and Joachim Cornelius (Trier: WVT).

taken. A remarkably consistent mechanism is visible here at first sight: the one-person-up principle. In most regions one author is favoured – arguably out of proportion – above all the others. An exception to this rule must be made for Africa where Achebe and Soyinka as well as Gordimer and Lessing compete on the same level, and for the West Indies where Derek Walcott, as the unexpected Nobel prize winner, has come remarkably close to the long-established V.S. Naipaul (who has meanwhile caught up in ‘Nobel’ terms of dignity). The one-author-per-region principle may well be grounded in the lack of space in class announcements and in the need felt for representative names. In any case, it has an inbuilt effect of inflatory affirmation, as a comparison with the reading-list preferences will show. For Canada, Margaret Atwood (53 nominations during 1988-1996, with a slight but notable growth over the years) is by far in lead over Margaret Laurence (11) and Philip Grove (5). On grounds of teaching announcements, she is therefore the most clearly canonized author of the whole field of the NLE, followed by Salman Rushdie (26), Katherine Mansfield (23), Nadine Gordimer and Doris Lessing (20 each), V.S. Naipaul and Patrick White (13 each), Chinua Achebe (12), Wole Soyinka (11) and Derek Walcott (8). Most of the named reputations are fairly stable, especially those of the Canadians and Africans, and obviously that of New Zealand’s Katherine Mansfield who, for right or wrong, like Doris Lessing, is not always regarded as a colonial.

Some reputations seem to have been subject to more sudden changes. There clearly was some guarded reservation in announcing classes about Rushdie during the early years of the Fathwa – a sad instance of academic cowardice. Derek Walcott only entered on our stage of teaching due to the Nobel Prize – and he is just about to disappear again from this competition: which points to the fashion-bound, partly self-advertising character of teaching announcements.

The question where the English departments of East Germany come into the game, and whether they behave differently from the rest, is difficult to answer on our database. It must be kept in mind that in the GDR English was neither the first nor the most favoured foreign language and that, before unification, the NLE could only be selectively taught in a very few places such as Leipzig (Australian and African Literature) and Jena (Canadian writing). New teaching programmes started only gradually after the grinding internal reforms had been completed, which usually meant replacing and supplementing the old staff with mostly young professors from the West. This process went at different speeds and took several years altogether, so that the impact of German unification does not show as a sudden change in teaching announcements. In sum, however, the increasing total

numbers of classes offered in the NLE can also be attributed to the growing numbers of reformed departments of English in East Germany.

### 3. Reading

My second statistic effort is directed at the reading lists of departments of English in Germany East and West, Austria and Switzerland [Table B]. It evidently first required the existence of such lists and then the readiness of departments to disclose them and make them available to me. Much of the post-1968 departmental reluctance to produce any kind of reading list (that might have been deemed suspect of conservative canon-forming and canon-preserving)<sup>8</sup> as well as the corresponding sensitivities to disclosing and comparing such things, seem to be a matter of the past. The truth that, as long as life is short, you cannot do without a canon even if you wished, is now made less inflexible by accepting the fact that canons can and must change.

Of 76 university departments of English in German-speaking countries, 49 (i.e. 65%) answered kindly to my request. I am grateful to all of them. 38 departments (i.e. 50%) presented lists of recommended reading, others announced that they were just preparing such matter or that they advised students to use guidelines and recommendations already printed and available in bookshops. About 30% of the departments approached did not care to answer. The highest returns came from East Germany: 9 out of 11 departments answered. On these grounds, my following figures can be taken as representative.

The reading lists are usually devised as recommendations to students doing their five-year course for Staatsexamen or M.A. In some cases special lists for an intermediate exam after 2 years ("*Zwischenprüfung*") were produced. Most lists have been put together, revised or updated during the nineties; some of the lists go back to the early eighties; in one rare (Austrian) case the historic date is 1973. The *volume* of reading lists differs widely. The five most demanding and most optimistic ones stage between 400 and 500 authors – English, American and NLE included. The record (509 authors) has now been transferred from a West German to an East German university. Swiss departments, on average, do not seem to be less demanding, but my Austrian returns indicate slightly more modest (or realistic?) expectations.

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8 Observed by Ulrich Broich in "Anglistische Lektüreempfehlungen in der Bundesrepublik: Entwicklungstendenzen und Forderungen," *Forum Anglistentag 1987: Tübingen*, ed. Hans-Werner Ludwig (Gießen: Hoffmann, 1988), 22-32.

Breaking the numbers down into English, American and NLE sections, we see that English authors, medieval to 20th century, usually make up between 50 and 65%, while American authors usually account for 30 to 40% (more than 50% are rare exceptions), leaving altogether for authors of the NLE a margin between 0 and 26%. Such authors are often innocuously included in the lists for English or American literature. This is particularly true for early "misfits" such as Katherine Mansfield or Malcolm Lowry and for late "internationals" such as Salman Rushdie, Kazuo Ishiguro and Hanif Kureishi. But even where the NLE are allotted a section of their own (which is meanwhile the case in about one third of the reading lists), famous NLE authors will also be found and honoured in the English or American literature sections.

There are, obviously, centres for the study of the NLE, or at least for one or two select regions, and the existence of such centres (or their projects) are usually reflected in the reading lists. Thus we find evidence in the reading recommendations supplied of the African and Caribbean centre in Bayreuth; the African leanings in Braunschweig; the Canadian preferences in Eichstätt, Cologne and Jena; the Canadian and Caribbean emphasis in Saarbrücken; and the New Zealand and Pacific interests at the University of Basel. (From common knowledge one would have to add Augsburg, Trier and Vienna for Canada, Essen for Africa, Wuppertal and Klagenfurt for Australia.) Other departments demonstrate in their reading lists a more evenly balanced interest in all or most of the regions of the NLE: notably Kiel, Munich, Tübingen, Chemnitz, Leipzig, Potsdam and Zurich. (And again one would have to add Frankfurt and Gießen, from common knowledge.) The development of a specified interest in the NLE – as evident from the lists of recommended reading supplied – is strongest in the reformed universities in the German East. It appears to be considerably more modest in Switzerland and Austria, where none of the universities (with the exception of Zurich) puts forth a substantial number (or even a special section) of NLE authors.

Our final question is: How do individual authors fare in these reading lists? Altogether, no less than 245 authors share 689 nominations. But on first sight, the one-person-up principle is also valid here. And there is still a large gap between the 13 authors recommended on ten or more lists and those 163 writers who are named only once or twice. But there is a continuum between these extremes, and the competitive situation in the literature of one area becomes more evident in reading lists than in teaching announcements. It is not just that teaching may be more selective and therefore a stricter force in the canon-forming process, but reading lists usually yield the little space needed to accommodate the variety that the often flashy and formulaic teaching announcements do not reveal. Thus our reading lists supply more of a canonization profile in depth. The most favoured NLE

author on this basis (cf. my “top twenty” list, Table C, left column) is Katherine Mansfield, nominated in 20, i.e. in more than 50% of our 38 lists of recommended reading. She is closely followed by V.S. Naipaul (19), by Margaret Atwood and Salman Rushdie (18 each), by Doris Lessing (17), Patrick White (15) and Chinua Achebe (14). All the major areas of the NLE can so far be seen to be represented once: New Zealand, the Caribbean, Canada, India, South Africa, Australia and West Africa. The frequency list continues with Jean Rhys and Nadine Gordimer (12 each), Wole Soyinka and Derek Walcott (11 each), Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Michael Ondaatje (10 each). They come remarkably close to the “firsts” in their respective areas, and they are followed by an even denser field of authors nominated 5 and more times.

Since East German reading lists tend to be more detailed for the NLE – the six East German departments represented supplied no less than 38% of the total nominations, whereas 25 West German departments supply no more than 56% (the rest of author nominations is divided unequally between Switzerland [5%] and Austria [1%]) – , a significant number of authors can be seen to be extolled by the new reading lists of the East German departments. These are mostly young writers who did not yet find their way into, or their due respect in, the slightly more traditional reading lists of the West. This is notably the case for the African author Ben Okri (3), who does not turn up in the recommended reading of the old FRG; the same applies to the Australian David Malouf (3), the Canadian Tomson Highway (2), the West Indians Caryl Phillips (3) and Olive Senior (3). For Michael Ondaatje (6 vs. 3), Keri Hulme (4 vs. 2) and Raja Rao (3 vs. 1), the East German nomination numbers are significantly higher than the West German ones. Since all these observations, however, can only rely on a very low database, they ought to be handled with due care and reservation.

For the same reason, there is no clear indication in our material for any special author favourites in Austria or Switzerland, beyond the modest statistical evidence that in Switzerland there seems to be relatively less encouragement in the fields of Canadian and Australian studies and slightly more in the African, Caribbean and Indian areas.

#### 4. Ranking

Altogether, my findings support the claim that contemporary Germany, in spite of many shortcomings (some of which are due to the current cuts in university budgets – one of our sacrifices to the Euro) has still one of the liveliest and most courageous university systems when it comes to the open horizons of innovations in academic teaching. The reasons for this seem to

be, first: the comparatively open course structure (often misnamed as “*Freiheit der Lehre*”) that permits the teaching staff to adapt quickly to new discoveries and developments; second: a vital group of academics who, since the early 1970s, pushed the “opening of the canon” to include the NLE into the teaching of English; third: the explicit encouragement to structural change in favour of the NLE expressed, from 1990 on, by the annual meeting of German-speaking Professors of English on occasion of the *Anglistentag*; and fourth: the recommendations of the *Wissenschaftsrat* concerning the structure of English studies in the Eastern *Länder*.

Is all this different from British, American or international phenomena? It most probably is, at least to a certain extent. There is one piece of research on which we can ground a few tentative comparative observations. Wolfgang Zach’s attempt at a questionnaire-based international canon of English Literature<sup>9</sup> established preferential catalogues of authors who were nominated on the reading lists suggested by 28 colleagues from 20 different countries. From his list on the NLE (which, for him and others, arguably includes Anglo-Irish Literature) the 23 authors from our fields rank from 17 nominations (Patrick White) down to 4 nominations (Lessing to Keneally) [Table C: right column]. Comparing this ranking list with our findings gained on the basis of German-speaking departmental reading recommendations, we arrive at a few interesting asymmetries. Some authors enjoy amazing favour in Central Europe, by comparison to their international renown. Katherine Mansfield (first rank, according to our ‘German-speaking’ preference list, vs. 12-13 in Zach’s international ranking), Doris Lessing (5 vs. 18-23) and Jean Rhys (9 vs. 14-17) are those authors promoted by the steepest ‘gradients’ of relative preference. Rushdie and Naipaul also fare better in Central Europe than in Zach’s international survey. Walcott (10-11) and Ondaatje (12-13) – as well as J.M. Coetzee, Peter Carey, Keri Hulme and MacLennan further down the list – seem to be particularly favoured in a German-speaking milieu while they are not mentioned at all among the first 23 in the international survey.

On the other hand, there are obviously a number of authors whose central European recognition seems to be lower than their international standing. White and Achebe are reduced by five positions, Soyinka by six, Laurence, Narayan and Wilson Harris by even more.

It is difficult to say why this is so, and a well-corroborated answer would certainly require some more detailed empirical reception analysis for each writer on a broader scale. A multiplicity of factors is undoubtedly at

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9 “A Canon of English Literature? An International Survey,” *English Literature and the University Curriculum*, ed. W. Zach, Literature in English, vol.3 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992), 53-57.

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work in the regional and local upgrading and downgrading of an individual author – starting from the person’s real or imagined German connection, as may be the case with Mansfield or Doris Lessing, or an author’s availability in German translation (and the marketing power of his or her publisher, which follows laws outside the control of academe). But there is also evidence of reputations shaped or at least uplifted by outstanding academic publications and teaching activities – which is certainly the case with Hugh MacLennan.<sup>10</sup> After all, even this paper may contribute to the petrification – or to the questioning – of the canonized value of authors mentioned, and even provoke the establishment or rehabilitation of authors ignored.

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10 Triggered off by Paul Goetsch’s dissertation *Das Romanwerk Hugh MacLennans: Eine Studie zum literarischen Nationalismus in Kanada* (Hamburg: de Gruyter, 1961), the first major German post-war book published in the field of the NLE.

# Teaching Postcolonial English Literature in Germany

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BARBARA KORTE\*



**A**t most European universities, literatures in English are taught within a 'foreign' context that differs more or less significantly from the cultures in which the literatures in question were originally conceived. Where this difference is made explicit in the classroom, the usual aim is to deepen the students' intercultural competence and enhance their willingness to engage with 'other' cultures in their very 'otherness.' We tend to be less aware of the fact that similarities of contexts may also affect the students' response to literature quite significantly. The following remarks, which arise from my personal experience of teaching at both Western and Eastern universities of reunited Germany, present a case study of this kind of contextual relevance: the special pertinence that colonial and postcolonial (or 'New') literatures in English seem to have acquired at the current moment in German history, in contrast with earlier German contexts.

I had not thought about this possible relevance until I changed cultural contexts myself in 1993. Three years after reunification, I left my alma mater at Cologne and went East to teach at the Technical University of Chemnitz. During one of my first terms there, I reused an introductory course of lectures on post/colonial English literature that had originally been written for West German students. During one of the first lectures now delivered under Eastern eyes, one quotation caused a hilarious response which it had definitely not elicited one year earlier from an audience in the West: "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet ..." The quote is of course from Kipling's "The Ballad of East and West," which for East Germans in reunited Germany appears to have gained a significance quite independent from the context in which the poem was written.

This anecdotal evidence of cultural interference got me interested in the various contexts in which post/colonial literatures have been taught in German English Studies. I offer a sketch of these contexts here as an

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\* This article first appeared in *The European English Messenger*, Vol. IX, No.1 (Spring 2000) and is reprinted by kind permission of the editor and the author.



invitation to further discussion: should students' 'native' context be acknowledged explicitly in courses of English literature? What didactic or interpretational rewards might be gained from such a decision? Could colleagues from other European regions suggest other examples where foreign contexts have seemed to affect the teaching of 'new' and 'older' English literatures?

### The Topicality of New Literatures in English

In reunited Germany of the late 1990s, courses in the New Literatures in English have become an established part of the curriculum. Almost a tenth of the courses in English Studies are offered in this area, with an increasing number taught by senior staff, as interest from students grows. Students are now generally very active in the various associations, conferences, workshops, etc. devoted to their study. From the point of view of staff, current interest in the New English Literatures is motivated by concerns that are not nationally specific, like the demand for canon revision, or the awareness of the challenge global cultural changes necessarily put to a subject based on the only true remaining world language: the need to rethink concepts of cultural identity and cultural relationships, to abandon established distributions of power and to pay greater attention to phenomena of cultural hybridity.

As always, other factors are involved, significantly different in the Western and Eastern parts of post-World War II Germany. However, in both parts, and in potential contrast to other European countries, this interest has been entirely dissociated from Germany's own historical involvement in imperialism. In the collective memory of German people today, German expansionism is connected with the Nazi usurpation of European territory rather than the country's brief imperialist past. When the imperialist spirit was alive in Germany around the turn of the century, it nourished an early interest in Britain's colonies on behalf of German English Studies, as Gerhard Stilz has pointed out in two articles.<sup>1</sup> After the Second World War, however, remembrance of Germany's colonial days was overshadowed by the more recent atrocities and the upheavals they had caused in the political situation of the present.

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1 Cf. Gerhard Stilz, "Continental Discontents: Central European Constructions of World Literature in English," in *Anglistik: Mitteilungen des Verbandes Deutscher Anglisten*, 8, no. 2 (1997): 133-145, and his "Commonwealth Studies in German-Speaking Countries 1977-1987: A Tour of New Horizons" in *Critical Approaches to the New Literatures in English*, ed. Dieter Riemenschneider (Essen: Die Blaue Eule, 1989): 13-31.

### New English Literatures in West Germany

Since the 1970s, the New English Literatures have become an increasingly important part of the curriculum of English Studies in the old Federal Republic both because of a need to revise the traditional content of English Studies and because of certain political commitments – tendencies released by the intellectual climate of 1968. A general interest in the so-called Third World and in multiculturalism and more recently in the ecological movement have contributed to West German interest in particular postcolonial countries.

Courses taught in this area have spanned a wide range. There has long been a preference for certain regions, especially Canada and Africa and later also Australia, which is now giving way to a broader consideration of postcolonial literatures worldwide. Special thematic interests since the 70s have included processes of decolonisation, especially in Black Africa, anti-apartheid in South Africa, or the situation of the indigenous population and ethnic minorities in the former settler colonies and present immigrant countries. Not only does marginalisation within postcolonial societies seem to have attracted the sympathetic interest of West German students and teachers, but also the fact that these cultures in general occupy a more marginalised position in the world than the traditional centres of English Studies.

For many teachers and students, the New English Literatures have thus also had an initial attraction of novelty; a discipline found that it could still discover terra incognita. Many early courses taught in the field accordingly used literature as a platform for explorations of cultural specificity and ‘images’ of the newly discovered countries, taking stock of a country’s characteristic landscapes and nature, its history (especially of colonisation and immigration), its population, the people’s ways of life and mentalities, the construction of national and regional identities.

The multiculturalism of many postcolonial societies has retained its topicality in the West. Germany does not officially consider itself an immigrant country, but there has been a high percentage of migrants from Southern Europe and Turkey in the old Federal Republic for decades, which may have contributed to the particular interest of West Germans in this feature of postcolonial cultures.

### New English Literatures in the German Democratic Republic

It is not easy for a person from the West to trace information about the teaching of the New English Literatures in the GDR. Public course

announcements are hard to obtain (if published at all), and when the old academic institutions of the GDR were 'wound up' after reunification, many of those active in this area disappeared from the scene and are no longer available for interviews. It would be highly desirable if the European History of English Studies project of ESSE could contribute to greater transparency in this area.

In any case, before the *Wende*, there were only a few courses in New English Literatures in East Germany: "It must be kept in mind that in the GDR English was not the first and most favoured foreign language and that, before unification, the NLE could only be selectively taught in a very few places such as Leipzig (Australian, African Literature) and Jena (Canadian writing)."<sup>2</sup>

In terms of thematic orientation, research already published or accessible in institutions such as the *Deutsche Bücherei* in Leipzig (now a branch of the German national library) allows us to suggest some tentative conclusions.<sup>3</sup> Like all 'ideological' subjects, English Studies in the GDR had a more or less obvious political bias, especially at the height of the Cold War. A standard history of English literature, first issued in the 1960s, contains a few very short sections on some postcolonial literatures that indicate where early GDR interest in these literatures lay.

In their *Englische Literatur*, Helmut Findeisen and Georg Seehase emphasise Australian writers who adopt a working-class point of view (e.g. Katharine Prichard), depict the oppression of the aboriginals (e.g. Xavier Herbert) or "have adopted the principles of socialist realism" (e.g. Frank Hardy). For Anglo-Canada, Dyson Carter – a writer not found in the Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature – is presented as the "most prominent representative of progressive contemporary literature"; his novels are claimed to depict "the rise of the labour movement and of the movement for peace and understanding." For South Africa, Findeisen and Seehase highlight literature about the struggle for independence and the fight against racism, apartheid and exploitation.<sup>4</sup>

When the Cold War abated, a wider range of areas, authors, themes and approaches became 'suitable,' and by the 1980s it was possible for theses to

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2 Stilz, "Continental Discontents," 138. This restraint can be explained in part by the fact that the New English Literatures played no role in English as a school subject, preparation for which was a major purpose of English Studies at university. In West German schools, representation of the New English Literatures was equally low to nonexistent, but in the West, university curricula have traditionally been independent of school curricula.

3 Cf. Helmut Findeisen/Georg Seehase, *Englische Literatur* (Leipzig: VEB Bibliographisches Institut, 1965): 32-35; my translations.

4 I should like to thank Dr. Claudia Sternberg for her help with this preliminary survey.

miss out entirely on state-ideological relevance.<sup>5</sup> Even then, however, much research in the post/colonial literatures was still contained in the desired channels and continued to speak in favour of anti-capitalist internationalism, anti-imperialist solidarity with the Third World, anti-racism (racialism being firmly associated with capitalism) and support for independence movements in former areas of imperialist influence. Black Africa and South Africa were regions favoured for obvious reasons, but sympathy and solidarity were also expressed for the plight of autochthonous peoples in Canada or Australia.

It is fair to say that GDR interest in the New English Literatures sympathised with those marginalised through the power structures of colonialism and with resistance against such power structures. From a different ideological vantage point, this overlaps with some of the interest which West Germans have associated with the literatures in question. In both contexts, East and West Germany, sympathy with those marginalised was expressed from the position of cultures that would have defined themselves as non-marginalised. The West approached third-world and minority cultures from a privileged economic position that could afford to commit itself to the underprivileged and outsiders. The East approached them from the stance of a socialist society which had already overcome capitalism and imperialism and thus felt obliged to support emerging brother nations.

When the GDR ceased to exist in 1990, this position changed dramatically, but significantly the new interest of East Germans did not become identical with that in the West. Today, sympathy with the marginalisation of and within postcolonial societies still has quite different contexts in West and East Germany: while students in the West still tend to look at these phenomena from a non-marginalised position, students with an East German background now frequently approach the New English Literatures with a new potential of identification, namely their own sense of marginalisation in the new Germany, their own identity problems that have resulted from reunification.

### New English Literatures in the New Eastern States of Germany

This was a reaction probably not foreseen when, in the process of restructuring the Eastern universities after reunification, the New English Literatures were granted a strong status in the new curricula of English Studies. The teaching of these literatures in East German universities is now predominantly in the hands of academics trained in the West, who may be

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5 Cf., for instance, Karla El Hassan's Habilitation (post-PhD) thesis on Canadian short story cycles, *Kurzgeschichtenensembles* (Jena 1984).

expected to teach these subjects with the same approaches and theoretical frameworks as in the West. Nevertheless, the everyday experience of East German students seems to make for a somewhat different response than that common in the West.

Even before Reunification Day on 3 October 1990, the mechanisms of German unification were paralleled with those of imperialism. Instead of two parts of a country growing together, both making significant contributions to the new socio-political and cultural entity, East Germany seemed to be overrun and swallowed by the dominant West. East Germans felt treated like inhabitants of a developing country exposed to political, administrative, economic and cultural western imperialism. The deliberately nasty term '*Buschgeld*,' literally translated as bush money, was used for the additional premium that civil servants received for daring to 'rough it' in the new Eastern *Länder*.

In the *Guardian*, a few days before reunification, Günter Grass expressed his anxiety about the new economic imperialism of his West German compatriots, worrying that it would eventually spill over beyond the German Eastern border: "Shouldn't they be asking themselves East of the Oder whether the West Germans are treating their compatriots like potential colonial subjects? If so, how will they treat the Poles of this world when they have put their finances in order...?"<sup>6</sup> Two years later, Reiner Oschmann sketched the mood and sense of identity of East Germans in the *Observer*: "Coping with a fundamental change of value systems, and faced with rapidly increasing unemployment [...] and the often ignorant and arrogant accusations of having gone rotten under socialism, many now see the westerners as colonial masters out to humiliate their servants."<sup>7</sup>

By the time this article was published, much 'indigenous' GDR culture had indeed already gained museological status. The familiar products and brands had almost vanished from the shops and were instead displayed in the glass cases of city museums – remnants of a culture that seemed to have been displaced for good. To anyone standing in front of such displays it will be evident to what extent East Germans must have gone through a collective identity crisis. To this crisis, however, they are now reacting with a pronounced 'Eastalgia' (*Ostalgie*) for what was good in their old culture, ranging from social benefits and good childcare facilities to the familiar old products and brands that are now found in East German stores again. A new, self-confident and specifically East German identity is under formation and will sooner or later challenge the established Western sense of German identity.

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6 "Rivers of Change" in the *Guardian*, special issue on Germany, 28 September 1990: 27.

7 "A Wall goes up again in German hearts" in the *Observer*, 13 September 1992: 11.

This sketch of the present situation of East Germans in the reunited Germany may explain why their current response to post/colonial English literatures appears to be partially different from that of West Germans – as my initial Kipling anecdote was meant to suggest. The discourses of power and subjection, the loss and reconstitution of cultural identity, the sense of marginalisation and outsiderdom frequently thematised in these literatures currently have a special appeal in the new Eastern *Länder*.

This is also indicated in a statement made by a young East German academic during a panel discussion intended to assess the success of the first five years of the German Association for the Study of the New English Literatures in 1994. Jana Gohrisch, who had begun her PhD thesis on Joan Riley when East Germany was still the GDR, now explicitly related her interest in the postcolonial cultures with the new German identity problem. She deplored that concern with these literatures – now largely conducted by academics trained in the West – tended to ignore the personal dimension which these literatures can have in the united Germany. The following is my translation from the published minutes of the discussion:

At the same time her [i.e. Gohrisch's] experience of the last few years has been that postcolonial phenomena (such as identity) and literatures are dealt with from a position of personal distance, i.e. the problems treated seem to concern others, not ourselves. Germany does not reflect about itself in this light, it does not relate [these problems] to its own national context. She considers it necessary to involve other scholarly disciplines, for instance German Studies and American Studies, but also the position of those marginalised.<sup>8</sup>

In Chemnitz, transfers from their own situation were made relatively often by my East German students when we dealt with examples of the New English Literatures. I have not noted a similar reaction with my present West German students at Tübingen University, even though discourses of power, decolonisation, cultural identity, etc. are of course regularly discussed in the relevant classes. In a class on postcolonial rewritings of Shakespeare during my first term in Tübingen in 1997, I deliberately asked the participants whether they could relate the issues raised in Marina Warner's novel *Indigo* (a *Tempest* adaptation) to German situations. They immediately mentioned the novel's feminist discourse, they also made comparisons between Warner's presentation of blacks in contemporary Britain and the treatment of ethnic minorities in contemporary Germany. But none of them would think of West Germany as a new Prospero to an

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8 "Protokoll der Panel-Discussion: Innenansichten/Introspections: The First Five Years" in *ACOLIT*, No. 35 (November 1994): 6-10, here 6. *ACOLIT* is the newsletter of the German Association for the Study of the New English Literatures.

East German Caliban. Even though the German national media have a lot to say about the Eastern Länder, many West German students appear to be unaware of East German ways of life and problems of cultural identity and how these might eventually affect their own sense of Germanness. Are university classes in post/colonial English literature a site where they should be made aware of such issues?

It has been my personal experience that, in a special area of English Studies in Germany, English literature can be rewardingly discussed with an awareness of the students' specific cultural context – not only because students, when addressed in their personal concerns, tend to be more active participants than they might otherwise be. In reunited Germany the post/colonial English literatures appear to have gained a particular cultural transferability that can be exploited to make students aware of processes currently reforging German cultural identity, thus also revealing some general mechanisms of identity formation.

Arguably, this special opportunity of approaching the New English Literatures in Germany will be of passing interest. Another special interest that these literatures have within English Studies worldwide is probably of a more enduring relevance: the necessity of thinking about global cultural developments from positions detached from traditional centres and hierarchies. Even in this respect, however, occasional explicit links between the 'foreign' cultures and the students' own may support the development of transcultural understanding and intercultural competence.

# The Rise Of The New Literatures

## Reminiscences of a Sceptical Optimist

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PETER O. STUMMER



Looking back is nowadays wont to be accompanied by either anger or frustration, if not sometimes by both. My attitude, I presume, is one of resigned optimism, though. In the following conjectures, I shall try to explain why.

It all began with a feeling of rebelliousness. Established anglistics was perceived then as asking the wrong questions, or no questions at all. The *raison d'être* of philological activity was no longer plausible for all and sundry. So what attracted my attention was first of all the situation members of various minorities found themselves in in Great Britain. Prolonged first-hand experience of Scotland could well have had something to do with it. After a while, in the seventies, some of us hotheads decided to put our acts together and get organised. The ground was slightly shifted to the countries of origin of the minorities and to the writing traditions of their own. With or without Heinemann, the new classics were unearthed. We thought we were giving Anglistics Ltd a well-deserved kick in the behind, and were consequently abused – in the manner of good old binary thinking – for seeking to replace Shakespeare by Achebe.

The other defence strategy which was put forward was to construe an obvious case of image neurosis on our part. A cluster of *non-arrivés*, it was suggested, most of them not possessing the highest professorial laurels, were giving themselves airs by pushing for new contours of the field and setting up a separate rival association with, alas, active student participation.

From there we skidded into a kind of pseudo-radicalism, Palestinian head-scarf fashion and all, sometimes also adopting something which, with the benefit of hindsight, must be called verging on reverse paternalism, with us taking up the cudgel for writers with First-Nation background, or Maori, or Aborigine, or whatever, claiming thereby to be balancing the cultural accounts. Naturally, this could be widely dismissed as political *chic* or as *ersatz* commitment.



Then occurred the formation of fractions, the major split between the interest in the so-called settler societies and the truly Third World domaine. It would be hypocritical not to admit that the sordid question of money and the availability of funds played a major role in the process. Specialist congregations saw the light of day with the convergence of public and private gain in that, for instance, scholarships could be had for research and sponsorship for conferences and exchanges, library support for future 'centres of excellence.' The outlook was clearly a national one. Canada,<sup>1</sup> Australia, New Zealand desired to move up a notch or two on the international scale of conspicuousness. With the Cold War at its last gasp, there was more and more breathing space for the members of the Second World. India, parts of Africa and the Caribbean, after their non-alignment detours did not see much change and were largely left out of the new endeavour. Moreover, in the field of the literatures written in English there could be advanced a fake ethnographer's argument which happened to follow the divide between the have-gots and the have-nots. According to this view, the settler societies and their literatures were English alright, or at least English derived (with the indigenous element deemed negligible), whereas in all the other cases there were legions of autochthonous cultures none of us new anything about, so we could easily be stamped as utter *dilitanti* or sent packing to join forces with Africanists, Indologues and the like.

Luckily enough, the subversive stance provided a possible retreat. In true post-modern fashion, you could get away from politics and – comparable to the change from women's to gender studies – keep some partisan attitude. Just as deconstructing this or that was popularised and became rather fashionable, being subversive here or there degenerated into a *passe-partout* metaphor for all sorts of things. Mostly, in the guise of grousing and griping directed at all-powerful London from the perspective of down under, and to a lesser degree, from the polar regions.

After resting on this comfortable *chaise longue* for a while, word was spread that the postmodern paradigm was a bit of a *cul-de-sac* after all. The total abandonment of commitment was reversed, in particular in the context of the discourses concerned with Female Genital Mutilation and the Human Rights<sup>2</sup> issue. At long last more and more people looked into the abyss of infinite difference and were appalled. The once loudly praised multiculturalism all of a sudden became a widely rejected notion and was debunked as just another trick of the forces that be to divide and rule.<sup>3</sup>

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1 On the other hand, as late as September 2000, a Manitoba conference could ask whether Canada was 'post-colonial.'

2 See the (leftist) position recently advanced by Samantha Power (Power 2002).

3 Mike Phillips is on record for discarding it in favour of individual syncretic (my word) cultural practice (see Phillips 2001). Unfortunately, the once much maligned

Ever so unobtrusively we had slithered into globalisation and had been conditioned for the positive reaction to the appeal of the internet. Both phenomena preached a truly supra-national attitude and had, as defense mechanisms – comparable to the liberation movements of the Sixties – various nationalisms slink in by the back door again. It is remarkable in this context that, through the concomitant collapse of the coffee price and the effect of the IMF structural adjustment programme, for example part of the blame for the tragedy in Rwanda can be laid at the doorstep of globalisation.<sup>4</sup> By others, under the impression of recent worldwide protest movements, the impact of globalisation is regarded as a possible improvement of citizenship.<sup>5</sup> These new social movements, however, see the internet as a “contradictory feature of globalization” that is “both anti-democratizing and democratizing” (Smith 2001: 123). It has also become glaringly obvious by now that the world wide web is far from being only mildly egalitarian, as the recent “jump from free to fee”<sup>6</sup> shows. American Greetings Corp. gets you hooked, so-to-speak, through their services such as Blue Mountain-Arts.com and then charge a fee. Equally most papers and journals now demand fees for online access or a look into their archives.

*Tempora mutantur...* Nine Eleven, they say, has changed everything.<sup>7</sup> Ronald Dworkin, who saw negative implications in “The Threat to Patriotism,”<sup>8</sup> did not make much headway. On the contrary, the Institute for American Values made a horrendous splash when they published “What we are fighting for,” signed by an impressive cross-section of American intellectuals. Recent issues of ‘strategic misinformation’ and ‘nuclear posturing’ have only slightly affected this. A bit of Said-bashing has therefore become something of an obligatory act these days, or so it seems in the confines of an all-pervasive Islamic extremism. My experience in a prolonged email debate with an author of *Die Zeit* writing in the Huntington-Joffe vein may be typical and especially revealing with regard to the direction which the recent changes have taken. Criticising the blunt misrepresentation of Said in the said article, I laid myself open to accusations ranging from ‘naive do-gooder’ to misguided member of the ‘Bleeding Heart

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‘essentialism’ surprisingly crept back under biological auspices in such attempts as ‘the unmasking of Mudrooroo’ (see Clark 2001).

4 See Chossudovsky 1999.

5 See Smith 2001.

6 See Walker 2002.

7 “Tough positions are needed both as an end in themselves and to show that we are not the flabby degenerates of the fundamentalist imagination. The US government has to prove [...] that Americans are not weaklings addicted to pornography and drugs” is how Daniel Pipes from the *National Interest* puts it (see Pipes 1995).

8 See Dworkin 2002.

Brigade' who inadvertently furthers the belligerent advance of militant Islam. All this would not be worth mentioning, if it was not for the inclusion in the article, as a kind of smear campaign, of "this perverse activity amongst anglicists called postcolonial studies originated by Said." We should, the argument ran, forget simplified notions of Orientalism and concentrate instead more on the distorted image of Occidentalism. By striking coincidence, Avishai Margalit and Ian Buruma published an essay at about the same time bearing exactly this title, where they concocted an odd mixture of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, fascist Japan and bin Laden, with the sole intention of giving the al-Qaeda threat a bigger format as anti-secular, anti-West, anti-city, anti-bourgeois, and, of course, both anti-Jewish and anti-American.<sup>9</sup>

So where is the optimism in all this, the gentle reader, who has been kind enough to follow me that far, will, undoubtedly, ask. Well, I feel inclined to say, in literature itself, where else. I have insisted elsewhere on the importance of a transnational outlook in recent literature in English by the likes of Caryl Phillips, Amitav Ghosh, Rodney Hall, Thomas Keneally and Wilson Harris and would like to concentrate in the remaining space on Timothy Mo for a change.

It has been criticised quite rightly, in a recent issue of *ACOLIT*, that not enough attention is given to the literature of the Philippines.<sup>10</sup> Mo plays on this in *Brownout on Breadfruit Boulevard* (1995) in as much as he not only thematises the Philippines in relation to Japan, Taiwan and China, but very explicitly puts the islands on the literary map in all their cultural inconclusiveness after the long days spent in "the Spanish convent" and the short spell in "the American bordello." The outlook is very local, concentrating on the South. The military do not figure large. The bringing in of hundreds of anti-terrorist advisors by the United States is not an issue, nor are the kidnappings by the Abu Sayyaf on Jolo or Basilan. Instead, the novel concentrates on the sexual exploitation of Filipinas by Filipinos and by foreigners alike who come in all sorts and sizes. However, my main point of interest lies in the fact that here we have a novel which presents the reader with rather annoying uncertainties as for *Pinoy* writers<sup>11</sup> and questions of their authenticity or their fictitiousness on the one side and a rather intricate and prolonged discussion of postcolonial political correctness hilariously flying in the face of all sorts of taken-for-granted assumptions in the field on the other.

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9 See Margalit and Buruma 2002.

10 See Manarpaac 2001.

11 cf. [http:// pinoylit.webmanila.com](http://pinoylit.webmanila.com).

Mo, we could therefore say sets himself up as a mixture of Lodge and Naipaul. He evidently enjoys conference as well as cross-cultural criticism. In a way, Mo out-Naipauls Naipaul to such a degree that it almost becomes a parody, an impression that is certainly reinforced by the skits at certain aspects of Australians, men and women,<sup>12</sup> just as he plays on anti-Japanese and anti-Chinese stereotypes and prejudices. In particular, Mo and his implied narrator hide behind a slightly mad male German scientist in constant conference feud with a very with-it white female conference *aficionado* from South Africa. The wife of a Filipino senator sets up a conference centre to give her area an economic boost, modish talk of conservationism is just as much deflated as politically hypercorrect anti-racism. For between the hyperaggressive German and the overprotective South African the black representative from Africa is finally annihilated symbolically before he realiter falls a victim to cannibalism back home (309), not before he has had more than his fair share of an opportunity to spout almost every cliché of postcolonial political correctness imaginable. What could be read at first glance as downright support of overt racism turns out to be, after some closer scrutiny, in unison with a deliberate outmanoeuvring of Lodge in truly non-anglosaxon (though they all speak some kind of international English) attitudes, a highly artful and occasionally wonderfully glib exercise in global cross-cultural lampooning, involving many if not all sides of a venture or turbo capitalism which is conspicuously de-centred in that it is almost entirely devoid of First World pretentiousness and repeatedly uses *occidental* as a term of abuse.

Instead of a proper conclusion, I simply feel reminded of an adage which Doris Lessing brought up in a private conversation we had a long time ago about the importance of writers and their critics and the inversely proportional relationship of the two camps with regard to their imagined and their genuine importance. This is not a gibe against theory as such, but constitutes, as I hope my reminiscences have demonstrated, the insistence on the necessity of historicising not only the writing of literature(s) but also the deployment of theory under whatever circumstances.

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<sup>12</sup> Most appropriately, one Aussie is actually compiling a *Compendium of the New Literatures in English* (162).

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# Beyond the Canon?

## Some Reflections on the New Literatures in English

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CECILE SANDTEN\*



The dynamism and complexity of cultures has increasingly become the focus of cultural and literary studies in recent years. This can be observed in the large amount of publications in this area: cultural identities as well as cross-cultural phenomena have been discussed and analysed on a theoretical as well as on a practical level. They have played a decisive role in discourses on globalisation, transnational organisations, postmodern ways of life, decolonisation and various forms of migration, and have thereby gained a significant role not only in the academic world but also in politics and society. Inter- and transcultural studies on cultural identities and multiculturalism have begun to acknowledge these phenomena.

According to James Clifford the notion of “travelling cultures” is still topical today as cultures are endlessly mobile due to processes of migration (see Clifford 1997). Furthermore, there is the ineradicable fact of cultural difference: the critic’s sense of distance to certain cultures accounts for and explicates cultural analysis. Literary texts, however, constantly gain meaning due to their function as mediators in transcultural relations. Such linking becomes most obvious when looking at the influence of postcolonial discourses on contemporary writers in English. It also becomes obvious when looking at developments within the academic world with regard to university appointments, research, associations and conferences. In what follows, I would like to reflect on the New Literatures in English and the position of the *Gesellschaft für die Neuen Englischsprachigen Literaturen*/ Association for the Study of the New Literatures in English (GNEL/ASNEL) within the context of current developments in English Studies (*Englische Philologie*) at German-speaking universities.

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\* I am most grateful to Gerhard Stilz for providing me with copious material on the New Literatures in English at German-speaking universities.

Both the need to give a name to the subject in question and the urge to expand “the canon” by transgressing existing conventions have been persistent features in this respect. Following the initiative started in Frankfurt in 1977, “Commonwealth Studies” as well as the histories and literatures of formerly colonized parts of the world were increasingly acknowledged in German-speaking countries, while linguistic research into different “Varieties of English” retained an uncertain status in the newly established field.<sup>1</sup> Along with the term “Commonwealth” a discussion of how to name this new awareness at our English departments was initiated.<sup>2</sup> The term “Commonwealth literature” was obviously both too confining and outdated and extremely Eurocentric. “Anglophone literature” excluded the many rich literatures of Africa, for instance, written in European languages other than English, and taken in the literal sense, it did not distinguish between mainstream British and American writing and the body of texts under discussion. “Third World” was derogative and made no sense after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist “second world.” “Literature of developing nations” bought into an economic paradigm which most “post-colonial” scholars reject. The term “New Literatures in English” somehow puts much emphasis on newness (Brathwaite, Ngugi or Achebe are hardly ‘new’) and again excludes the non-English-speaking world, though this is the name that was given to the “Association for the Study of the New Literatures in English” (GNEL/ASNEL), founded on 16 June 1989. Amidst all the debates about terminology, language is a key aspect of reclaiming voice and a recurring theme of the post-colonial literature that has been read. However, those who are unwilling to adopt either “New Literatures in English” or “post-colonial” as a label are obliged to find an appropriate term for what is studied. And the question might be raised as to whether we are not already beyond the “post-colonial.”

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1 See Stilz 1989: 25. Although it was a more personal, smaller and intimate gathering, last year’s ASNEL conference at Freiburg University was a combined effort: this time of literary scholars and linguists – of ASNEL and MAVEN (Major Varieties of English); see Heinke 2001 and Manarpaac 2001. This combined effort shows an interest of linguists in literary approaches and of literary scholars in linguistic approaches to the New Literatures in English. There are, of course, several linguists who joined ASNEL years ago and who have sought a close relation between the two areas, as their field of study (varieties of English) is firmly placed within the New Literatures in English and postcolonial studies.

2 For a thorough discussion of Commonwealth Studies in German-speaking countries see Stilz 1989. In this paper, which provides a fine data-base research on the New Literatures in English at universities in German-speaking countries during the mentioned decade, Stilz most interestingly also refers to the time before and after World War II at German-speaking English departments.

Today, instead of being trapped in the singular relationship to a once colonial past, writers who can be considered “post-colonial” or who come under the umbrella of the New Literatures in English develop their topics further. They stop “writing back” and start “doing their own thing” which is then more often than not canonised as “hybrid,” “syncretic” or “cross-cultural” writing, adaptation, performance etc. This raises the question if literary criticism alone is sufficient for an analysis of these texts. An interdisciplinary approach might be more useful than adhering to one field of analysis only: theatre studies, linguistics, anthropology, history, media studies, humanities, performance studies, ecology, economy, law etc. might provide us with useful theoretical and practical material. Barbara Korte, for example, argues for cultural studies *within* literary studies as many post-colonial texts are informed by social, political and cultural discourses and therefore call for analytical tools which help to analyse the texts appropriately (Korte 1996: 445). Gerhard Stilz asks if ASNEL should be seen as an umbrella organisation for specialists in regional literatures, or if it should rather be defined in relation to common perspectives in this field of study (Stilz 1991: 149). He argues for an interdisciplinary approach to the New Literatures in English which also takes neighbouring disciplines such as the social sciences or the humanities into consideration in order to arrive at *integrierte Regionalkunde* – an integrated concept of regional studies (152).

But how can literary scholars and school teachers working in the field of the New Literatures in English adopt the different approaches outlined above in their day-to-day practice? Is it possible to grasp the whole field of study in question and at the same time to move beyond the terms “post-colonial” and “New Literatures in English” – terms that seem less and less capable of circumscribing our subject area in all its complexity?

Proposing the idea of literary scholars able to teach and research in other disciplines within the humanities, social, cultural or media studies, or even law and economics, entails the danger of erasing very specific specialisations from the agenda of English Studies at German-speaking universities. On the one hand, the expansion of the “canon,” which will be furthered by the introduction of “modularisation” at German-speaking universities in the near future, is precisely what ASNEL formulated as one of its goals at its 1994 annual conference: in contrast to other organisations and associations ASNEL members seek a thorough literary-cultural geography of the English-speaking world (Gohrisch 1996: 26). The introduction of modules such as “transnational studies” or “transcultural studies” could promote an interdisciplinary dialogue in our teaching and research and help with the analysis of phenomena such as border-crossings, the notion of diaspora or Black British writing from a wide variety of angles.



On the other hand, the expansion of “the canon” might occur at the expense of already established university positions,<sup>3</sup> a strategy that has already been adopted by some state ministries in order to save money: the traditional “Anglistik” post is quite frequently replaced by a post covering both the traditional “Englische Philologie” *and* the New Literatures in English. Therefore, the chance of bringing about greater structural changes that promote our interest in firmly establishing the New Literatures in English at German-speaking universities is further reduced due to the overall higher education policy that is characterised by a permanent shortage of money especially in the humanities. In addition, the allocation of more than one discipline to one post could pose a danger to literary scholars who might then be expected to be able to teach history, economics or media studies and thus to turn themselves into “all-round geniuses”. This might well have positive effects in reducing narrow specialization in regional literatures. But the negative aspects, such as a decline of thorough area studies in the New Literatures in English, or the cancellation of posts (as will happen at the Universities of Hannover and Trier) specifically allocated to the New Literatures in English would mean a huge loss of what has already been accomplished for the establishment of our field.

An interdisciplinary approach that was at the same time sensitive to different historical and cultural contexts and concerns related to the New Literatures in English was in fact favoured at the beginning of “Commonwealth Studies”, while the bi-polar differentiation of English studies into “Anglistik” and “Amerikanistik” (Stilz 1989: 17) was organised according to a systematic rather than a historical umbrella. But later (by now well-established) associations were formed that focussed exclusively on one region, such as the *Gesellschaft für Kanada-Studien* (“Association of Canadian Studies”), or the *Gesellschaft für Australienstudien* (“Association of Australian Studies”), as more and more people with increasingly diverse interests participated in nation-wide conferences and the need for acquiring academic status was felt strongly. Even at the *Anglistentag* (the Annual Conference of the German Association of University Teachers of English) the New Literatures in English have been established as a more or less permanent section. ASNEL members have joined the *Deutscher Anglistenverband*, and a number of sections related to the New Literatures in English

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3 Positions, professorships and research groups in literary studies or linguistics have been established, for example, at Bayreuth („Institut für Afrikastudien“), at Hannover (with a focus on „Postcolonial Literatures“), at Munich (English-speaking countries in combination with General & Business English), at Potsdam (“Interdisciplinary Centre for Australian Studies”) and at Trier (“Centre for Canadian Studies”); see Gohrisch 1996: 30. In Saarbrücken a professorship designed to teach and research in the New Literatures in English has been established quite recently.

have been set up: sections such as "inner-anglistische Komparatistik" (inner-English comparative literature) in 1983, "Australia" (1988), "New Zealand" (1990), "Canada" (1991), "India" (1993), "South Africa" (1995), "Nigeria" (1996), "the Caribbean" (1997), "South East Asia" (1998), "Postcolonial Theory" (1999), "London: Multiculturalism and the Metropolis" (2000), and "English Literatures and Indigenous Cultures" (2001); at the Anglistentag 2002 at the University of Bayreuth one section offered will be on "Diasporas." This shows that the New Literatures in English have entered established, "canonical" or traditional English Studies (*"Englische Philologie"*) and have thereby extended or even become part of the canon.

Between 1977 and 1987, 50% of German-speaking universities offered courses on the New Literatures in English on a fairly regular basis; 1987 (summer and winter term combined) just over 100 courses were offered (Stilz 1989: 27). Today, more than 50 universities offer about 150 courses on the New Literatures in English each term.<sup>4</sup> But crucial structural changes have not taken place so far: teaching and research still depend on the personal preferences of individual teachers. Though there is, as the data show, a growing scope and interest in the New Literatures in English we still lack firm financial and political support. As to financial backing, GNEL/ASNEL can be proud of being an organisation that appeals especially to students and post-graduates, who form over half of our members (Gohrisch 1996: 27). This membership structure, however, results in lower membership fees because of reduced rates for students, and the budget of the Association has therefore always been under severe strain.

What we should do, for instance, is to try and recruit more English teachers to GNEL/ASNEL, which calls for very early activities with regard to our English students who will become future teachers of English. In addition, a permanent section for teachers at our conferences highlighting didactic aspects related to the New Literatures in English should be offered. A future conference theme could be "Culture and Education in the New Literatures in English" in order to discuss recent developments in the New Literatures in English and the English Foreign Language classroom.

With regard to political backing of GNEL/ASNEL, it is interesting to note that while there has been a marked increase in more general interest in transcultural studies, multiculturalism, processes of migration, globalisation and cross-cultural phenomena that has also entered the social and political agenda, GNEL/ASNEL seems not to have profited significantly from these developments as yet.

For these reasons, we should try to gain a foothold in research programmes organised by the DAAD or the DFG to be able to offer temporary

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4 See *Acolit* No. 49 (December 2001).

research posts to well-established as well as promising young international scholars or to internationally acclaimed younger writers from all over the world ("writers in residence").<sup>5</sup> This should allow us to continue to provide a platform e.g. in the form of symposia for a lively and thorough discussion of GNEL/ASNEL-relevant aspects and the fast changes that take place in inter- and transcultural studies due to migratory processes and globalisation.<sup>6</sup> Further, politically related foundations, such as the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung or the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, should be approached as future partners when it comes to the financing of our conferences and support for our post-graduate students, as these foundations also have recognised the changes in society due to multiculturalism, processes of migration and cross-cultural phenomena. What we need is political and public recognition that would allow us, for instance, to establish a yearly award for an excellent study in the field of the New Literatures in English.

Our half-yearly newsletter, *ACOLIT* (happy birthday!) which is most useful as it directly informs our members, students and colleagues in Germany and abroad, should be turned into a full journal in the future in order to provide a more thorough representation of our study of the New Literatures in English. An additional (and proper) GNEL/ASNEL-web-page would also facilitate direct communication, enhance networking amongst ourselves and inform members and friends about current events such as guest lectures or readings offered at our universities.

All these aspects might also help us to come closer to answering the question of how to name the subject we study. The terms "New Literatures in English" and "post-colonial literatures" exist as umbrella terms, but they seem increasingly unable to contain both the creative texts we discuss and the research related to these texts. The question arises where the New Literatures in English are heading to in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: do we simply become a side aspect of traditional English Studies or are we able to jointly form a strong association which conveys a clear-cut picture of what we are doing beyond the "canon"?

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5 The Socrates Exchange-programmes involving staff (up to six months) and students (up to 12 months) are easily accessible and well suited for promoting international dialogue and exchange. At the University of Bremen I was able to set up a Socrates-Exchange programme with the Centre for Colonial and Post-Colonial Studies (headed by Elleke Boehmer) at The Nottingham Trent University in England; see [www.english.ntu.ac.uk/ccps/](http://www.english.ntu.ac.uk/ccps/).

6 See the documentation of two symposia that took place at the universities of Frankfurt (1994) and Giessen (1995) in Collier et al., 1998. Guest speakers were Homi Bhabha (Frankfurt) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Arun Mukherjee, Rhonda Cobham, and Wilson Harris (Giessen).

The New Literatures in English and the Varieties in English are an excellent field to study and discuss multicultural and transcultural processes and developments. What we need is proper and permanent staffing and equipment for our research and teaching, an interdisciplinary platform to discuss topical aspects related to our fields of interest, as well as a more effective infrastructure that helps us to acquire greater public, political and cultural recognition – and financial backing. This would help us to trigger the structural changes that are needed.

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# Hat die gegenwärtige Novellierungssucht im Hochschulrecht auch etwas mit den Neuen Englischsprachigen Literaturen zu tun?

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Abstract: The coalition government of the Social Democratic and the Green Party has taken a major step in re-shaping the German higher education system. The government prides itself in having provided rules that will allow young academics to calculate their careers more effectively and to advance to professorial posts more quickly than they apparently do now. The government lays claim to protecting these academics from the insecurity of temporal contracts that is the reality for those lucky ones who have been able to secure a job in the university at all. Under the new law, the majority of the non-professorial academics (who have not made it to one of the almost non-existent permanent positions) will only be allowed to be employed for a total of twelve years. The first six-year period is reserved for the PhD while the second phase is to be spent in a junior professorship based on the American tenure-track model minus the tenure track.

As the bulk of academic research in Germany is done in projects which rely on temporary contracts this government move threatens to destroy the academic culture that has grown up around these flexible and innovative research communities. Moreover, it is detrimental to a whole generation of young scholars who are currently working on their “Habilitation,” up to now the standard German qualification for a professorship that consists of a refereed second book (the PhD thesis being the first one) and a formal examination. Contrary to conventional practice, the “Habilitation” will not be taken into account in future applications for professorial posts as the government wishes to reserve them for successful junior professors. The junior professorship itself appears to be a risky enterprise for those happy few who will get one because the work load prescribed will probably equal that of a full professor with the additional burden of having to write a second book. Given the difficult condition of academic teaching and learning, a reform of the sorely tried German mass university is definitely a good idea. This reform, however, is doomed to fail because it does not allocate an extra penny to the chronically under-financed higher education facilities, but relies instead on an equally miraculous and gratuitous renewal.

Um es gleich vorwegzunehmen – selbstverständlich hat sie das. Am 23. Februar 2002 trat, nach dem Professorenbesoldungsreformgesetz, nun auch das 5. Gesetz zur Änderung des Hochschulrahmengesetzes (5. HRGÄndG) in Kraft, in dessen Folge sich die deutsche Hochschullandschaft zumindest im Mittelbau stark verändern wird. Da der Mittelbau nicht nur einen großen Teil der Lehre und Forschung trägt, sondern auch das Reservoir der zukünftigen Professorinnen und Professoren bildet, ist er natürlich für die Neuen Englischsprachigen Literaturen überlebenswichtig. Die Änderungen des Hochschulrahmengesetzes (HRG), denen in Kürze eine 6. Novelle folgen soll, die hoffentlich einige Kritikpunkte korrigieren wird, waren und sind begleitet von Veränderungen in der bundesdeutschen Forschungsförderung, die wiederum vor allem den Mittelbau und damit den wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchs betreffen. So hat zum Beispiel die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), ohne daß die Pläne der Bundesregierung schon Gesetzeswirklichkeit geworden wären, deren Grundgedanken bereits in ihre neuen Richtlinien eingearbeitet. Zum Ende 1998 hat die DFG das Postdoc-Programm eingestellt und bietet nur noch zweijährige Stipendien im Normalverfahren an. Der Schwerpunkt der Finanzierung liegt auf der Förderung der eigenen (Projektleiter)Stelle in Nachwuchsgruppen und auf den (allerdings auch reduzierten) Exzellenzprogrammen wie Emmy Noether und Heisenberg, deren Altersobergrenze bei 35 Jahren liegt. Promovenden sollen neben Stipendien vor allem Stellen in (internationalen) Graduiertenkollegs und DFG-Projekten wahrnehmen.

Welche Änderungen sieht nun das neue Gesetz vor und welche Schlußfolgerungen können wir daraus ableiten? Sowohl die DFG als auch das Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF) legen ihrem neuen Modell der Universitäts- und Hochschulstruktur Bedürfnisse zugrunde, die ganz offensichtlich Forschungsparadigmen aus den experimentellen und angewandten Naturwissenschaften entspringen. Dazu gehören die praktische (Labor)Arbeit in Forschergruppen, rasch aufeinanderfolgende Gruppenveröffentlichungen in internationalen Zeitschriften und der (in einigen Fächern besonders) hohe Stellenwert außeruniversitärer Praxis. Laborleiterinnen und -leiter, zum Beispiel in der biowissenschaftlichen Grundlagenforschung, sind heute in den meisten Fällen promovierte Mitarbeiter, die ihrerseits Doktoranden und Diplomanden betreuen, deren Tätigkeit in das zentrale Forschungsvorhaben des Lehrstuhlinhabers einfließt. Aus der Sicht der experimentell arbeitenden Naturwissenschaften ist die größere Aufgabenvielfalt und -menge der zukünftigen Juniorprofessoren also nur die Widerspiegelung bereits heute praktizierter Arbeitsformen, die auf diese Weise offiziell anerkannt werden. Mit den Reformen will das Bundesministerium nun den Generationswechsel an den Hochschulen nutzen, um schnell hochqualifizierte junge Fachkräfte heranzubilden und deren frühe Selbständig-

keit in Lehre und Forschung zu sichern. Die Hochschulkarriere soll berechenbar und attraktiv sein sowie den internationalen Wettbewerbsbedingungen entsprechen. Daher ist die Neuordnung des Qualifizierungsweges für den wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchs das Kernstück der Reformen. Daneben umfassen sie noch eine leistungsorientierte Professorenbesoldung und Hochschulfinanzierung. Die im Vergleich zur gegenwärtigen Praxis niedrigeren Mindestgehälter für die drei Professorenämter W1 (Juniorprofessur, mindestens 3.260 Euro), W2 (bisher C3, mindestens 3.724 Euro) und W3 (bisher C4, mindestens 4.522 Euro) sollen durch leistungsorientierte (statt bisher altersabhängige) befristete und unbefristete Zusatzzahlungen aufgestockt werden, wobei im Fall von W2 und W3 auf Obergrenzen verzichtet wurde (vgl. die Pressemitteilungen des BMBF vom 30.5.2001 und 20.12.2001). Die geringere Vergütung bzw. Besoldung von Angehörigen des öffentlichen Dienstes in den neuen Bundesländern wird nicht aufgehoben. An dieser Besoldungsstruktur zeigt sich einmal mehr die Marktorientierung der Hochschulreform, die darauf zielt, hochbezahlte Fachkräfte aus der freien Wirtschaft an die Universitäten zu holen. Von dieser Förderung werden natürlich nur diejenigen Fächer profitieren können, deren Tätigkeitsfelder auch direkt marktrelevant sind.

Die vermutlich folgenreichste Neuerung, bei deren Entwurf offensichtlich das amerikanische Hochschulsystem Pate gestanden hat, ist die Einführung der Juniorprofessur, einer auf sechs Jahre befristeten Professur, die mit 35 bis 37 Jahren beendet sein soll. Nach drei Jahren erfolgt eine Zwischenevaluierung, deren Form jedoch noch völlig ungeklärt ist. Am Ende wird die Berufungsfähigkeit des Juniorprofessors festgestellt, der sich danach auf eine dauerhafte Professur bewerben kann. So heißt es in der Pressemitteilung des BMBF vom 20.12.2001 zur Juniorprofessur: „Sie soll in Zukunft die Regelvoraussetzung für eine Universitätsprofessur sein. Alternative Wege für die Berufung [...] wie z. B. die Tätigkeit an einer ausländischen Universität oder in der Wirtschaft wird es aber auch künftig geben.“ Zum Tätigkeitsprofil eines Juniorprofessors gehören in den ersten drei Jahren vier, in den zweiten drei Jahren acht Semesterwochenstunden Unterricht, die Betreuung von Magisterkandidaten, Diplomanden und Promovenden, die Leitung einer eigenen Arbeitsgruppe einschließlich des Einwerbens von Drittmitteln, die Mitarbeit in der akademischen Selbstverwaltung und natürlich die eigene Forschung und Publikation. Die Habilitation entfällt, weil sie „vor allem der Selbständigkeit und Eigenverantwortlichkeit des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses“ entgegensteht und weil heute „die Forschung im Team immer wichtiger“ wird (Pressemitteilung des BMBF vom 30.5.2001). In den Geisteswissenschaften jedoch wird „vermutlich auch künftig ‚das 2. Buch‘ erwartet“ (Pressemitteilung des BMBF vom 21.9.2000).



Diese Regelung verweist zwar auf die beiden Habilitationstypen, die sich in den verschiedenen Fächerkulturen herausgebildet haben (vgl. Berning), wird aber den zeitlich und formal unterschiedlichen Anforderungen an wissenschaftliche Qualifikationsarbeiten in den verschiedenen Bereichen letztendlich nicht gerecht. In den experimentell arbeitenden Fächern stehen kumulative Habilitationen schon seit langem eindeutig im Vordergrund, während in den Geistes-, Rechts- und Wirtschaftswissenschaften sowie in den theoretischen Teilfächern der Natur- und Sozialwissenschaften „die monographische Habilitationsschrift als Ergebnis einer länger dauernden wissenschaftlichen Tätigkeit immer noch ein zentrales Gewicht hat“ (Berning). Bis zum 1.1.2010 wird es eine Übergangsregelung geben, damit laufende Habilitationen abgeschlossen werden können.

Diese scheinbar kulante Richtlinie steht jedoch im Widerspruch zu der ausdrücklich formulierten Entscheidung, daß die Habilitation künftig „im Berufungsverfahren keine Rolle mehr spielen“ wird, weil die Bewerber „unter Verzicht auf die Habilitation“ (Pressemitteilung des BMBF vom 30.5.2001) zu bewerten sind. In diesem Sinne definiert § 44 des HRG in der neuen Fassung (n. F.) die Einstellungsvoraussetzungen für Professorinnen und Professoren. War bisher die Habilitation die wichtigste schriftliche Qualifikationsleistung, soll sie nun gleich gar nicht mehr zählen. Da der Gesetzgeber bewußt auf Übergangsregelungen verzichtet hat, gilt das prinzipiell für alle nach Einführung des Gesetzes beginnenden Berufungsverfahren. Im Interesse der jetzt frisch Habilitierten bzw. der noch im Habilitationsprozeß befindlichen Nachwuchswissenschaftler ist jedoch zu hoffen, daß möglichst viele Bundesländer in ihren Landesgesetzen die Habilitation dennoch berücksichtigen (wie es § 72 HRG n. F. eigentlich vorschreibt). Schließlich stehen ja so schnell noch keine fertigen Juniorprofessoren auf dem Markt zur Verfügung, denen allein die neue Gesetzeslage zum Vorteil gereichen würde. Zur Bedeutung der „zusätzlichen wissenschaftlichen Leistungen“, hinter denen sich eben die Habilitation samt des bisher üblichen Habilitationsverfahrens verbirgt, heißt es im § 44 Abs. 2 HRG n. F.: „Die zusätzlichen wissenschaftlichen Leistungen [...] sollen, auch soweit sie nicht im Rahmen einer Juniorprofessur erbracht werden, nicht Gegenstand eines Prüfungsverfahrens sein. Die Qualität der für die Besetzung einer Professur erforderlichen zusätzlichen wissenschaftlichen Leistungen wird ausschließlich und umfassend in Berufungsverfahren bewertet.“ Vermutlich als Reaktion auf die harsche Kritik aus den Hochschulen lassen die indirekte Formulierung und die weichere Soll-Regelung die Möglichkeit offen, auch über das Jahr 2010 hinaus Habilitationen durchzuführen und letztendlich eine Mischform in den Zugangsvoraussetzungen zur Professur zu etablieren. Favorisiert wird trotz aller Interventionen der Reformkritiker jedoch die Juniorprofessur.

Besonders fragwürdig ist die Finanzierung des Juniorprofessors, der die bisherigen Assistenten (C1), Oberassistenten und Hochschuldozenten (C2) ersetzt. Die ohnehin schon prekäre Personalsituation an der modernen Massenuniversität wird damit beträchtlich verschärft. Nach den Berechnungen des BMBF gibt es zur Zeit an den Hochschulen und Universitäten über 15.000 C1-Planstellen, von denen aber nur etwa 6.000 adäquat mit wissenschaftlichen Assistenten besetzt sind. Daneben gibt es noch etwa 4.000 C2-Stellen für Oberassistenten und Hochschuldozenten. Die Mittel, die bisher in diese Stellen flossen, sollen nun für die Juniorprofessur und deren drittmittelfähige Grundausrüstung eingesetzt werden, so daß die neue Variante „kostenneutral“ eingeführt werden kann. Das Ministerium sieht von einer verbindlichen Anzahl für Juniorprofessuren ab, rechnet aber jährlich bundesweit mit ca. 6.000. Was genau mit den übrigen C1- und C2-Stellen geschehen soll, wird nicht ausgeführt; neben der Umwandlung in Mitarbeiterstellen scheint eine Streichung aus Spargründen (wie auch bei den demnächst neu zu besetzenden C3- und C4-Stellen) durchaus als möglich. Mit den C2-Stellen entfallen die ohnehin schon bescheidenen (und an vielen Universitäten gar nicht mehr gegebenen) Möglichkeiten für Bewerber um Professuren, die Zeit bis zum Erhalt eines Rufes finanziell zu überbrücken. Auch die Privatdozenten, die zwar keine Finanzierung, aber doch die Anbindung an eine Universität gestatteteten, wird es fortan nicht mehr geben (vgl. Erhardt). So findet sich der wissenschaftliche Nachwuchs im Ergebnis der Reform eher schlechter denn besser gestellt, zumal auch den erfolgreichen Juniorprofessoren (anders als beim amerikanischen Vorbild) keine Übernahme ins Professorenamt garantiert wird. Vielmehr sollen sie sich – wie jetzt die Habilitierten – selbst auf Professuren bewerben. Die vom Bundesrat geforderte Nachbesserung des Gesetzes sieht immerhin die Möglichkeit vor, an der bisherigen Hochschule zu verbleiben, wenn vorher bereits ein Ortswechsel stattgefunden und die Hochschule außerdem gerade eine passende freie Professorenstelle hat.

In § 42 n. F. legt das HRG die veränderte Personalstruktur der Hochschulen fest: „Das hauptberuflich tätige wissenschaftliche und künstlerische Personal der Hochschule besteht aus Hochschullehrerinnen und Hochschullehrern (Professorinnen und Professoren, Juniorprofessorinnen und Juniorprofessoren), den wissenschaftlichen und künstlerischen Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern sowie den Lehrkräften mit besonderen Aufgaben.“ Daneben gibt es erstmals auch die Kategorie des Doktoranden (§ 21 HRG). Angesichts der traditionell eher geringen Anzahl von (dauerhaft angestellten) Lehrkräften mit besonderen Aufgaben ist die einzige zahlenmäßig bedeutende Personalgruppe des akademischen Mittelbaus unterhalb der Professur die des befristeten wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeiters. Dieser ist in Aufgaben

und Funktionen dem bisherigen wissenschaftlichen Assistenten nachgebildet, wird aber bewußt vage definiert (vgl. § 53 n. F.).

Der in den Medien besonders heftig kritisierte § 57 n. F. regelt die Beschäftigungszeiten des neuen akademischen Mittelbaus, der – wenn man die Juniorprofessoren mitrechnet – insgesamt zwölf Jahre befristet nach HRG angestellt werden kann. Davon entfallen sechs Jahre auf die Zeit vor der Promotion und sechs Jahre auf die Zeit als Juniorprofessor. Im Zeitalter der chronischen Unterfinanzierung der Hochschulen liest sich der gut gemeinte und auf die wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeiter bezogene § 57a Abs. 2 n. F. fast wie ein Hohn: „Unberührt [von diesen neuen Befristungsregelungen] bleibt das Recht der Hochschulen, das [...] Personal auch in unbefristeten Arbeitsverhältnissen zu beschäftigen.“ Nach den zwölf Jahren ist eine Anstellung nur noch nach dem allgemeinen Arbeitsrecht gestattet, wonach grundsätzlich eine befristete Beschäftigung nach einem Arbeitgeberwechsel ohne sachlichen Grund bis zu zwei Jahren möglich ist (§ 14 Abs. 2 Teilzeit- und Befristungsgesetz). Ohne Arbeitgeberwechsel oder im Anschluß an eine sachgrundlose befristete Beschäftigung ist eine befristete Beschäftigung nur noch mit sachlichem Grund erlaubt. Wie die Praxis vor allem der ärmeren Hochschulen im Norden und Osten des Landes zeigt, nutzen diese die letztgenannte Möglichkeit lieber nicht, um sich unliebsame Klagen auf Dauerbeschäftigung zu ersparen. Die Furcht, die nun als Trauma die Personalabteilungen der Universitäten umtreibt, ist zwar nicht unbegründet, doch ist die Zahl derjenigen, die sich nach fünfzehn Jahren tatsächlich erfolgreich einklagen konnten, bundesweit sehr niedrig. Für die Habilitierten von heute sind jedoch diese befristeten Stellen die einzige Möglichkeit, die Zeit bis zur Berufung zu überbrücken, in dem sie sich über Drittmittel eine Projektfinanzierung schaffen. Trotz der heftigen Kritik an dieser nur sehr bescheidenen, weil nicht verlässlichen Regelung, soll sie in der 6. HRG-Änderungsnovelle nicht verbessert werden. In der jüngsten Pressemitteilung des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung vom 22. März 2002 heißt es dazu:

Eine in den letzten Wochen ebenfalls geforderte ‚Nachbesserung‘ des Hochschulrahmengesetzes im Hinblick auf die Möglichkeiten einer befristeten Beschäftigung im Anschluß an die Qualifizierungsphase wird es allerdings nicht geben. Hier haben die Gespräche klar ergeben, daß dies nicht sinnvoll und auch nicht erforderlich ist. So bietet das allgemeine Arbeitsrecht ausreichende Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten auch für befristete Arbeitsverhältnisse. [...] Bulmahn: ‚Einige Verwaltungen haben allerdings das Gesetz als Vorwand genutzt, um sich von Mitarbeitern zu trennen. Das sieht das Gesetz nicht vor und ist auch nicht Wille des Gesetzgebers.‘ Den Verwaltungen an Hochschulen und Forschungseinrichtungen solle in

Kürze eine Handreichung zum neuen Hochschulrahmengesetz zur Verfügung gestellt werden.

Ob es wirklich nur die Unfähigkeit der Verwaltungen ist, die sie zu einer solchen Anwendung des neuen Gesetzes veranlaßt, mag dahingestellt bleiben. Auch die von Frau Bulmahn immer wieder beschworenen „Fehlinformationen und zum Teil unsachlichen Diskussionen“ (Pressemitteilung des BMBF vom 22. März 2002) werden kaum die Ursachen der heftigen Kritik vor allem von seiten der Betroffenen, die sich als „lost generation“ verstehen, erklären können. Vielleicht unfreiwillig, aber um nichts weniger offensichtlich, öffnet das neue HRG spargenötigten Personalabteilungen jedenfalls genügend Möglichkeiten, ihrer Pflicht genüge zu tun. So gestattet § 46 HRG n. F. zum Beispiel auch die befristete Anstellung von Professoren, die bisher immer in unbefristeten Beschäftigungsverhältnissen standen: „Professorinnen und Professoren werden, soweit sie in das Beamtenverhältnis berufen werden, zu Beamtinnen und Beamten auf Zeit oder auf Lebenszeit ernannt.“ Was sicher für die Juniorprofessoren oder als Erprobung für neue Mitarbeiter gedacht ist, kann natürlich auch für andere Zwecke genutzt werden. Wie anziehend befristete Professuren auf die künftige Hochschullehrergeneration wirken mögen, bleibt ebenfalls abzuwarten.

Während die jetzt Betroffenen, wenn auch vergeblich, ihren Unmut artikuliert haben, werden die zukünftigen Wissenschaftler in die neuen Regelungen hinein wachsen und sie als normal akzeptieren. Daher können die Neuen Englischsprachigen Literaturen nur fortleben, wenn es ihren Vertretern heute gelingt, die neuen Strukturen zu nutzen, in dem sie an ihren Universitäten Juniorprofessuren für eben diese Spezialisierung einzurichten versuchen. Dies kann natürlich nur im Einvernehmen mit den Kolleginnen und Kollegen der Anglistik und Amerikanistik gelingen. Schließlich ist es denkbar, daß sich aus dieser Situation heraus neue gemeinsame Forschungsinteressen und intra- und interdisziplinäre Projekte eröffnen, die allen Beteiligten und Fächern zugute kommen. Darüber hinaus sollten Hochschullehrerinnen und -lehrer heute weiterhin neue Stellen auf allen Strukturebenen einfordern, da im Ergebnis der Strukturreform ja eher weniger als mehr Stellen zur Verfügung stehen werden. Zum großen Teil sind es gerade die daraus resultierenden schwierigen Studien- und Promotionsbedingungen der Massenuniversität, die dazu führen, daß die deutschen Nachwuchswissenschaftler erst relativ spät berufungsfähig werden.

Trotz des Wunsches nach rascher Verjüngung der Universitäten sollte des weiteren nicht übersehen werden, daß zum Beispiel in den Geistes- und Kulturwissenschaften zum Profil eines Hochschullehrers durchaus die mit den Jahren wachsende persönliche Erfahrung und Reife gehört. Außerdem sollten die in den Reformplänen anvisierten Altersgrenzen unbedingt flexi-

bel gehandhabt werden, um Frauen und Männer mit Kindern nicht von einer wissenschaftlichen Karriere auszuschließen. Neben diesen allgemeinen Fragen sind auch Überlegungen zur konkreten Umsetzung der neuen Strukturen angebracht. Das Verfahren zur Auswahl von Juniorprofessoren und die Evaluation werden zum großen Teil von den Universitäten und Fachbereichen bestimmt, die zudem darüber wachen sollten, daß die Arbeitsbelastung der Juniorprofessoren die gewünschte Qualifikation auch wirklich gestattet. Ein Buch in drei Jahren zu schreiben, scheint eine wenig sinnvolle Forderung. Für die einzelnen Fächer wird spezifisch festzulegen sein, in welchem Verhältnis das Thema des zweiten zu dem des ersten Buches stehen soll, wie das Breitenwissen im Fach angesammelt und nachgewiesen werden soll, wie hochschuldidaktische Kenntnisse und Fertigkeiten erworben und geprüft werden können. Hier liegen die Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten durch innovative Vorschläge, die auch die Vertreterinnen und Vertreter der Neuen Englischsprachigen Literaturen als Herausforderung aufgreifen werden, um die Zukunft ihres Fachs in der deutschen Universitätslandschaft zu sichern.

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# Contributors

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